Teaching a Knowledge-Rich English Curriculum

Leaving Nothing To Chance

Contents

Overview 3

Part 1: Knowledge, Skills, and Memory 6

- Knowledge vs Skills: The Debate 6
- The Trouble With Bloom's 7
- But Teaching Knowledge is Boring 8
- Different Types of Knowledge 8
- We Can't Possibly Expect Students To Remember So Much 10
- References 11

Part Two: Sequencing a Knowledge-Rich Curriculum 12

- Why is a Curriculum Important Anyway? 12
- Choosing Texts 14
- Progressing Through The Curriculum 15
- Conceptualising a Curriculum Map 17
- References 18

Part Three: Planning Effective Lessons 19

- Retrieval Practice 21
- Interactive Reading 22
- Formative Assessment 23
  - Mini Whiteboards 23
  - Questioning 23
  - Because/But/So 23
- Hinge Questions 24
- References 25

Part Four: Embedding Writing 26

- What Students Can Write In Year 6 26
- When to Write 27
- Talk for Writing 28
- Explicit Teaching 28
- I Do – We Do – You Do 31
- Sequencing Writing 32
- References 32

Part Five: Desirable Difficulty 33

- Rising Tides Lift All Boats 33
- An Example: Julius Caesar 34

Teaching To The Top: Macbeth 36
References 38
Part Six: Assessment 39
Decoupling Formative and Summative Assessment 41
Teaching To The Test 42
Summative vs Formative 44
.....44
References 44
Appendix 1: Interactive Reading Script 45

Overview

What do I want students to remember? → What do they need to remember from previous lessons? → How do I explain things as simply as possible? → How do I test students have understood? → How do I model what to do with that knowledge?

Session Title	Key Content	Application in the Classroom	Further Reading
1. Knowledge, skills, and memory	• The difference between knowledge and skills • Core and hinterland • Cognitive load theory	• Understand the science of how children learn best • Recognise that children need a broad knowledge • Consider how to break down concepts so as to not overload working memory	https://tomneedhamteach.wordpress.com/2020/10/19/experts-and-novices-is-that-all-there-is/ https://mrvallanceteach.wordpress.com/2021/05/15/core-and-hinterland-what-are-we-really-talking-about/ Seven Myths About Education by Daisy Christodoulou Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning by Peter Brown, Henry Roediger & Mark McDaniel
2. Sequencing a knowledge-rich curriculum	• Understanding why the curriculum is sequenced as it is • Moving away from genericism • Schema • Curriculum is the progression model • Spiral planning • Track planning	• Have an understanding of the OAT curriculum sequence and notice the strands which run through it • Appreciate how careful planning can mean concepts are revisited and strengthened	The National Curriculum https://clioetcetera.com/2020/02/08/what-did-i-mean-by-the-curriculum-is-the-progression-model/

3. Planning effective lessons	• Retrieval – beyond quizzing • Interactive reading • Hinge questions • Learning vs performance • Formative assessment	• Design and deliver lessons which are calm and purposeful • Lessons ensure that students learn new ideas and concepts, while frequently retrieving what they already know • Teachers frequently check understanding before moving on to new content	https://tomneedhamteach.wordpress.com/2022/10/04/explicit-instruction-a-generic-lesson-plan-i-we-you/ https://tomneedhamteach.wordpress.com/2020/02/03/low-stakes-quizzing-and-retrieval-practice-5-extended-quizzing/ https://my.chartered.college/research-hub/learning-vs-performance-the-difference-and-what-it-means-for-your-teaching/
4. Embedding writing	• What can students to in year 6? • Deconstructed essay stems • Creative writing stems • Extended writing practice	• Demystifies writing instruction • Provides a framework around which to base writing instruction • Bridges the gap between sentence-level and extended writing	https://tomneedhamteach.wordpress.com/2023/07/17/creating-instructional-sequences-2-an-example-sequence/ Closing The Writing Gap by Alex Quigley How to Teach English by Chris Curtis
5. Desirable difficulties	• Making the difficult seem easy • Adaptive teaching • Maintaining high standards	• High expectations for all students • Teachers are aware of how to deliver seemingly difficult content to students	

6. Decoupling summative and formative assessment	• What is the difference between summative and formative assessment? • What can summative assessment tell us? • How to use formative assessment in the classroom • Whole class feedback – what's the point?		https://clioetcetera.com/2017/11/02/decoupling-summative-and-formative-assessment/

Part 1: Knowledge, Skills, and Memory

Knowledge vs Skills: The Debate

Question 1: *The Last Supper* is one of the most well-known paintings in the world. Imagine that you are showing this painting to a student for the first time. What would they need to know in order to understand it? Write your ideas in the box below:

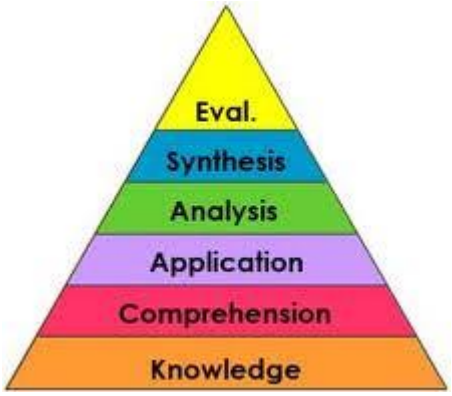
The world of education appears to be in a state of constant conflict between whether students need to learn knowledge of a subject, or the skills associated with that subject. In 1976, Jim Callaghan announced that children were leaving school without the prerequisite knowledge to really access the world. ED Hirsch, an American educationalist, views knowledge as the driver of social mobility – elevating children beyond their immediate circumstance (ie their homelife, their parents, their peers, their town…) is necessary in order stop cycles of illiteracy and poverty. However, others argue that school shouldn't be about imparting knowledge, it should rather encourage children to pursue what they enjoy – a philosophy taken to an extreme conclusion by AS Neil and the Summerhill School. Dr

John Yandell views English specifically as a subject which is about self-expression and exploration, and is critical of the idea that teaching explicitly the building blocks of knowledge in English, suggesting that this is moving away from the purpose of the subject in secondary education.

Question2 : What do you think is more important in the teaching of English, knowledge or skills? Why?

The Trouble With Bloom's

Bloom's Taxonomy is a widely taught and shared view of what is important in teaching and learning. Knowledge is placed at the bottom of the pyramid, while 'higher order' thinking such as analysis and evaluation form the top. These skills are often prized above all else in English – we want students to be able to examine a piece of text and say something marvellous about it; construct their own ideas and opinions; and ultimately use it to inform a piece of their own writing – usually as either an essay or a piece of extended creative writing.



What this view misses is that knowledge is *essential* in being able to perform those tasks well: skill is nothing but the fluent application of knowledge. This means that students have to be told the meaning of things multiple times, shown examples of how to analyse things multiple times, guided through the process of writing multiple times, before they are able to tie everything together and demonstrate the skill we want to see.

Think about sports: we don't expect children (or adults for that matter) to become good at something by simply trying to recreate the finished article: *England Football* has a list of over 100 separate drills that children need to be taught and practise in order to improve their game; ranging from how to dribble a ball to how to position yourself on the pitch. Piano lessons don't throw children in at the deep end and expect them to be able to play Beethoven; instead, good piano

teachers break down the act of playing a piano into smaller chunks and build up difficulty. The same approach should be adopted in schools, and easy to apply to English.

But Teaching Knowledge is Boring

Question 3: Which of these statements do you agree with?

	Agree	Disagree
1. *Teaching facts prevents a deep understanding of literature and language.*		
2. *Teacher-led instruction results in passive students.*		
3. *Schools should focus on teaching '21st century skills'.*		
4. *We don't need to teach knowledge, Google exists.*		
5. *We need to teach transferable skills – comprehension, inference, creativity, etc.*		
6. *Students need to have fun, otherwise they aren't learning.*		
7. *Teaching knowledge is indoctrination*		

All of these myths – which pervade education practice – are essentially, false. While they might give the appearance of being equitable and fair, following these principles puts students – especially those in areas of deprivation - at a disadvantage. A reliance on 'fun' activities and a development of skill can only take children so far. Without a broad and deep knowledge of literature; its conventions; its history; children won't be able to do much more than explain a plot and offer limited explanations. Think about PEE paragraphs – they arm students with a skill to write an answer, but they fundamentally limit the knowledge that is needed for that answer to be a good one.

Different Types of Knowledge

Not all knowledge is equal. We don't want to just impart and assess dry facts, as these are really only useful for pub quizzes. At the same time, we don't need year 7 students to be able to apply literary theories to whatever they're studying, as it probably isn't appropriate yet.

Christine Counsell expounds the idea of 'Core' and 'Hinterland' knowledge. Core knowledge is the most important knowledge that we want students to remember and recall, which will aid them in analysis and evaluation later on. Hinterland knowledge is the knowledge which brings that to life – something beyond the text which unless we explicitly teach, students aren't going to stumble upon by themselves.

Both aspects of knowledge are important. Core knowledge can be condensed down to fit on to a knowledge organiser, but hinterland knowledge – arguably the more important aspect for success in English – is built over time. A clear and organised KS3 curriculum which introduces children to concepts and ideas can only be a good thing for building independence and success at KS4.

The model on the next page examines what might be considered 'core' and 'hinterland' when teaching Macbeth to students in KS4:

Core Knowledge	Hinterland Knowledge
• The plot • The characters • Major themes • Context such as James I being on the throne; Witchcraft being a topic of interest; the meaning of the word patriarchy • The meaning of iambic pentameter and trochaic tetrameter • What an essay is	• The political landscape of Jacobean England • The conventions of plays • The conventions of Shakespearean plays • Shakespearean language • Similarities to other plays written at the same time • Subversive women in literature

While this list isn't exhaustive, it does demonstrate that core knowledge often represents the 'facts' which can be taught and repeated in the space of a lesson, while 'hinterland' knowledge is built over time.

Question 4: Consider the following exam question. What core and hinterland knowledge will students need in order to be successful at answering it?

How does Priestley present Mr Birling as a morally corrupt character?

Core Knowledge	Hinterland Knowledge

We Can't Possibly Expect Students To Remember So Much

Cognitive Load Theory has been around since the 1980s, but has become particularly popular in the last couple of years. It suggests that there are essentially two modes of memory: our working memory and our long-term memory. We remember things once they move from our working memory into our long-term memory and recall them frequently.

