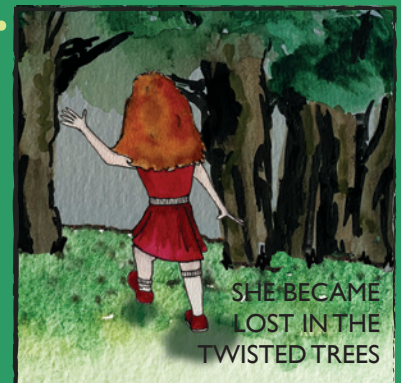


12 STEP DESCRIPTOSAURUS GUIDE TO CREATIVE WRITING

for all KS1 and KS2 primary English teachers

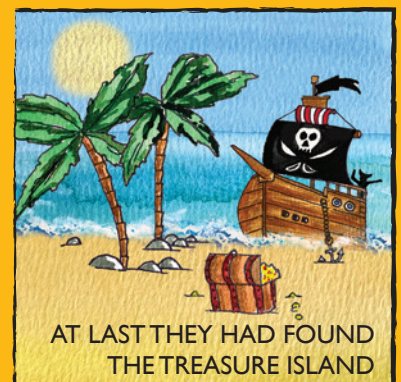
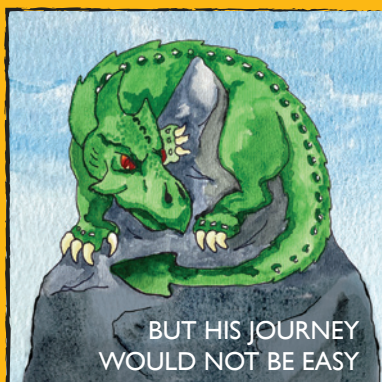


INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that high levels of literacy developed at a young age will greatly enhance the educational development of a child in all subject areas, not just English. To be able to develop these skills, children need contextualised vocabulary, frameworks, models and descriptive references delivered in an easy-to-use, flexible and engaging format.

This free guide shows how the explicit teaching of vocabulary can be done within the context of a writing task, where the pupils themselves are seeking to widen their repertoire rather than learning random new words chosen for them within the context of an artificial scenario. It will help younger pupils become enthusiastic and confident writers with the necessary building blocks to ensure that they will be ready, willing and able to participate fully in the writing process as they move onto the next stage.

It is taken from the latest book in the *Descriptosaurus* series that focuses specifically on the needs of younger children (aged 5-9). After reading it teachers will understand each of the 12 steps in the Descriptosaurus model and have a clear framework for developing language, grammar and punctuation.



How to use this book

PLANNING

Planning a piece of writing is an essential part of the writing process. This is often the skill that young pupils find the most difficult. However, if they are taught the skills and given an easy-to-use structure from an early age, planning will become a habit that will benefit them as they develop their writing skills and tackle other aspects of the writing process.

The templates are included in the Resource Section.

STEP 1: AN OUTLINE – BASED ON THE STORY OF RED RIDING HOOD

The first step is to develop a simple outline for the story by completing the table shown below:

TEMPLATE		EXAMPLE	
Setting:		Setting:	Forest
Hero/heroine:		Hero/heroine:	Red Riding Hood (RRH)
Villain:		Villain:	Wolf
Challenge:		Challenge:	To deliver basket to granny
Problem:		Problem:	Wolf was waiting for her in Granny's cottage
Result:		Result:	Rescued by woodcutter who cut off the wolf's head

STEP 2: BREAKING THE TEXT INTO SCENES

Breaking down a text into scenes is another helpful step for teaching planning skills. This means that the text is broken down into manageable bite-size chunks. It also assists with developing a beginning, middle and end structure.

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Identifying key words for setting, characters and events are also useful skills in developing writing and lead to exploring vocabulary description for each element.

TEMPLATE		EXAMPLE	
Scene:		Scene:	RRH enters the forest
Keywords:		Keywords:	RRH, Granny, forest, path, flowers, birds, squirrels, sunny

STEP 3: USING DESCRIPTOSaurus TO COLLECT VOCABULARY

Once the keywords and events have been identified, use the word bank template shown below to expand the planning.

1. List the nouns that would be found in the setting.
2. Take each noun and expand on description, which can be an adjective or a more specific noun, for example, flowers – bluebells, snowdrops, daffodils.
3. Verbs can be added between the text boxes.

