Non-fiction: Explanation texts

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Innovating & Inspiring English

Key subject knowledge

- Includes information about causes, motives and reasons (how and why)
- Title shows what will be explained
- General opening to introduce the subject
- Sections/paragraphs are in a logical order
- Organisational devices may be used: *bullet points, headings, sub-headings*
- Closing paragraph to finish off
- Adverbs of time to support sequence: *first, then, next, finally*
- Adverbs and conjunctions for cause and effect: *therefore, because of, so, consequently*
- Written in present tense
- Written in third person
- Uses technical vocabulary
- Visuals could include diagrams, photographs and flow charts
- May have a glossary to support
- May add extra detail to interest the reader

Purpose for writing

- To explain how or why something happens/how something works

Ideas for publication

- Science experiment
- Encyclopaedia entry
- Article for a technical magazine
- Part of a non-fiction text

Consider carefully who your **audience** will be. This will inform how it is written, how much detail is needed and the level of formality

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Progression

The table below illustrates progression in the national curriculum and how it **could** be linked to the text type

Year 1	Talk about how and why things happen Read, follow and understand simple explanations and link these to their own experiences Discuss the significance of the title Say, compose a sentence/sequence of sentences that explains how and why Discuss writing with the teacher or other pupils Read writing out loud Use 'and' to join clauses Punctuate using capital letters and full stops *(other punctuation **could** be used: question marks, exclamation marks)* Use a capital letter for people, places, days of week and person pronoun, 'I' as needed Re-read to check for sense
Year 2	Discuss and give views on explanation writing: sequence, language, vocabulary, sense Write explanations about real events Have a purpose for writing explanations Before writing, say and note key ideas and appropriate vocabulary Punctuate using capital letter and full stops *(other punctuation **could** be used: exclamation marks, question marks, commas for lists and apostrophes for contraction and possession, commas in lists)* Write statements *(other sentence types **could** be used: questions, exclamations)* Conjunctions for cause and effect *(because, so that, etc.)* Adverbs of time to support sequence *(first, then, after that, etc.)* Evaluate writing for sense, correct verb form Proof-read for spelling, punctuation and grammar Read aloud with appropriate intonation to support meaning

Year 3/4	Read and discuss a variety of explanations that are structured in different ways and have different purposes *(Who is this for? Why might you read this?)* Explore and discuss vocabulary and grammar used Ask questions to develop understanding Discuss how language, structure and presentation support meaning Retrieve and record information from non-fiction Discuss and record ideas in advance of writing Use simple organisational devices such as headings and sub-headings Evaluate own and other's writing by suggesting improvements Suggest changes to grammar and vocabulary to improve consistency Proof-read for spelling and punctuation errors Read aloud with appropriate intonation controlling the tone and volume so that the meaning is clear	<u>Year 3 (Grammar specific)</u> Extend the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when, if, because, although Express time, place and cause using **conjunctions** [for example, *when, before, after, while, so, because*], **adverbs** [for example, *then, next, soon, therefore*], or **prepositions** [for example, *before, after, during, in, because of*] Introduction to paragraphs as a way to group related material Headings and sub-headings to aid presentation Use of the present perfect form of verbs instead of the simple past [for example, He has gone out to play contrasted with He went out to play]
		<u>Year 4 (Grammar specific)</u> Extend the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when, if, because, although Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases (e.g. *the teacher* expanded to: *the strict maths teacher with curly hair*) **Fronted adverbials** [for example, <u>Later that day</u>, I heard the bad news.] Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme Appropriate choice of **pronoun** or **noun** within and across **sentences** to aid cohesion and avoid repetition **Apostrophes** to mark **plural** possession [for example, *the girl's name, the girls' names*] Use of commas after **fronted adverbials**

Year 5/6	Read and discuss a wider range of explanations with different structures and purposes Recommend explanations, giving reasons for their choices: This one is clear because… Compare explanations: This one has… so that…, but this one doesn't… because… Summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas Identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning Identify audience and purpose for writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own Note initial ideas, drawing upon reading and research where necessary Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, giving attention to enhancing meaning Evaluate how effective their own and others' writing is Propose changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to clarify meaning Ensure consistent and correct use of tense throughout Ensure appropriate register for writing Proof-read for spelling and punctuation error	Year 5 (Grammar specific) Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun Indicating degrees of possibility using adverbs [for example, perhaps, surely] or modal verbs [for example, might, should, will, must] Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph [for example, then, after that, this, firstly] Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time [for example, later], place [for example, nearby] and number [for example, secondly] or tense choices [for example, he had seen her before] Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis Use of commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity Use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely Use the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause Year 6 (Grammar specific) The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, *find out – discover; ask for – request; go in – enter*] Use of the **passive** to affect the presentation of information in a **sentence** [for example, *I broke the window in the greenhouse* versus *The window in the greenhouse was broken (by me)*]. The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, the use of question tags: *He's your friend*, *isn't he?*, or the use of **subjunctive** forms such as *If I were* or *Were they to come* in some very formal writing and speech] Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of **cohesive devices**: repetition of a **word** or phrase, grammatical connections [for example, the use of **adverbials** such as *on the other hand*, *in contrast*, or *as a consequence*], and **ellipsis** Layout devices [for example, headings, sub-headings, columns, bullets, or tables, to structure text] Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent **clauses** [for example, *It's raining; I'm fed up*] Use of the colon to introduce a list and use of semi-colons within lists **Punctuation** of bullet points to list information How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity [for example, *man eating shark* versus *man-eating shark*, or *recover* versus *re-cover*] Use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely Use the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause

Explanation planning frames