However, the ability to remember things is limited by how much we can hold in our working memory at one time. The average number of things someone can hold in their working memory is 4.

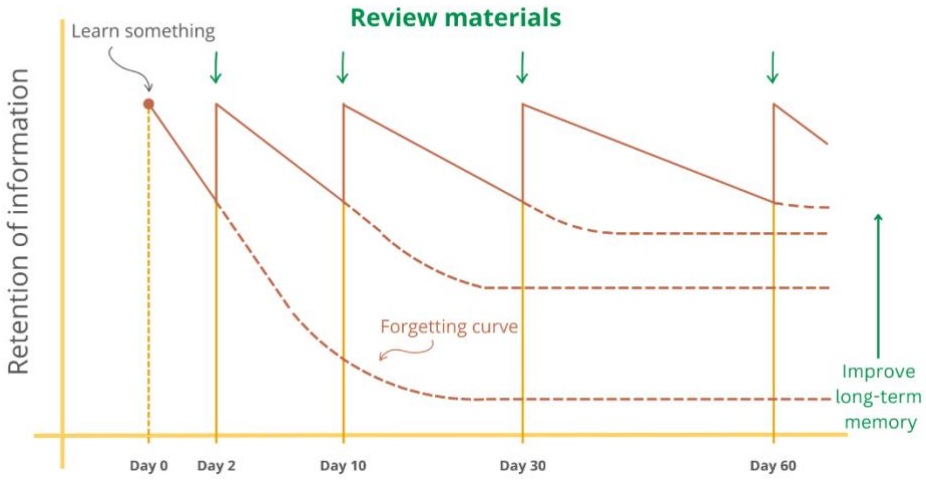
The theory identifies three different forms of cognitive load:

- Intrinsic cognitive load: the inherent difficulty of the material itself, which can be influenced by prior knowledge of the topic
- Extraneous cognitive load: the load generated by the way the material is presented and which does not aid learning
- Germane cognitive load: the elements that aid information processing and contribute to the development of 'schemas'.

This highlights the importance of several things:

1. Routines and calm atmospheres in the classroom reduce extraneous cognitive load, allowing for better teaching and learning.
2. Difficult material needs to be broken down into small chunks, taught explicitly, and tested regularly to make sure that it moves into working-memory
3. The more that this is practised, the more 'hinterland' knowledge is built and reinforced.

The forgetting curve' demonstrates the importance of recall after teaching: if we only tell students something once and never revisit it, it will be forgotten quickly. However, if we repeat what we want them to learn over several lessons and we test that knowledge regularly, it becomes 'stickier' and less forgettable. This is surely, the ultimate aim of school! The implication is that lessons need to be planned explicitly around reducing cognitive load and encouraging remembering. A good rule of thumb is *teach 3 things, test 3 things.*



Question 5: Imagine you are teaching a lesson about the poem *Ozymandias*. Your first lesson is going to be about the form and structure of the poem. What do you want students to remember from previous learning? What 3 things will you teach and test to aid them in the analysis of the poem that will follow next lesson?

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Part Two: Sequencing a Knowledge-Rich Curriculum

Question 1: Answer the following questions to see what you can remember about knowledge in the curriculum.

1. Christine Counsell suggests there are two types of knowledge. What are they?
2. What is the name of the theory which explains the movement of knowledge from the working memory to the long-term memory?
3. How many things can the average person hold in their working memory?

Why is a Curriculum Important Anyway?

On the most basic level, the curriculum outlines what students are learning. It allows teachers to plan lessons and assess what students know at the end of a sequence of study. But the curriculum must also define what it is that students are expected to learn, remember, and be able to do.

This is the National Curriculum outline for English in KS3:

Subject content

Reading

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through:
  - reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors. The range will include high-quality works from:
    - English literature, both pre-1914 and contemporary, including prose, poetry and drama
    - Shakespeare (two plays)
    - seminal world literature
  - choosing and reading books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment.
  - re-reading books encountered earlier to increase familiarity with them and provide a basis for making comparisons.
- understand increasingly challenging texts through:
  - learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries
  - making inferences and referring to evidence in the text
  - knowing the purpose, audience for and context of the writing and drawing on this knowledge to support comprehension
  - checking their understanding to make sure that what they have read makes sense.
- read critically through:
  - knowing how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning
  - recognising a range of poetic conventions and understanding how these have been used
  - studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these
  - understanding how the work of dramatists is communicated effectively through performance and how alternative staging allows for different interpretations of a play
  - making critical comparisons across texts
  - studying a range of authors, including at least two authors in depth each year.

Writing

Pupils should be taught to:

- write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:
  - writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including:
    - well-structured formal expository and narrative essays
    - stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing
    - notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations
    - a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters
  - summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail
  - applying their growing knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and text structure to their writing and selecting the appropriate form
  - drawing on knowledge of literary and rhetorical devices from their reading and listening to enhance the impact of their writing
- plan, draft, edit and proof-read through:
  - considering how their writing reflects the audiences and purposes for which it was intended
  - amending the vocabulary, grammar and structure of their writing to improve its coherence and overall effectiveness
  - paying attention to accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling; applying the spelling patterns and rules set out in English Appendix 1 to the key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study for English.

Grammar and vocabulary

Pupils should be taught to:

- consolidate and build on their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through:
  - extending and applying the grammatical knowledge set out in English Appendix 2 to the key stage 1 and 2 programmes of study to analyse more challenging texts
  - studying the effectiveness and impact of the grammatical features of the texts they read
  - drawing on new vocabulary and grammatical constructions from their reading and listening, and using these consciously in their writing and speech to achieve particular effects
  - knowing and understanding the differences between spoken and written language, including differences associated with formal and informal registers, and between Standard English and other varieties of English
  - using Standard English confidently in their own writing and speech

You will notice that the document doesn't really elucidate us as to what *knowledge* children should learn. Rather, it is open to interpretation: it lists skills rather than specifics.

Question 2: How far does your current KS3 curriculum match what is expected by the National Curriculum? Do children encounter what is listed frequently or infrequently?

It can be perhaps be argued that the general nature of the statements in the National Curriculum align quite well with the adoption of skill-based teaching approaches: it is easy to slip into the belief that by 'doing' poetry once a year we are teaching poetry analysis skills; or that by reading the novel that we have hundreds of in the cupboard, without really thinking about *why* we're teaching it, that we are helping students to read widely and critically.

Therefore, it is our job to ensure that children are exposed to a curriculum which is thoughtfully designed and specifically details what we want children to learn and when they're going to learn it. We need to be as precise as possible so that we aren't leaving it to chance that children will know the difference between a Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnet; or the difference between writing an article or a letter. The more prescriptive we are at the curricular planning stage, the more successful we'll find our students to be by the time they take their exams.

Christine Counsell suggests that there are two curricular forms of knowledge to consider:

1. Substantive Knowledge: Essentially, the facts. *How many lines in a sonnet? What meter did Shakespeare write his sonnets in? What is the term for two lines of verse?* These are quick to teach and easy to assess. More importantly, they are easy to revisit and can be planned explicitly into a curriculum outline. These are the building blocks of what comes next.

2. Disciplinary Knowledge: What students learn to do with that knowledge and how they can use it to understand the subject at more than just a surface level – the tradition of the subject. In the case of English, this usually takes the form of analysis and argument; it is important to remember that without firm foundations, students won't ever be able to make convincing or coherent analyses.

Question 3: Consider one unit of study in your year 9 curriculum. What substantive knowledge do you teach in that unit? What substantive knowledge must students have learnt previously for it to make sense? What disciplinary knowledge do children have after that unit of study?

Choosing Texts

Perhaps the most emotive part of teaching English is deciding on what texts to study. Do we want children to read things they'll identify with? What Shakespeare play do we choose? Do we want students to experience literature from just one place, or from the entire world? Michael Young – the proponent of 'Powerful Knowledge' in a curriculum, argues that schools have to teach things beyond what children would normally encounter. There is a difference between books worth reading for pleasure, and books worthy of study.

Counsell says of such choices:

> "In those subjects where content choices are potentially infinite and selections must be made, it is through due attention to the disciplinary dimension that pupils know that what I teach is not all that there is. In those subjects where truth is sought through argumentation, pupils learn that even the selection and juxtaposition of two facts in a narrative amount to an interpretation, and that interpretation can be conducted responsibly or irresponsibly, but never definitively. A successful history, geography, RE or literature curriculum, in which the disciplinary was visible, will leave pupils absolutely clear that even the curriculum itself, as they received it, was one such selection, and must not be confused with the whole domain."

The argument here being that text choice is important because it forms the way that students think about literature later on – if we introduce concepts like patriarchy, oppression, and subversion early in the curriculum and revisit them with carefully chosen texts regularly, students' disciplinary

knowledge will grow to a point that they are able to form convincing arguments in a literary fashion, rather than regurgitating what they've been told before.

Careful choices around texts avoid what Michael Fordham calls 'curriculum genericism': the thought that students will learn the generic skills of a subject regardless of the medium through which they're taught. If we want to understand the development of the novel form, is it a valid curricular choice to limit a students' diet simply to novels which will interest them (for example, the Hunger Games, Harry Potter, the Bone Sparrow)? Or is it our responsibility as the experts to introduce students to novels and stories which carry a deeper significance to the study of English literature?

Question 4: How might a diverse curriculum of texts help to build a student's *hinterland* knowledge of literature and language?

Progressing Through The Curriculum

As students move through the curriculum – from their very first encounter with English in year 7, through to the end of year 11 – the point is to help them build a secure and broad knowledge of the subject. It isn't enough to read 'engaging' texts, we need to consider carefully about how one text choice influences the next and what children learn from this.

The name for the web of knowledge we want students to learn is called **schema**. It can be defined as:

> "...the vital interconnected networks of background knowledge that prove so crucial for our pupils' learning. ...working with schemas often involves developing ideas through processes of organization, comparison, or elaboration... It may be the schema we intentionally develop about a topic in discussion, or the careful use of graphic organisers to compare ideas."