SCENE 1: **Red Riding Hood** enters the **forest**

Keywords: Ruby, Granny, forest, path, flowers, birds, squirrels, sunny

NOUNS
Red Riding Hood
forest
trees
sky
branches
leaves
path
flowers
birds, magpies
squirrels



DESCRIPTION
excited
thick, deep
tall
blue, sunny
crooked
bright green
narrow, winding
singing
scampering

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SCENE 2: Red Riding Hood is lost in the forest

Keywords: Red Riding Hood, wolf, forest, path, dark, scared

NOUNS
Ruby
wolf
forest
trees, branches
roots
sky
twigs, thorns
path
sounds
animals
heart



DESCRIPTION
scared
big, bad
thick, dense
crooked
twisted
light, misty, dark
sharp, spiky
narrow, winding
snap, crack
wolf
jumped, thudded
shout, yell, scream

STEP 4: COLLECTING DESCRIPTIVE PHRASES

Use the phrases table to pick out favourite descriptive phrases to include in the text.

WORDS		PHRASES
NOUNS	DESCRIPTION	
Red Riding Hood, cloak, basket	Excited, skipping, humming Red, bread, cakes	Red cloak, black, curly hair, blue eyes
Forest, trees, branches, leaves, flowers	Thick, deep, tall	Tall, majestic trees Thick forest of enormous trees Huge treetops like green umbrellas
Paths	Narrow, winding	Narrow path wound ...

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Sky	Blue, sunny	Beautiful bright sunlight
Birds, animals	Squirrels, magpies	Scampering squirrels Flew from branch to branch
Sounds	Singing, rustling	Chattering magpies
Smells	Flowers, fruit	Juicy fruit, fresh flowers

STEP 5: SENTENCE PARTS AND STRUCTURE

This is an opportunity to practise identifying parts of speech and using the vocabulary and phrases in a simple sentence structure within the context of a creative piece of writing.

EXAMPLE 1

Step 1: Noun	What is your sentence about? (branches)
Step 2: Adjective	Describe it/them. (thick, twisted)
Step 3: Verb	What does it/they do? (spread)
Step 4: Prep. Phrase	Where or when? (across the path)
Step 5:	Create a complete sentence

The / thick, twisted / branches / spread / across the path.
Adjective(s) / noun / verb / prepositional phrase

EXAMPLE 2

Step 1: Noun	flowers
Step 2: Adjective(s)	yellow
Step 3: Verb	hung
Step 4: Prepositional phrase	from the branches
Step 5: Complete sentence	Yellow flowers hung from the branches.

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Noun:	branches	flowers	
Adjective:	thick, twisted	yellow	
Verb:	spread	hung	
Prepositional Phrase:	across the path	from the branches	
Sentence:	The thick, twisted branches spread across the path. Yellow flowers hung from the branches.		

STEP 6: INNOVATION

To embed the sentence structure, change each part of speech individually in a step-by-step process. This activity serves to reinforce knowledge of parts of speech and sentence structure in a written context as opposed to merely identifying the individual components in a series of de-contextualised sentences.

Exercise A**1. Change the noun:**

Thick, twisted **branches** spread across the path.

Thick, twisted **roots** spread across the path.

Thick, twisted _____ spread across the path.

2. Change the adjective(s):

Thick, twisted roots spread across the path.

Huge, crooked roots spread across the path.

_____ roots spread across the path.

3. Change the verb:

Huge, crooked roots **spread** across the path.

Huge, crooked roots **wiggled** across the path.

Huge, crooked roots _____ across the path.

4. Change the prepositional phrase:

Huge, crooked roots wiggled **across the path**.

Huge, crooked roots wiggled **over the ground**.

Huge, crooked roots wiggled _____

Exercise B**1. Change the noun:**

Yellow **catkins** hung from the trees.

Yellow **flowers** hung from the trees.

Yellow _____ hung from the trees.

2. Change the adjective(s):

Yellow flowers hung from the trees.

Long, crimson flowers hung from the trees.

_____ flowers hung from the trees.

3. Change the verb:

Long, crimson flowers **hung** from the trees.

Long, crimson flowers **dangled** from the trees.

Long, crimson flowers _____ from the trees.

4. Change the prepositional phrase:

Long, crimson flowers dangled **from the trees**.

Long, crimson flowers dangled **from the branches**.

Long, crimson flowers dangled _____.

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STEP 7: JOINING SENTENCES

1. Coordination

Investigation using sentence stems

Investigation is the key to developing knowledge and confidence in joining sentences. This can be done in the following ways:

- Use the main clause strips in Part 3 and investigate by placing each of the coordinating clauses in turn with the sentence stem and deciding which makes sense.
- The table below contains sentence stems and two alternative coordinating main clauses, (a) and (b). One of them clearly connects to the sentence stem. Pupils tick the correct main clause to complete the compound sentence.

