

Writing Fact Cards - Professional Development Activities

Punctuation

Based on evidence and reliable research, UKLA's free downloadable writing fact cards tell you all that you need to know about writing. You can use them for whole school development or in teacher training to look at the writing curriculum as a whole or to target specific features of writing. These Fact Cards are the perfect starting point for discussion leading to short, medium and long-term plans to develop writing.

Download the Fact Cards from http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_fact_cards_on_teaching_writing/

The following sessions are based on Fact Card 13. Suggestions are made for further reading to support planning for development.

Learning Punctuation

You will need several copies of Fact Card 13 for this Activity (photocopying is fine), small sets of any reading books relevant to each year group; a large sheet of paper for notes and the planning for the next unit of work.

It's always worth talking through what a group of staff or trainees see as the current picture so that you can identify as priorities for action or further reading. To establish common principles you may want to ask people who teach the same age group to work together or, if you are looking at issues of progression, you may want to have all key stage 1 or 2 teachers working together.

Ask colleagues in groups of two or three briefly to exchange ideas about how they discuss purpose and audience with their classes. Is this something that is done as a matter of routine? At what point do they talk about the effect that punctuation has on how a piece will be read? It would be worth jotting down good ideas to share with the group as a whole.

Using a book suitable for the year group they teach, ask the groups to look at how punctuation is used and what effect it has on meaning. Are there capital letters or exclamation marks for emphasis; long sentences with commas to extend description or evoke atmosphere; short sentences to create a sense of urgency?

Research shows that teaching punctuation in the context of meaning makes it much more likely that the children will learn it more effectively than just writing punctuation. Looking at the plans for the next unit of work, how might colleagues focus on punctuation to create meaning? One way is to ask the children to do just as the teachers have done and become 'punctuation detectives', working out how punctuation creates meaning in a whole range of text types. Decide on a date to meet again to share good ideas for teaching punctuation in the context of effective writing.

The UKLA publication *Teaching Grammar Effectively* by David Reedy and Eve Bearne is an excellent resource for teaching grammar in the context of meaning. There are plenty of ideas for teaching all the punctuation required in the National Curriculum for English in key stages 1 and 2.

Specially for trainees – reflective practice

To pinpoint what you know and what you'd like to find out more about

You can do this individually, but it's always a good idea to work with others to get discussion going and to share ideas about where to go to find out more.

How confident are you about using and teaching punctuation? If you're unsure about any particular punctuation mark, get hold of any novel, magazine, cookery book or manual and find examples of that punctuation mark in use. Work out a 'rule' for how and when to use it and what effect it has on meaning.

Using Fact Card 13 gather examples you have seen of teachers

- discussing purpose and audience with their classes
- talking about punctuation and its effect on meaning

You'll find the UKLA book *Teaching Grammar Effectively* by David Reedy and Eve Bearne very useful for ideas of how to teach punctuation in the context of meaning and for definitions of grammatical terminology.

As well as the references listed on the UKLA website on: http://www.ukla.org/news/new_ukla_fact_cards_on_teaching_writing/

There are also useful resources to support grammar teaching on the UKLA website.