By keeping the development of a schema at the forefront of our minds when planning a curriculum, we reduce the chances of students forming misconceptions or misunderstandings. Narrating throughout the curriculum how the ideas and concepts we want them to learn are connected helps students to realise that the knowledge we are giving them is creating a 'big picture' of English literature as a subject.

You'll notice the focus is on what students learn over a relatively long period of time: 4 or 5 years of a curriculum, rather than on a term-by-term basis. In order to make sense of this, we need to stop thinking of progress between units of study, and recognise that the moving through the curriculum and developing the rich schema we have outlined is the measure of student progress. Assessments can show us a snapshot of something at some point in time, but the bigger picture can't be ignored.

Year 7: The Origins of English				
Content	**Ancient origins** - Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad - Greek mythology - ***Homer's Odyssey***, Simon Armitage - Emily Wilson's *Odyssey*	**Links to legends** - Beowulf (Heaney & Headley) - Journey to the West - King Arthur - ***Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*** (Armitage)	**The art of rhetoric** - Shakespeare - ***Julius Caesar*** - Famous speeches - Cicero & Aristotle	**Romance** - **Chaucer, *Knight's Tale*** - Shakespeare, *Romeo & Juliet* - Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* - Keats, La Belle Dame - Tennyson, The Lady of Shallot - Extracts from modern fantasy.
Metaphor	- Tenor, vehicle, ground - Homeric epithets	- Tenor, vehicle, ground - Abstract to concrete - Metaphors in words - Kennings	- Tenor, vehicle, ground - Literary tropes	- Tenor, vehicle, ground - Symbolism
Story	- Sense making - Mythology - Narrative perspective - Heroes; the epic	- Epic - Plot: 5 act structure - Characterisation	- Genre: tragedy - Drama	- The romance; quests - Tragedy & comedy - Poetry
Argument	- Debate: Is Odysseus admirable? - Thesis statements - Summarising	- Debate: What makes a good king? - Thesis statements - Selecting evidence - Summarising	- Ethos, logos, pathos - Thesis statements - Arrangement (act 3 scene 2) - Structuring arguments	- Summarising - Thesis statements - Selecting and embedding evidence - Tentative phrasing
Pattern	- Beginnings, changes and endings: In media res	- Phonemes - Schemes: Alliteration - Caesura	- Metrical feet: iambic pentameter	- Rhyme, alliteration; metre - Binding time: theme & motif
Grammar	- Syntax: word class & subjects - Fragments & phrases	- Morphology – roots and fixes (spelling & decoding) - Clauses & sentences	- Clauses & sentences - Semantics & pragmatics	- Sentence types & complexity - Semantics & pragmatics
Context	- Literary timeline - Aristotle's poetics - Cuneiform; Gilgamesh	- Identifying relevant context - Old English - Christianity	- Using context to support arguments - Origins of rhetoric - Elizabethan anxieties	- Find connections between contexts - Middle English - Courtly love

The example above of a curriculum map exemplifies these thoughts: there are specific elements of knowledge which students are expected to learn, mapped out against a range of specifically chosen texts. Student's develop a schema of literature's evolution through time; of how stories are arranged and their importance in society; how to write analytically.

The following quotation sums up the necessity of a curriculum viewed as progression model:

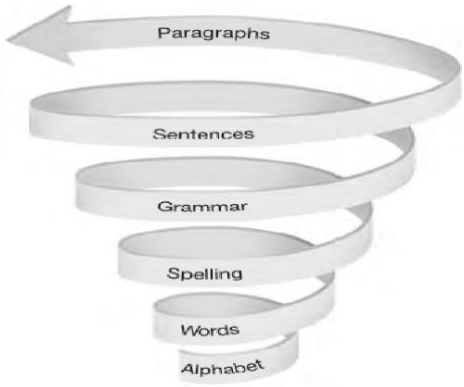
> "Everything has a purpose and is locked in a specific place. Like any great narrative, passing through the curriculum at large was a pre-requisite for understanding later episodes and chapters in all their beauty. Ideas, knowledge, and themes are echoed and foreshadowed so as to build suspense, drama and meaning over time. The curriculum is one."

Question 6: Consider your current KS3 curriculum. Does it have specific detail to map the schema that students should build?

Conceptualising a Curriculum Map

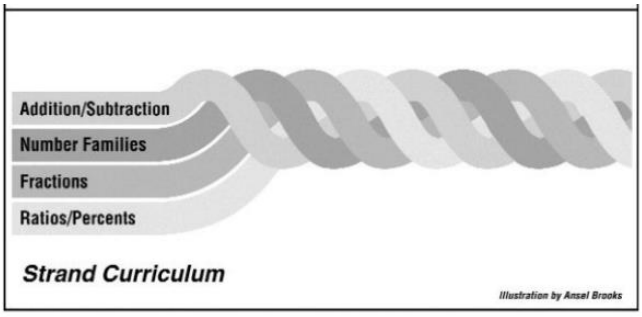
Don't think of the curriculum as a road map. It suggests that the subject is linear and that knowledge doesn't need to be repeated. Instead, there are two useful ways of conceptualising how a curriculum unfolds:

1. Spiral Curriculum Planning



This is the model of a curriculum in which knowledge is frequently revisited and built upon: with each wind of the spiral a student's knowledge is reinforced and furthered, allowing them to do more with what they know. For instance, in year 7 we might *tell* students what a metaphor is and how it is constructed. In year 8 we might *explore* metaphor together, ceding some responsibility to students. In year 9, we would allow students to *analyse* a metaphor independently, as they have had 2 years of explicit teaching of how to do so.

2. Strand Planning



This method requires a lesson-by-lesson plan of the entire curriculum. It involves carefully mapping out at which specific points knowledge and instruction will be revisited. It recognises that no one lesson should ever be about just one thing, and instead considers how reading/writing/speaking can all tie together in order to deepen students' schemas.

Question 7: Using your current year 7 model, use a spiral or strand to explore how knowledge and skills build and are revisited throughout the year.

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Part Three: Planning Effective Lessons

Question 1: Define the following terms

Core Knowledge	
Hinterland Knowledge	
Cognitive Load	
Extraneous Load	
Schema	

Lessons which follow a routine are helpful for both teachers and students: for teachers, it removes the need to come up with activities and tasks, and instead focus on what they want students to know and how they'll check and embed that knowledge. For students, it removes some of the extraneous load and allows more free slots in their working memory – they aren't focused on trying to understand how to perform a task or complete a worksheet, they're focused on remembering and applying what they've been taught.

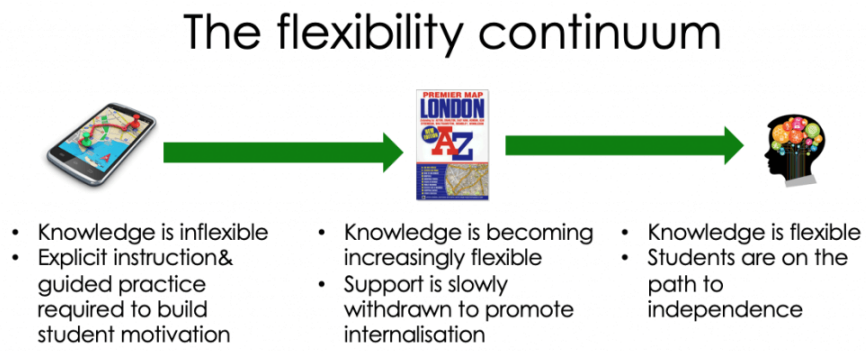
It's important to recognise the difference between performance and learning in a classroom. Consider this quotation:

> "There are different technical ideas about what 'learning' means, but we would probably all agree that even if a student can give a good answer or demonstrate a skill today, that doesn't mean they have learned it. Without strategies to embed knowledge in our long-term memory, we can easily forget things.
>
> Short-term performance can give the illusion that learning has happened but, within any group of students, the degree to which the material will be remembered long-term can vary significantly. This will depend on what they already knew and the nature of the learning task, in particular the success of the task in connecting new and prior learning."

While whizzy activities and worksheets might give the illusion of engagement from students, it disguises the fact that learning isn't happening as efficiently or effectively as it might. Students are focused on trying to decipher how to complete the task and how to apply something they've just learnt to something which is probably quite abstract. It is ok to tell student things, they don't have to discover everything for themselves.

When students first learn something, that knowledge is inflexible: they can only conceive of it as they've been told it and it is difficult to see how it might to apply to anything else. As students see examples of its application and encounter that knowledge in different contexts, the knowledge

becomes more flexible and applicable in different areas. It is our job to firstly give students that inflexible knowledge, and to model explicitly what to do with it to make that knowledge flexible.



Question 2: Consider the example of a worksheet below. Imagine that the students in front of you know the plot of Julius Caesar and that you have just taught the difference between a monarchy and a republic. Does this worksheet help to embed the inflexible knowledge of the differences? Does it allow all students to make links between a new concept and the plot of the play?

	How a republic would react	How a monarchy would react	How it relates to Julius Caesar
An Emperor returns from war after successfully defeating the enemy 			
A member of high society tries to usurp the ruler and claim all of the power for themselves 			
The country's ruler is no longer able to lead the country effectively 			

What is good about the worksheet?	What is bad about the worksheet?

Instead of hoping that students remember the right things, we need to plan lessons to ensure that they do. A good sequence for a lesson would include all of the following: Retrieval practice, reading instruction, formative assessment, hinge questioning, writing practice.

Retrieval Practice

This is an easy thing to adopt into lesson planning. Retrieval practice is simply the idea of remembering something you've learnt before. It might be something from last lesson, or something from a few weeks ago. By knowing what we want students to remember, we can plan retrieval tasks that encourage students to recall those facts quickly. The more that students are tested on remembering things, the easier they will find it to remember.

Often this will take the form of a simple quiz at the beginning of a lesson, with questions designed to test knowledge from throughout the course of study. The usual example is of a gap fill or 'complete the quotation'. The downside to these tasks is that students can opt-out, and many won't fill in the answers until given to them by the teacher.