Clause (1)	Conjunction	Clause (2)	√
It was a sunny day	and	a. the forest was covered in misty light.	
		b. the forest was covered in bright sunlight.	
Red Riding Hood was excited	and	a. skipped along the path.	
		b. crept along the path.	
Her mother warned Red Riding Hood not to wander off the path	but	a. she soon kept her promise.	
		b. she soon forgot her promise.	
The forest was full of the sound of birds singing	and	a. the rustle of leaves.	
		b. loud music.	
Red Riding Hood was sure she was being followed	and	a. she kept looking behind her.	
		b. she started singing.	
She heard the magpies chattering	but	a. she could not see them.	
		b. she stopped to watch.	
A twig snapped behind her	and	a. Red Riding Hood fell on her knees.	
		b. Red Riding Hood froze.	
Her heart thudded in her chest	but	a. she kept on walking.	
		b. she hid behind the bush.	

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Red Riding Hood began to shout	but	a. she was scared.	
		b. no-one heard her.	
Red Riding Hood turned around	and	a. closed her eyes.	
		b. her eyes were wide with shock.	

2. Subordination

Main Clause	Conjunction	Subordinate Clause	√
Red Riding Hood really wanted to pick bluebells for Granny	because	a. they made her sneeze.	
		b. they were her favourite flowers.	
Her mum had warned Red Riding Hood to stay on the path	because	a. it was a sunny day.	
		b. wolves and gnomes lived in the forest.	
She kept stumbling	because	a. it was too dark to see the roots across the path.	
		b. she fell over.	

STEP 8: JOINING SENTENCES (THE NEXT LEVEL):

Cut the two tables into strips. Take one table at a time and mix the main clauses. Pupils join the main clauses to form compound and complex sentences.

TABLE 1
SENTENCE STEMS AND CONJUNCTIONS
It was a sunny day and
The narrow path twisted through the forest and
Clusters of pink and white blossoms hung from the branches and
She spotted lots of dazzling bluebells and
Her mother had warned Red Riding Hood not to wander off the path, but
She was determined to pick some bluebells for Granny because
The forest was full of the sound of birds singing and
Magpies chattered from every tree and
Red Riding Hood watched the squirrels scampering up the trees and
Red Riding Hood set off back towards the main path, but

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MAIN CLAUSES

they were her favourite flowers.

flew from branch to branch to hide their stolen treasures.

was covered in petals like pink confetti.

she couldn't find her way back.

the path was covered in beautiful bright sunlight.

sitting on a branch to nibble their nuts.

the rustle of leaves as they flew from tree to tree.

she decided to pick some for her grandmother.

she soon forgot her promise.

vivid, lime green vines wound around the huge tree trunks.

TABLE 2

SENTENCE STEMS AND CONJUNCTIONS

She walked deeper and deeper into the forest **and**

Red Riding Hood kept stumbling over the tangle of twisted roots that wriggled across the path **because**

She was sure she was being followed **and**

Patches of misty light shone through the trees **and**

This part of the forest was very quiet, **so**

Red Riding Hood started to walk faster and faster, **but**

Red Riding Hood's heart was thudding in her chest **and**

Behind her, she heard the snap of a twig **and**

Red Riding Hood spun around **and**

MAIN CLAUSES

it was difficult to see them in the gloom.

every small sound made Red Riding Hood jump.

she began to shout louder and louder.

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the tangle of bushes and thorns grabbed at her coat and trousers.

made the crooked trees look like ghostly figures.

her eyes widened with horror.

she kept looking over her shoulder.

the trees were now knotted together to form an arch over her head.

she kept stopping to look over her shoulder.

Innovate

Complete the sentence stems with own main clauses.

Exercise 1: Combining the phrases into sentences and into a paragraph

Using *and*, *but*, *because* and *so* to develop sentence structure.

Complete the following sentence stems:

1. It was a sunny day **and** _____.
2. The narrow path twisted through the forest **and** _____.
3. Clusters of pink and white blossoms hung from the branches **and** _____.
4. Red Riding Hood spotted lots of bluebells, which were like a dazzling carpet of jewels **and** _____.
5. Her mother had warned Red Riding Hood not to wander off the path, **but** _____.
6. She was determined to pick some bluebells for Granny **because** _____.
7. The forest was full of the sound of birds singing **and** _____.
8. Magpies chattered from every tree **and** _____.
9. Red Riding Hood watched the squirrels scampering up the trees **and** _____.
10. Once she had collected a large bunch of bluebells, Red Riding Hood set off back towards the main path, **but** _____.
11. She had walked deeper and deeper into the forest **and** _____.
12. Red Riding Hood kept stumbling **because** _____.
13. She was sure she was being followed **and** _____.
14. Patches of misty light shone through the trees **and** _____.
15. This part of the forest was very quiet, **so** _____.
16. Red Riding Hood started to walk faster and faster, **but** _____.
17. Her heart was thudding in her chest, **but** _____.
18. Behind her, Red Riding Hood heard the snap of a twig **and** _____.
19. Red Riding Hood spun around **and** _____.
20. Beside her, there was a _____.