Tom Needham has suggested an alternative he calls extended quizzing. An example is below:

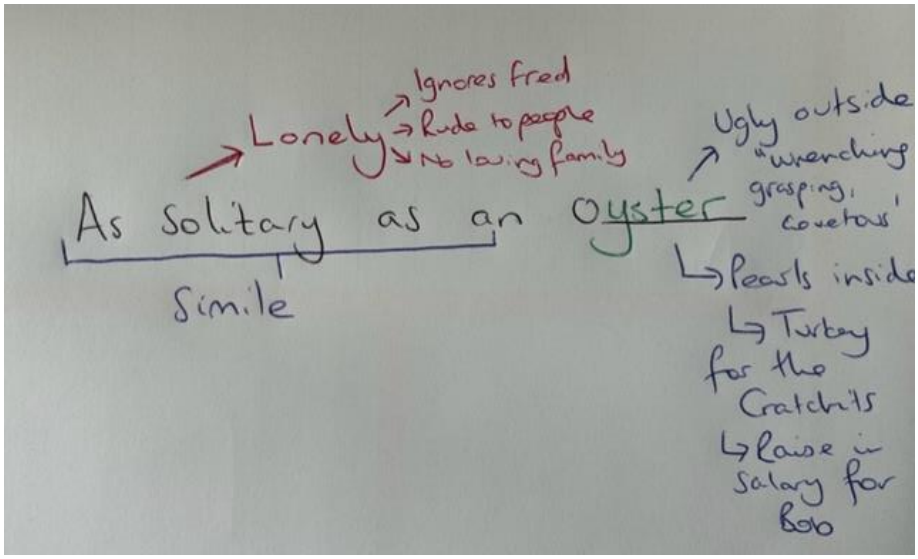
A normal quiz question might look like this:

Complete the quotation: 'As solitary as an o_____.'

However, with a few probing questions under the visualiser and some cold calling, it can turn into something much more.

1. Solitary is an adjective. Define what that adjective means.
2. Tell me three reasons why Scrooge is lonely and solitary.
3. 'As solitary as an oyster' is what type of language device?
4. On the outside, oysters are quite ugly. Is there an ugly description of Scrooge?
5. However, there are sometimes pearls inside of oysters. Tell me two things Scrooge does that show he might be good on the inside too.

Using retrieval practice in this way helps to build the links for students and develop their schema, while giving a quick indication of what they know well and what they are less secure with.



Interactive Reading

Most lessons will involve reading something. The majority of students can read reasonably well, however they might struggle with complex texts. Additionally, a skill that they will need in year 11 is the ability to read for meaning and annotate a text independently. Interactive reading (taken from *Reading Reconsidered)* is a vehicle to achieving this.

To make interactive reading work, the teacher would first use an appropriate reading strategy to read an extract aloud to a class (for example: choral reading, call and response etc.). The teacher would then use text dependent questions to elucidate the text for students.

Task: Using the script in Appendix 1, annotate the extract below using Interactive Reading.

Mr. Jones, of the Manor Farm, had locked the hen-houses for the night, but was too drunk to remember to shut the pop-holes. With the ring of light from his lantern dancing from side to side, he lurched across the yard, kicked off his boots at the back door, drew himself a last glass of beer from the barrel in the scullery, and made his way up to bed, where Mrs. Jones was already snoring.

As soon as the light in the bedroom went out there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the farm buildings. Word had gone round during the day that Old Major, the prize Middle White boar, had had a strange dream on the previous night and wished to communicate it to the other animals. It had been agreed that they should all meet in the big barn as soon as Mr. Jones was safely out of the way. Old Major (so he was always called, though the name under which he had been exhibited was Willingdon Beauty) was so highly regarded on the farm that everyone was quite ready to lose an hour's sleep in order to hear what he had to say.

Interactive reading allows for explanation of the text to students, without resorting to Powerpoints or confusing worksheets. This is an easy method for getting students to 'notice' what we want them to.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a way to quickly check for understanding of predominantly fact based information during a lesson. If students have learnt and remembered that knowledge and get it right, then excellent! However, if an assessment uncovers common misconceptions it allows for immediate reteaching and can stop that misconception being remembered.

Mini Whiteboards

Mini whiteboards are a quick method of formative assessment. An example might be having just revised nouns, verbs, and adjectives with students, saying a word aloud and asking them to write which word class it belongs to. If all of the students get the answer right the teacher can move on. However if a couple of students get the answer wrong, some quick probing questions and a clear explanation can help. The same knowledge can be tested over a sequence of lessons to ensure that it is embedded.

Questioning

Ask comprehension questions aloud. Allow students time to think about their answer and use cold-calling to sample the room. A nice sequence might be 'tell me what… tell me why…'. For example: "Tell me what Macbeth says to the Witches when he visits them again. Tell me why Macbeth might have chosen to go and see the Witches at this point in the play."

Because/But/So

A favourite from *The Writing Revolution*, these three quick sentences can often help to identify what student know and understand and where their misconceptions might lie.

Task: Imagine that you have just taught Sonnet 18 to a year 8 class. How could you use these three formative assessment strategies to measure whether students have learnt what you wanted them to?

Hinge Questions

Hinge questions are targeted and specific question which assesses whether students are ready to move from the 'input' part of a lesson (the sections above) to the 'application' stage of the lesson.

- A hinge question is based on the important concept in a lesson that is critical for students to understand before you move on in the lesson.
- The question should fall about midway during the lesson.
- Every student must respond to the question within two minutes.
- You must be able to collect and interpret the responses from all students in 30 seconds
- You need to be clear on how many students you need to get the right answer in advance – 20-80% depending on how important the question is

For example, after teaching students Act 3 Scene 4 of Macbeth and having revised the elements of a tragic hero, a hinge question might be:

What is Macbeth's hamartia?

a) His arrogance

b) His ambition

c) His wife

d) His cowardice

If 80% of pupils get this right, then the teacher might decide to move on and catch the remaining 20% up in future lessons. However, if 80% get this wrong then there is little point in continuing with the lesson and so the teacher would reteach this element immediately.

Task: Consider the lessons below. What might make a good hinge question for each lesson?

A year 7 lesson exploring the creation of man in Greek mythology.	A year 8 lesson looking at Chapter 1 of Great Expectations.	A year 11 lesson exploring the theme of betrayal in Romeo and Juliet.

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Part Four: Embedding Writing

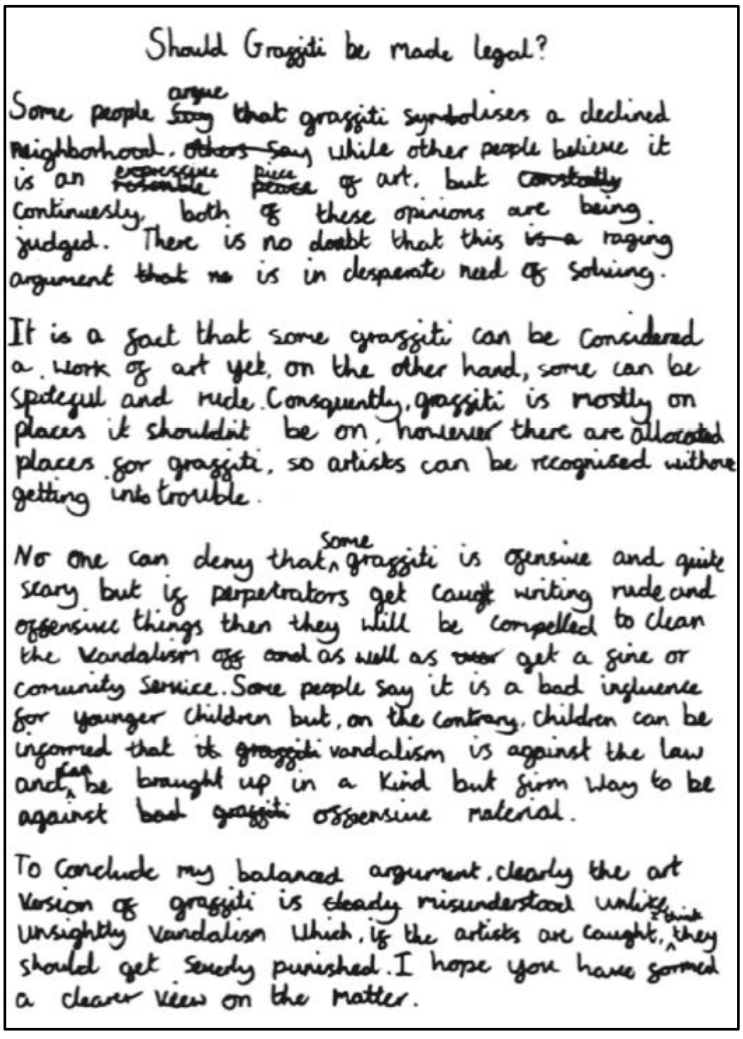
Question 1: What is 'good' writing? How do you know it when you see it?

What Students Can Write In Year 6

Opposite is an example of a piece of extended writing that a year 6 student wrote. This is deemed to be 'Working at the Expected Standard' by the Department for Education.

Reading through it, you'll notice that this child has quite skilfully expressed two sides of an argument, has used some reasonably good terminology (symbolises, for example), generally constructed the sentences accurately, and ordered the information in a logical way.

This was achieved by thorough writing instruction by the teacher, repeated across year 6 (and probably by the teachers before that too). The approach would have been clearly scaffolded and modelled to students, leaving no ambiguity around what a good piece of writing looks like. That scaffolding and modelling would then have been very slowly and gradually reduced, until the student had achieved a degree of automaticity in structuring writing this way.



Should Graffiti be made legal?

Some people argue ~~say~~ that graffiti symbolises a declined neighborhood. ~~Others~~ say while other people believe it is an ~~expressive~~ ~~notable~~ piece ~~peace~~ of art, but constantly continuesly, both of these opinions are being judged. There is no doubt that this ~~is~~ a raging argument that ~~no~~ is in desperate need of solving.

It is a fact that some graffiti can be considered a work of art yet, on the other hand, some can be spiteful and rude. Consequently, graffiti is mostly on places it shouldn't be on, however there are allocated places for graffiti, so artists can be recognised without getting into trouble.

No one can deny that some graffiti is offensive and quite scary but if perpetrators get caught writing rude and offensive things then they will be compelled to clean the vandalism off and as well as ~~over~~ get a fine or community service. Some people say it is a bad influence for younger children but, on the contrary, children can be informed that its ~~graffiti~~ vandalism is against the law and ~~for~~ be brought up in a kind but firm way to be against bad ~~graffiti~~ offensive material.

To conclude my balanced argument, clearly the art version of graffiti is steady misunderstood unlike ~~from~~ unsightly vandalism which, if the artists are caught, they should get speedy punished. I hope you have formed a clearer views on the matter.

A bug bear of English teachers is that 'they just can't write'. But this is probably fundamentally wrong: the vast majority of students can write and can write well, but aren't being supported through careful scaffolding and modelling to achieve the kind of writing we want them to produce.

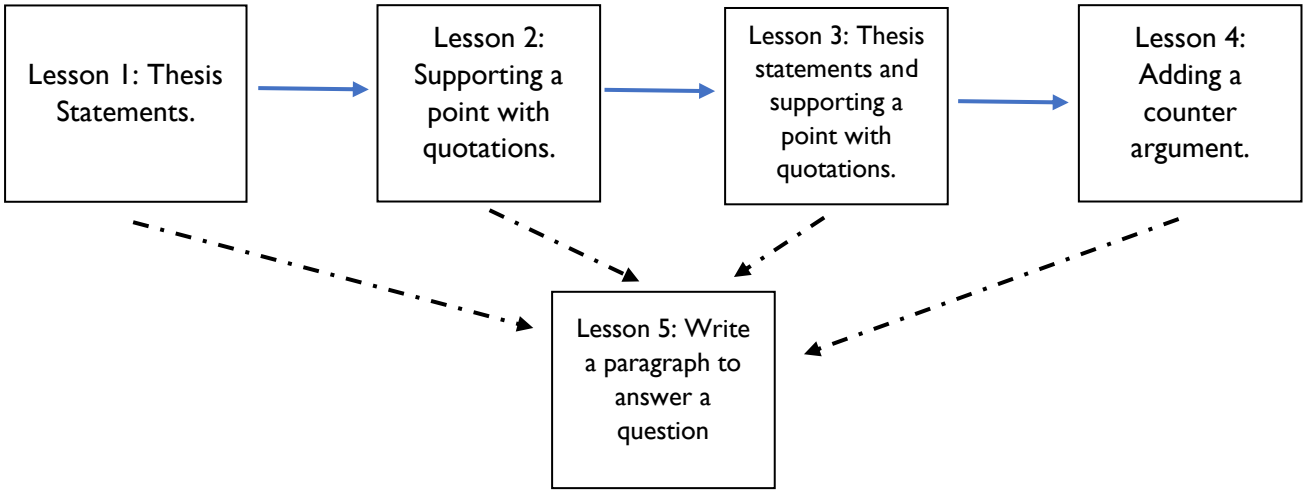
Question 2: Think about the last time you asked students to write a substantial answer (a paragraph or more) to something. How did you scaffold and model that writing?

When to Write

The ability to write, be it an essay or a narrative, is based on a secure knowledge of what makes good writing. The core knowledge of writing (sentence structure, syntax, grammar, spelling) can be taught explicitly. The hinterland knowledge of writing is accrued through study of good examples of writing across the curriculum.

In the last session, we looked at effective strategies for teaching inflexible knowledge to students. Writing is an exercise in making that knowledge more flexible and easier to apply to different scenarios and questions. Therefore, writing instruction should normally come towards the end of a lesson. As with everything, it has to be taught repeatedly in order for students to master the skill.

Students should write frequently, although this doesn't mean that they should be writing an essay every lesson. Small chunks of modelled writing in every lesson can culminate in a more independent, extended piece of writing in which you ask students to show off what they have learnt.



In the sequence above, we can see that the individual elements of writing are explicitly taught and modelled, following a linear pattern across the lessons. However, without that practice, the writing in lesson 5 would be of poor quality: the slow teaching of writing allows students to internalise the writing process, and produce something better when they apply everything together.

Talk for Writing

Getting students to discuss an answer before writing is excellent practice: it helps them to explore what they know and how to express their ideas before having to commit anything to paper. It is the first step in getting that inflexible knowledge to transform into flexible knowledge. But in order for it to be successful, the talk has to be purposeful. Turn-and-talk (or think-pair-share) is a great tool for exploring what students understand.

A poor example of a turn-and-talk exercise might be:

> *How does Dickens warn against exploitation of the working class in Great Expectations?*

This doesn't work because the scope is too wide: we aren't telling students what knowledge to draw on or what elements would make a god answer. A better script might be:

> *Label yourselves A or B.*
>
> *'A' students, you're going to think about how Pip is shown to be a vulnerable character in Great Expectations.*
>
> *'B' students, you're going to think about why Dickens shows that vulnerable characters are easily exploited in Great Expectations.*
>
> *You have 1 minute to think about what you want to tell your partner. Then you will have 1 minute each to say your ideas. Afterwards, I will pick four of you to tell me what your partner has said. Ready? Go.*

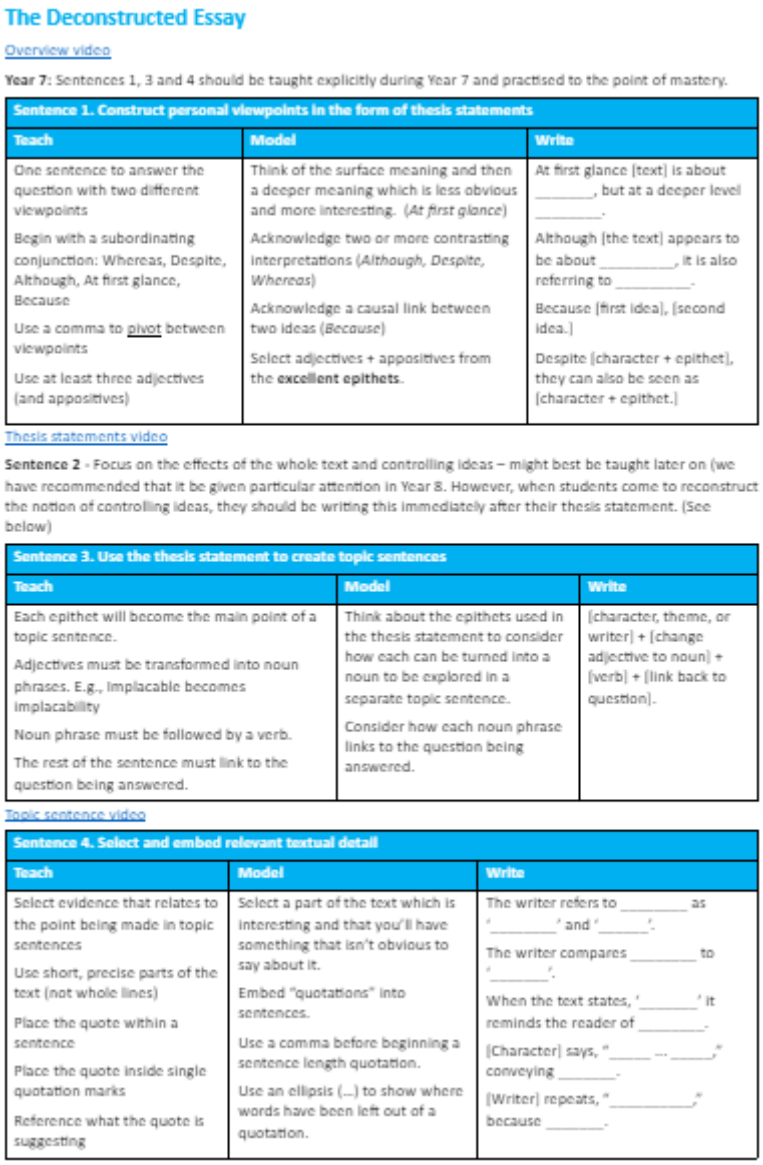
After listening to the feedback from students, the teacher would summarise and add in more detail where necessary, and write the important points of the discussion on the board. Students could then write a quick summary in their books so that they are able to recall the details.

Explicit Teaching

Question 3: Look back at Question 1. How many of the things you listed do you explicitly teach in your lessons?

The Deconstructed Essay sequence has broken down the elements of a good analytical essay into smaller, easily practised sentence types. This allows teachers to model – and students to write – accurate sentences before joining them up together.

This doesn't mean, however, and endless sequence of lessons of students just writing the same sentence over and over or copying from them board. A concept we can borrow from maths teaching is that of 'intelligent variation' – we give the students the building blocks and then ask students to adapt and evolve them. A sequence of lessons at the beginning of year 7 might look like this:



The Deconstructed Essay

Overview video

Year 7: Sentences 1, 3 and 4 should be taught explicitly during Year 7 and practised to the point of mastery.

Sentence 1. Construct personal viewpoints in the form of thesis statements		
Teach	**Model**	**Write**
One sentence to answer the question with two different viewpoints Begin with a subordinating conjunction: Whereas, Despite, Although, At first glance, Because Use a comma to pivot between viewpoints Use at least three adjectives (and appositives)	Think of the surface meaning and then a deeper meaning which is less obvious and more interesting. (*At first glance*) Acknowledge two or more contrasting interpretations (*Although, Despite, Whereas*) Acknowledge a causal link between two ideas (*Because*) Select adjectives + appositives from the **excellent epithets**.	At first glance [text] is about _____, but at a deeper level _____. Although [the text] appears to be about _____, it is also referring to _____. Because [first idea], [second idea.] Despite [character + epithet], they can also be seen as [character + epithet.]

Thesis statements video

Sentence 2 - Focus on the effects of the whole text and controlling ideas – might best be taught later on (we have recommended that it be given particular attention in Year 8. However, when students come to reconstruct the notion of controlling ideas, they should be writing this immediately after their thesis statement. (See below)

Sentence 3. Use the thesis statement to create topic sentences		
Teach	**Model**	**Write**
Each epithet will become the main point of a topic sentence. Adjectives must be transformed into noun phrases. E.g., implacable becomes implacability Noun phrase must be followed by a verb. The rest of the sentence must link to the question being answered.	Think about the epithets used in the thesis statement to consider how each can be turned into a noun to be explored in a separate topic sentence. Consider how each noun phrase links to the question being answered.	[character, theme, or writer] + [change adjective to noun] + [verb] + [link back to question].