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STEP 9: STRETCHING THE SENTENCE

To add more detail to a sentence, practise 'stretching' it by asking the following questions:

STRETCHING A SENTENCE	
Who?	
Is doing What?	
When?	
Where?	
Why?	

STRETCHING A SENTENCE: Example	
Who?	Red Riding Hood
Is doing What?	turned back
When?	after she had picked lots of bluebells for Granny
Where?	towards the main path
Why?	because it was getting dark

STEP 10: DRAMA: DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING OF 'SHOW NOT TELL' AND USEFUL PHRASES

1. Act out the scene. What will you do with your hands? How will you stand? What will happen to your mouth and eyes? How will you move?
2. Make a list of phrases that describe the actor's actions and facial expressions.

STEP 11: REVISION: ADDING DETAIL TO IMPROVE THE DESCRIPTION

Brainstorming ideas to improve description:

1. What can Red Riding Hood see when she enters the forest?
2. What are the flowers like? What can she hear? What can she smell?
3. Describe the forest. Describe the weather.
4. How does Red Riding Hood feel?
5. Describe the forest as Red Riding Hood moves away from the path deeper into the forest.
6. What can she see? What can she hear?
7. Describe the moment she realises she is being followed by the wolf. How does she feel?
8. What does the wolf look like?

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STEP 12: MODELS: IDENTIFYING DESCRIPTION USING SIGHT, SOUND AND SMELL

Read the paragraph above and highlight phrases that:

- ★ Help to paint a vivid picture of the scene – sights, sounds, smells, touch.
- ★ Describe how Red Riding Hood was feeling.
- ★ Use a simile.
- ★ Contain noun phrases.
- ★ Contain actions or other verbs.
- ★ Reveal Red Riding Hood’s character.

SCENE 1: SENTENCES 1–10

It was a sunny day and the path was covered in beautiful bright sunlight. The narrow path twisted through the forest and was covered in petals like pink confetti. Clusters of pink and white blossoms hung from the branches, and vivid, lime green vines wound around the huge tree trunks. Red Riding Hood spotted lots of bluebells, which were like a dazzling carpet of jewels, and she decided to pick some for her grandmother. Her mother had warned Red Riding Hood not to wander off the path, but she soon forgot her promise. She was determined to pick some bluebells for Granny because they were her favourite flowers. The forest was full of the sound of birds singing and the rustle of leaves as they flew from tree to tree. Magpies chattered from every tree and flitted from branch to branch to hide their stolen treasures. Red Riding Hood kept stopping to watch the squirrels scampering up the trees and then sitting on a branch to nibble the nuts clutched between their tiny fingers. Finally, she set off back towards the main path, but she couldn’t find her way back. She was lost!

SCENE 2: SENTENCES 11–20

Red Riding Hood walked deeper and deeper into the forest and the trees here formed a dark arch over her head. She kept stumbling because a tangle of twisted roots wriggled across the path and it was difficult to see them in the gloom. She was sure she was being followed and she kept stopping to look over her shoulder. Patches of misty light shone through the trees and made the crooked trees look like ghostly figures. This part of the forest was very quiet, so every small sound made Red Riding Hood jump. She started to walk faster and faster, but the tangle of bushes and thorns grabbed at her coat and trousers. Red Riding Hood’s heart was thudding in her chest and she kept looking over her shoulder. She heard the snap of a twig and froze. Then, she began to shout louder and louder, but no one heard her. All of a sudden, Red Riding Hood spun around, and her eyes widened with horror. Beside her, there was a wolf.

Descriptosaurus Story Writing provides a resource for younger pupils that will not only expand their descriptive vocabulary but also provide them with models that demonstrate 'language in action,' in a genre that is popular and familiar to children aged 5–9. Providing the essential building blocks to create a narrative text, alongside contextualised banks of vocabulary, phrases and sentence types, this book is designed to provide young pupils with the opportunity to see how a text is constructed using words, phrases and sentences. This exciting new resource:

- Provides vocabulary for setting, character, 'show not tell' and sensory descriptions with clearly defined progression
- Demonstrates how to use this vocabulary in different contexts using set sentence structures
- Offers four model narratives written in different styles and levels of difficulty
- Presents modelled sentences with exercises so that pupils can expand their vocabulary
- Enables young pupils to develop their understanding of how sentences are constructed and become more confident about using these skills in their own story writing.

This is an ideal resource to dramatically improve children's knowledge and understanding of language, grammar and punctuation for all KS1 and KS2 primary English teachers, literacy coordinators and parents. This easily accessible guide will also be helpful for teachers to use in preparation for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) alongside a creative writing task.

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