Topic sentence video

Sentence 4. Select and embed relevant textual detail		
Teach	**Model**	**Write**
Select evidence that relates to the point being made in topic sentences Use short, precise parts of the text (not whole lines) Place the quote within a sentence Place the quote inside single quotation marks Reference what the quote is suggesting	Select a part of the text which is interesting and that you'll have something that isn't obvious to say about it. Embed "quotations" into sentences. Use a comma before beginning a sentence length quotation. Use an ellipsis (...) to show where words have been left out of a quotation.	The writer refers to _____ as '_____' and '_____'. The writer compares _____ to '_____'. When the text states, '_____' it reminds the reader of _____. [Character] says, "_____ ... _____," conveying _____. [Writer] repeats, "_____," because _____.

Lesson 1: Sentence type 1. Modelled exclusively by the teacher under the visualiser, students copy it into their books. The teacher annotates the sentence to explain the make up of it (ie, the subordinating conjunction, the comma) and students copy.

Lesson 2: Sentence type 1 is modelled and annotated under the visualiser. Students identify the key components. The teacher gives three questions which can be answered using this sentence type. The class work together to answer the first question and write a sentence; then in pairs to write the second sentence; then individually to write the third.

Lesson 3: The teacher poses a question that can be answered using sentence type 1. Students work individually to complete their sentence on a whiteboard, annotating the constituent parts. The teacher checks and chooses one as an exemplar. Students all write the sentence in their books. The sequence repeats with sentence type 2 in this lesson.

The important thing that is happening here is that students are writing frequently and are slowly being given more ownership, but at the same time the components of knowledge that go into building a coherent sentence are being modelled and checked continuously.

As students become adept at each sentence type, they can be expanded and used in extended writing.

Task: Using the model below, map out the teaching sequence for a year 7 group who are practising forming an argument, using thesis statements, and embedding quotations:

	Turn-and-Talk	Teacher Modelling	Annotations	Checks for Understanding	Independent Writing
Lesson 1					
Lesson 2					
Lesson 3					
Lesson 4					
Lesson 5					

I Do – We Do – You Do

This is as simple as it sounds! Breaking down writing into three stages of the teacher having complete control, then sharing that control, then ceding control completely to students. An example might be:

I do	Modelling writing a paragraph which answers an exam question. Narrating where you include certain elements and why you include them there. Annotating your own work to show students the 'secret' of good writing. Including mistakes on purpose and then narrating how to fix those mistakes.
We do	Write an example paragraph as a class. The teacher would begin by providing sentence stems and students would continue that sentence in pairs, before offering answers. Annotating by students to elucidate the ingredients of good writing. Students work together to fix a problem and explain why that solution is correct.
You do (but I'm watching)	Present students with a similar style question. Ask them to remind themselves of what they identified to be the elements of good writing and the common mistakes that were made. Ask them to begin writing and circulate the room, checking and correcting as students write.
You do (complete independence)	Present students with a similar style question. Offer no help during the writing process. Feedback to the class the next lesson after checking a sample of books.

Task: Imagine you are going to approach the following question with year 11. How would you plan the writing sequence?

How does Dickens present Scrooge as a character who changes?

I do	
We do	
You do (but I'm watching)	
You do (complete independence)	

Sequencing Writing

As with the broader view of curriculum planning, it is important that we plan out the sequence of writing instruction across the 5 years that students will be with us: where will they encounter each type of sentence in *The Deconstructed Essay*? Where will there be time to model writing? Where will we include points for students to write independently? The key is that we don't stop repeated teaching when students get something right the first time. We have to keep repeating it until it becomes something automatic.

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Part Five: Desirable Difficulty

Question 1: How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree				Agree
Students with SEN should learn a different curriculum to others	1	2	3	4	5
We shouldn't expect SEN students to be able to understand difficult things	1	2	3	4	5
It doesn't matter if SEN students don't get a 4, so long as they are happy	1	2	3	4	5
SEN students should be taught in the same way as other students	1	2	3	4	5
High academic expectations are good for teachers to hold for SEN students	1	2	3	4	5

Rising Tides Lift All Boats

Undoubtedly, English can be a difficult subject to teach. Regardless of special educational needs, what we expect students to be able to do in our lessons can prove a challenge to everyone.

Our job is firstly to acknowledge to ourselves and to our students that yes, things might seem difficult: but we want them to be otherwise nobody's learning very much. Secondly, we must make sure that the difficulty doesn't become overwhelming and that we make things seem achievable.

Previously, the idea of 'differentiation' often meant that expectations of students with SEN were lowered. This could have taken the form of students being taught a different curriculum from other pupils because those texts were deemed 'too difficult'; or worksheets which involve simple exercises such as information retrieval or gap-fills, but provide no actual teaching; or a view that watching a film version is ok for SEN students, as reading the book might be too hard. The EEF says of this type of differentiation:

> Differentiation is an important factor to consider when adapting teaching, but in practice, its definition is unclear1. It is helpful to draw a distinction between differentiating by outcomes and differentiated support2. Whilst providing focused support to children who are not making progress is recommended, creating a multitude of differentiated resources is not.
>
> The Early Career Framework, which entitles new teachers to continued training following their Initial Teacher Training, references "adaptive teaching", moving away from the term "differentiation" altogether, which is an important distinction to explore further. Having a full understanding of every child is extremely important in adaptive teaching. Time needs to be diverted to identifying reasons for learning struggles, not just the struggles themselves.

High quality teaching comprised of explicit instruction, modelling and scaffolding, regular retrieval practice, and a carefully broken down approach to difficult tasks benefit *everyone* in the school. But they benefit the lowest prior attainers and students with SEN most, because they allow everyone to achieve highly.

Question 2: Think of a class that you teach with a high proportion of students with SEN. How do you adapt your teaching to allow them to succeed?

An Example: Julius Caesar

Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are often deemed 'too difficult' for some students, with the beautifully rich texts being replaced by comic books, film versions, or in the case of sonnets, pop songs. While their peers are learning the canon of English literature and the skill and joy of deciphering and interpreting famous poems, some students are destined to know nothing more than *that* exchange across a fish tank and the lyrics from an angsty Taylor Swift song.

Below is a sequence of lessons from the introduction to a unit of work on Julius Caesar. 8En1 is a top set class with very few students with SEN. 8En8 is a small class comprised entirely of students with a range of SEN. Read through and compare the lesson outlines for both classes:

8En1	8En8
Recap: 5 questions about Shakespeare from previous study Interactive reading: Difference between a monarchy and republic. Discussion: Is Britain a monarchy, republic or something else? Writing: Summarise the difference between a republic and a monarchy.	Recap: 5 questions about Shakespeare from previous study What does it mean to be powerful? Who are powerful people in society? Vocabulary: Monarchy and republic Interactive reading: The Difference between monarchy and republic True/False questions about both Hinge question: What is a republic? Writing: Summarise the difference between a monarchy and a republic.
Recap: Monarchy and republic. Discussion: What do we know of the Roman Empire already? Interactive reading: Roman Empire Cold-calling comprehension questions	Recap: Monarchy and republic Interactive reading: Roman Empire True or false questions about the Roman Empire Because/But/So

Writing: Explain the Roman Empire to someone who has never studied it before.	Hinge: Was the Roman Empire a monarchy or a republic? Whiteboards: Reasons the Empire was a republic Writing: Why the Empire was a republic
Recap: Monarchy, republic, Roman Empire. Introduce context around Aristotle's ideas of tragedy – what can they remember? Interactive reading: Synopsis of *Julius Caesar* (without spoilers) Discussion: How does *Julius Caesar* conform to Aristotle's ideas of tragedy? Writing: Why is the play a tragedy?	Recap: Monarchy and republic True and false questions about the Roman Empire Interactive reading: Synopsis of *Julius Caesar* (without spoilers) Whiteboards: Finish the sentences about the synopsis of Julius Caesar Discussion: Why might the people of Rome have been scared of Caesar assuming the powers of a king? Hinge question: What were the people of Rome scared of Caesar becoming? Writing: Because/but/so…
Recap: Monarchy, republic, Roman Empire, plot Interactive reading: Act 1 Scene 1 (students take on the roles) 5 comprehension questions Discussion: What are Roman citizens afraid of? Analysis of quotations about Caesar. Writing – How do citizens react to Caesar?	Recap: Monarchy, republic, Roman Empire, Caesar Choral response: What were Roman citizens scared of Caesar becoming? Interactive reading: Act 1 Scene 1 (teacher reads, students have small parts if they wish) Summary of the scene, reinforce key points. Whiteboard quiz Vocabulary: Benevolent Discussion: Was Caesar benevolent in refusing the crown three times? Hinge Question: How do we know Caesar didn't want to become a King? Writing: Analytical paragraph about Caesar refusing the crown

Question 3: What do you notice about the similarity of the content between the two lesson outlines? How does teaching differ? Will students all know the same knowledge at the end of the sequence?

Using strategies we've already covered in previous sessions, the teacher who planned 8En8's lessons was able to make sure that those students were able to access the same diet of knowledge as their peers, without it becoming overwhelming. Regular testing and retrieval, carefully designed to ensure success, meant that those students were working hard and learning lots – and most importantly, not doing something 'easier' than other students in the year group.

The EEF suggests that there is a 3 step approach to adaptive teaching:

Assess	**Adjust**	**Adapt**
Where are the students? What do they need to know? What barriers are there?	Don't lower expectations, but adjust how a lesson is structured Adjust the sequence of knowledge to reinforce the core	Adapt what you already have to be inclusive to students Change the plan if necessary to make sure students learn

Question 4: Think of the last lesson you taught. How would you adjust and adapt it for a class with a significant proportion of student with SEN?

Teaching To The Top: Macbeth

Of course, desirable difficulty doesn't just apply to students with SEN. We want every student to leave school with a vast disciplinary knowledge. To do this, we often need to move beyond the text itself and start thinking about the bigger ideas in literature, whether this be concepts like feminism or elements of critical theory, or applying a particular critic's ideas to an extract.

The following is a summary of Janet Aldeman's theory around women and their presentation in Macbeth:

> In "Escaping the Matrix: The Construction of Masculinity in *Macbeth,*" Janet Adelman argues that Shakespeare's tragedy is intensely concerned with the reconstitution of the male subject, a reconstitution that can only take place "through the ruthless excision of all female presence" (259). Adelman describes the various strategies that the male characters employ in attempting to banish female power, in particular

maternal power. Macbeth's beheading and splitting open of Macdonwald is thus constructed as the ultimate feminization of the latter's character, and is the first and one of the most vivid examples of Macbeth's attempt at a “bloody rebirth, replacing the dangerous maternal origin through the violence of self-creation” (294). War and single combat become primary modes of this brutal subjugation of female power.

Adelman describes Lady Macbeth as the central monstrous woman of the text, a witch-like figure whose “unsexing” in the play functions on several different levels, first of all as “unnatural abrogation of her maternal function” (300). But Adelman makes clear that “latent within this image of unsexing is the horror of the maternal function itself (300). The image of “perverse nursing” becomes the trope by which Shakespeare fuses Lady Macbeth and the witches as purveyors of male castration fears.

Interestingly, Adelman locates the initial reconstitution of masculinity in the character of Duncan, whose quasi-androgynous status is introduced as a possible idea that could circumvent the threat of maternal power. However, the polarized crisis and natural threat that the play opens with makes it clear that Duncan has failed as a male fetish object. Shakespeare instead works dramaturgically to divest the female characters of their power and presence, resulting at the play's end in an all-male world. The character of Macduff at once functions as a denial and affirmation of Macbeth's male fantasy of “not of woman born,” as the androgynous subject of Duncan is reintroduced in Macduff, whose status as a powerful male agent is located at the site of his birth, where he was brutally ripped from this mother's womb. The threat of maternal power and the reproductive origin are directly related to the male characters' fear of their own mortality and subject-hood, and it is only through a culture of violence and a re-imagining of birth that a masculine idea can emerge. Adelman exposes the often overriding misogyny of Shakespeare's tragedies, and their apparent inability to envision a world where male and female principles coexist.

This represents a different way of thinking for year 11students: they have the core knowledge of plot, theme and character secure in their minds; they probably are au fait with analysis by now too. By introducing others’ ideas, we are challenging their schema and understanding and forcing them to make their knowledge flexible in order to apply this theory to the text, and argue whether they agree or disagree with it.

Task: Imagine you are teaching a second-set year 11 class, who have a good knowledge of Macbeth already. How would you sequence 3 lessons to explore Aldeman’s theory?

	Recap	Discussion	Reading	Comprehension	Writing	Other
Lesson 1						

Lesson 2						
Lesson 3						

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Part Six: Assessment

Question 1: Of the below, what can we infer from summative assessment and what can we infer from formative assessment?

	Summative Assessment	Formative Assessment
How well a child can remember something they learnt 3 lessons ago		
What misconceptions a student holds about a particular text		
How well a student has performed relative to other students		
Whether or not a child understands what a verb is in a sentence		
What a student needs to do improve the accuracy of their writing		

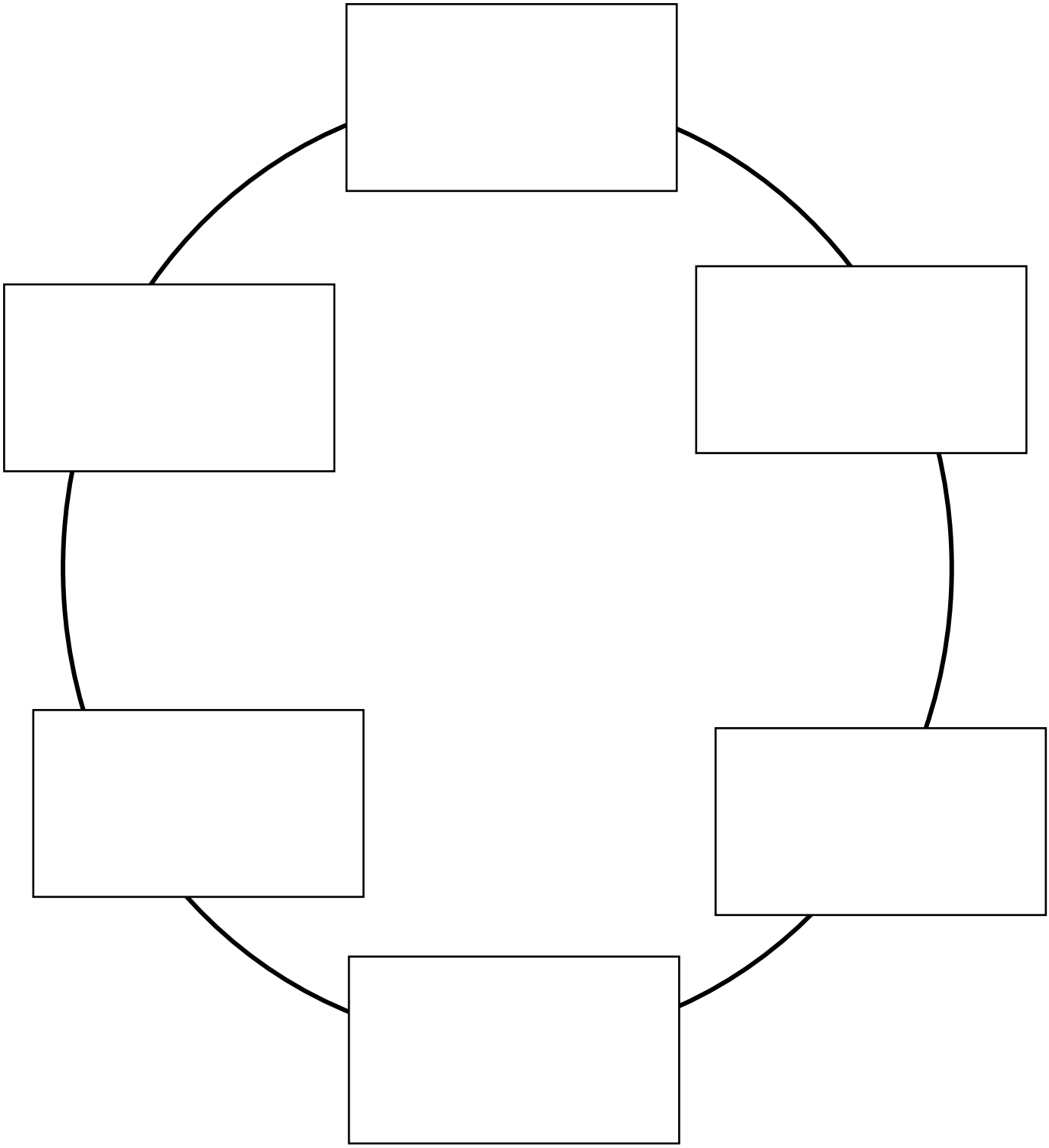
Assessment is an integral part of good teaching practice. After we've given students new knowledge and skills, we need to test how fluently they can be applied. Different types of assessment, however, should be used for different purposes:

Summative Assessment: The assessment at the end of a course of study, which results in a summary judgement or grade being awarded; like a GCSE exam. It tests the summation of knowledge and skills and the way they are applied.

Formative Assessment: Ongoing, frequent assessment *throughout* a course of study which results in feedback for improvement. It can involve mini-whiteboards, questioning, whole-class feedback, true or false, spelling tests, knowledge tests…

Formative assessment is the most powerful tool in a teacher's arsenal to ensure students are learning and improving. But so often the focus in schools is on summative assessment: how well has a child done in their end of unit test? What is their predicted grade after their year 10 mock? What does that data really show us? It is an indication of their performance at a moment in time, but it is difficult to draw meaningful inferences from one essay or a grade alone – we should be using the wealth of knowledge we accrue by performing regular formative assessments of our students.

Task: Think of a driving test – this is an example of a summative assessment that lots of people undertake. But lots of formative assessment has to happen before you get to the point that you're ready to take your test. In the boxes below, give some examples of formative assessment a driving instructor might conduct during the period of learning to drive:



Decoupling Formative and Summative Assessment

Michael Fordham explored the differences between the way that formative and summative assessment is used in the classroom. These are his conclusions:

> First, there is something to be gained by coaching pupils on performance in a task, but this is most likely to be useful when they already have a good knowledge of what is being learnt. Feedback given that is based on assessment criteria therefore has a place, but its place is limited, and it can be counter-productive.
>
> Secondly, diagnostic formative assessment is instead a matter of identifying what the causes of poor performance are, and then testing to see which of those causes is responsible for poor performance. These kinds of assessment will not necessarily look like the final performance: indeed, they might well look very different.

Essentially, Fordham argues that using the intended end-point of a sequence of study – an exam question, an essay task, a speech - as the method of teaching is flawed, since that end-point measures a collection of knowledge and skills that lie behind it and which need to be developed and honed individually and over the course of time.

Question: Think about a unit of study in year 10, which introduces students to the content of their GCSE Literature text. How much of the way this is taught resembles the end point of their GCSE? (Think about analysis, the type of questions you present, etc.)

Teaching To The Test

What's the implication for teaching, then? Moving away from using summative assessment as our dominant form of deciding whether a student is making progress or not is difficult. But, once we start to think about how formative assessment can empower students to improve, the benefit soon becomes clear.

Consider this question, from 2022's Language Paper 2:

0 2	You need to refer to **Source A** and **Source B** for this question. The writers in **Source A** and **Source B** stay in very different camping sites. Use details from **both** sources to write a summary of what you understand about the differences between the two camping sites. **[8 marks]**

It would be easy to think that all we have to do is train student in the art of summarising, because ultimately that's all the question wants. However, the processes which lie behind it are complex, and might include:

- Identifying similarities
- Identifying differences
- Making an inference
- Comparison
- Writing in a structured way
- Explaining ideas succinctly

All of these things can be assessed formatively, and we can help students to improve each individual aspect.

We might start by making the abstract ideas in the articles more explicit by using pictures:

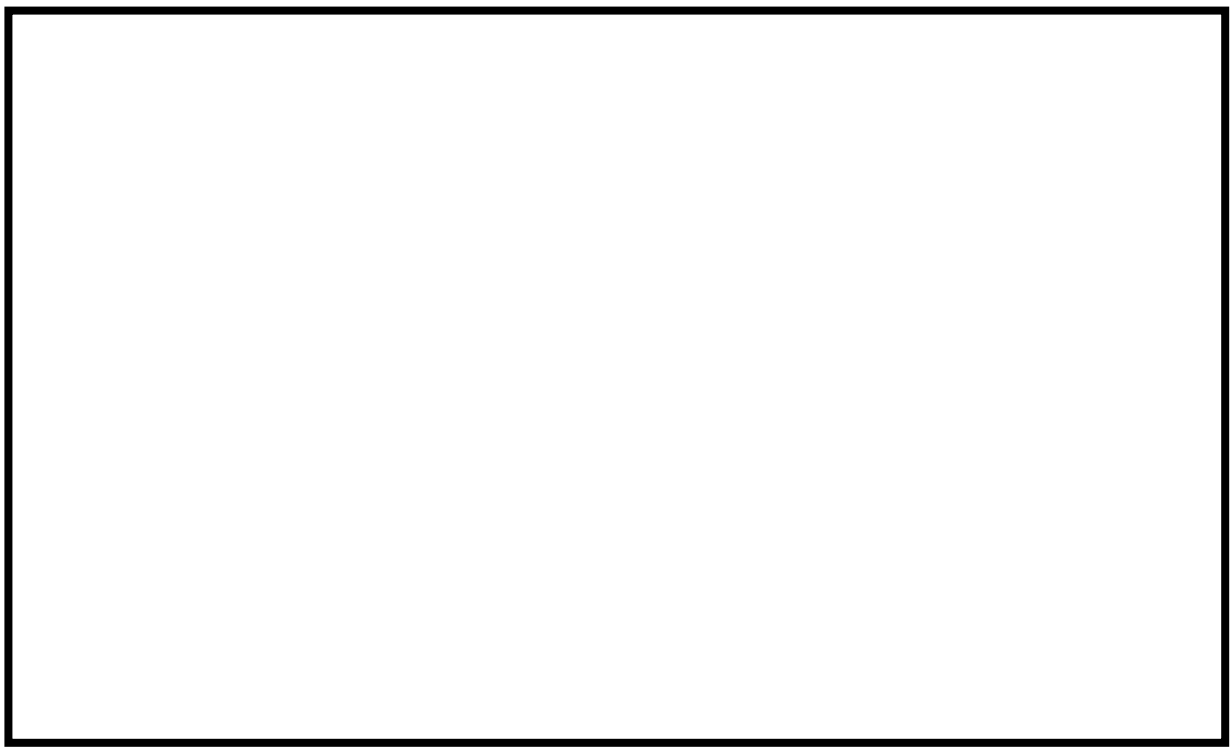
Then on whiteboards, get students to write down 3 ways in which they are similar. Checking their whiteboards is a quick formative assessment of whether they've succeeded. The same is true for differences.

Inference will need explicit teaching of using the word 'therefore': "The pictures are similar because they both have shelters, **therefore** it doesn't matter whether you're in a campsite or the woods, shelter must be important." A couple of practise rounds of this and some cold-calling is excellent formative assessment.

As the sequence continues and students get more and more secure with comparing pictures and drawing inferences, then we can transfer it into writing. Whiteboards again take away the risk of getting something wrong and mean students are likely to try. Then once pictures have become easy and the knowledge of how to perform this task is more flexible, we can start introducing short excerpts of text instead, gradually building up to the whole of the articles.

Although it might seem that this will take a really long time to teach something relatively simple, constant formative assessment means that we can be sure that students have gained autonomy in the underlying processes, and aren't merely putting on a performance of understanding.

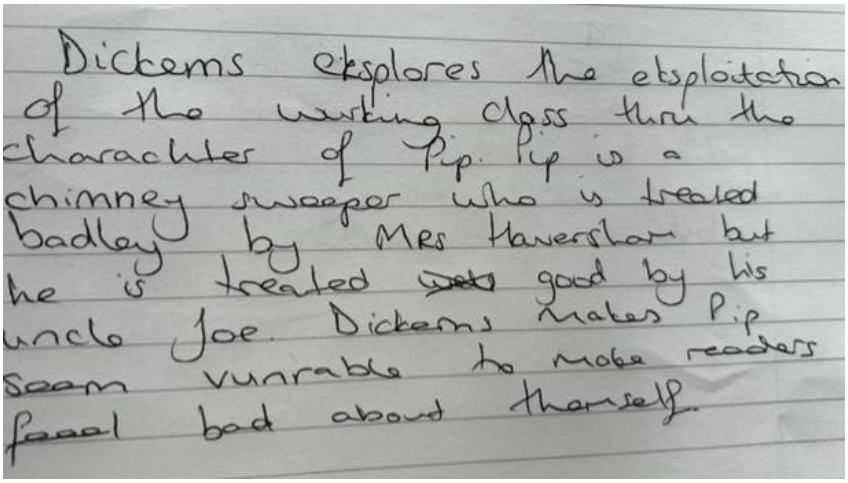
Task: Imagine that you are teaching students how to write an analytical paragraph about a poem. Break down the elements that students need to be secure with in order to write a good paragraph completely independently. How would you use formative assessment to check each of those elements?



Summative vs Formative

Finally, a scenario. You are at a parents evening and the parents of Josh A sit down in front of you and ask what Josh needs to do to improve in English. You have two available data points: the summative assessment data from the end of year 7, and a piece of writing you are able to formatively assess from a lesson yesterday.

Student	Reading	Writing	Overall Percentage
Abigail B	17	42	98
Colin P	14	48	95
Josh A	13	36	85
Robin G	18	41	90
Dapne R	21	40	96


Dickens eksplores the etsploitation of the working class thru the character of Pip. Pip is a chimney swaeper who is treated badley by Mrs Haversham but he is treated ~~bad~~ good by his uncle Joe. Dickens makes Pip seam vunrable to make readers feeal bad about thamself.

Question: Which will be more useful to understand what Josh A needs to do in order to improve? Why?

References

Fordham, M (2017) *Decoupling Summative and Formative Assessment.* https://clioetcetera.com/2017/11/02/decoupling-summative-and-formative-assessment/

Appendix 1: Interactive Reading Script

Parts in bold are read aloud to students. Parts in normal text are instructions for the teacher.

1. **Everybody show your reading ruler. Place your ruler on line 1 and follow along as I read the extract. Moving your reading ruler while I am reading lets me know that you're following along and paying attention.** Wait for everybody to comply, remind students who aren't following instructions.

2. Read the extract, checking that every student is moving their ruler as you

3. **When we read in class, this is how we'll do it. It will help you learn everything you need to learn and remember in what we've read. There's a special system to annotating a text, and we're going to practice it now. You'll need a pencil in one hand, your reading ruler in the other, and you'll have to listen to my instructions.**

4. **Firstly, we are going to read each paragraph individually before writing a short summary in the margin. Follow along with your reading ruler.**

5. Read paragraph 1. Underneath the visualiser, model writing a summary of the paragraph: *Mr Jones is outside, locking up the chicken coop.*

6. Read paragraph 2. Using paired discussion, ask students to come up with their own summary and write it on a whiteboard. Check what students have written. Choose the best and annotate it under the visualiser, asking students to do the same.

7. **Now we're going to annotate the text to better understand the meaning of it and how Orwell's language creates that meaning.**

> **a) An easy one to start us off. On line 1, underline the name of the farm.** Use choral response to check that students have identified 'Manor Farm'.
>
> **b) Next, on line two circle the adjective Orwell uses to describe Mr Jones.** Use choral response to check that students have circled 'drunk'.
>
> **c) Mr Jones is a farmer. So what might that adjective suggest about him? Turn and talk to the person next to you and explain what we might infer about Mr Jones.** Give students 30 seconds, use cold calling to get responses. Pursue the line of Mr Jones being irresponsible. **Well done, now I want you to draw two arrows from the word 'drunk' and next to each arrow, write one thing we can infer about Mr Jones.**
>
> **d) Between lines 3 and 5 there are two phrases which show Mr Jones is unsteady on his feet. Underline those phrases.** Make sure that students underline 'lantern dancing from side to side' and 'lurched across the yard'. **These suggest that Mr Jones shouldn't be in charge of animals. Why? Turn and talk to the person next to you to explain what you think.** Allow 30 seconds of

turn and talk. **Now, write next to those two phrases the reason that you think Mr Jones shouldn't be allowed to be in charge of animals.**

e) Tell your partner what an verb is. Allow 10 seconds turn and talk, cold call a student. Cold call to check understanding. Reinforce to the class. **Now tell your partner what a noun is.** Allow 10 seconds turn and talk, cold call a student. Cold call to check understanding. Reinforce to the class. **Sometimes, a word which is normally a verb acts as a noun in a sentence. This is called a gerund. What is it called?** Choral response. **Good. There is one gerund on line 8, it is 'stirring'. 'Stir' is the verb form, which means to cause excitement. 'Stirring' is the gerund form. Circle 'stirring and write next to it that it's a gerund.** Allow students time to do this. **On line 9 there is a second gerund. Circle what you think it is.** Cold call to check that students circled 'fluttering'. **What do these words suggest about the way the animals are feeling? Are they excited, scared, angry? How do you know? Talk to the person next to you and explain what you think.** Allow 30 seconds for turn and talk. Use cold call to gather ideas. **Excellent work. Now we'll annotate next to those adjectives that they show that 'stirring' shows there is a sense of excitement among the animals, and that 'fluttering' suggests that they are moving excitedly but quietly so as not to wake Mr Jones.**

f) The group of animals have a leader. The leader of the animals is a pig and he has two names. Underline firstly the name which he had been exhibited under. Choral response to check students have underlined 'Willingdon Beauty'. **Good, write next to it that this is his nickname. Next, underline his other name.** Choral response to check that students have underlined 'Old Major'. **What does the word 'Major' suggest about this pig? Turn and talk to the person next to you, then write your answer on your whiteboards. Hold them up!** Check for words like important, leader, military, etc. **Good. We're going to write next to 'Old Major' that it suggests he is important and respected by the other animals. We're going to draw another line from it and write that it reminds us of someone in the military.**

g) The last thing we're going to do is think about how we know Old Major is respected by the other animals. Read from line 15 onwards and circle a phrase which demonstrates how much the animals respect Old Major. Put your pens down when you're done. Allow 30 seconds, cold call to check what students have circled. Reward 'Highly regarded' or 'Lose an hour's sleep to listen to him…'. Ask students to explain how that shows respect. **Great, now we're going to write next to that phrase that 'This shows Old Major is respected because…'**