# A Guide to Text Types:

## Narrative, Non-fiction and poetry

*Overview of structure, language features and key knowledge*

# Text Types

Information on a range of text types for literacy is contained here. The text types are broken into three genres: Narrative, Non- fiction and poetry. Each of these genres has then been sub-divided into specific text types such as adventure, explanation or a specific form of poetry, e.g. haiku.

| 1. Narrative | 2. Non-fiction | 3. Poetry |
|---|---|---|
| Adventure<br>Mystery<br>Science Fiction<br>Fantasy<br>Historical fiction<br>Contemporary fiction<br>Dilemma Stories<br>Dialogue, Play scripts, film narratives<br>Myths<br>Legends<br>Fairy tales<br>Fables<br>Traditional tales guidance | Discussion texts<br>Explanatory texts<br>Instructional texts<br>Persuasion texts<br>Non-chronological reports<br>Recounts | Free verse<br>Visual poems<br>Structured poems |

# Narrative

Narrative is central to children's learning. They use it as a tool to help them organise their ideas and to explore new ideas and experiences. Composing stories, whether told or written, involves a set of skills and authorial knowledge but is also an essential means for children to express themselves creatively and imaginatively.

The range of narrative that children will experience and create is very wide. Many powerful narratives are told using only images. ICT texts tell stories using interactive combinations of words, images and sounds. Narrative poems such as ballads tell stories and often include most of the generic features of narrative. Narrative texts can be fiction or non-fiction. A single text can include a range of text types, such as when a story is told with the addition of diary entries, letters or email texts.

**Purpose:**
The essential purpose of narrative is to tell a story, but the detailed purpose may vary according to genre. For example, the purpose of a myth is often to explain a natural phenomenon and a legend is often intended to pass on cultural traditions or beliefs.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| The most common structure is:<br><br>▪ an opening that establishes setting and introduces characters;<br>▪ a complication and resulting events;<br>▪ a resolution/ending.<br><br><br>Effective writers are not constrained by predictable narrative structure. Authors and storytellers often modify or adapt a generic structure, e.g. changing chronology by not telling the events in order (time shifts, flashbacks, backtracking). Children can add these less predictable narrative structures to their own writing repertoires. | Language features vary in different narrative genres.<br><br>**Common features:**<br>▪ presented in spoken or written form;<br>▪ may be augmented/supplemented/partly presented using images (such as illustrations) or interactive/multimedia elements (such as hypertext/ images/ video/ audio);<br>▪ told/written in first or third person (I, we, she, it, they);<br>▪ told/written in past tense (sometimes in present tense);<br>▪ chronological (plot or content have a chronology of events that happened in a particular order);<br>▪ main participants are characters with recognisable qualities, often stereotypical and contrasting (hero/villain);<br>▪ typical characters, settings and events are used in each genre;<br>▪ connectives are widely used to move the narrative along and to affect the reader/listener:<br>  ➢ to signal time (later that day, once);<br>  ➢ to move the setting (meanwhile back at the cave, on the other side of the forest);<br>  ➢ to surprise or create suspense (suddenly, without warning). | ▪ Decide on your intended style and impact.<br>▪ Plan before writing/telling to organise chronology and ensure main events lead towards the ending.<br>▪ Visualise the setting and main characters to help you describe a few key details.<br>▪ Rehearse sentences while writing to assess their effectiveness and the way they work together.<br>▪ Find some different ways of telling what characters think and feel, e.g. describe what they did or said.<br>▪ Use some strategies to connect with the reader/listener e.g. use repetition of the same phrase or the same language pattern; ask them a question or refer to the reader as 'you'. What on earth was happening? Who do you think it was?<br>▪ Show how the main character has changed or moved on in some way at the end.<br>▪ Read or listen to the whole text as if you are the reader/listener or try it out on someone else: check that it makes sense and change anything that could work better. |

## Specific features and structures of some narrative types

Children write many different types of narrative through Key Stages 1 and 2. Although most types share a common purpose (to tell a story in some way) there is specific knowledge children need in order to write particular narrative text types. While there is often a lot of overlap (for example, between myths and legends) it is helpful to group types of narrative to support planning for range and progression. Each unit of work in the Primary Framework (Fiction, Narrative, plays and scripts) provides suggestions for teaching the writing of specific forms or features of narrative. For example: genre (traditional tales), structure (short stories with flashbacks and extended narrative), content (stories which raise issues and dilemmas), settings (stories with familiar settings, historical settings, imaginary worlds) and style (older literature, significant authors).

# Narrative - Adventure

**Purpose:**
To entertain.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| Typically a recount or retelling of a series of exciting events leading to a high impact resolution. The most common structure is a chronological narrative. Building excitement as the hero faces and overcomes adversity is an important element, so more complex structures such as flashbacks are less common. Archetypical characters are the norm and much of the building tension comes from the reader predicting who or what represents the threat (the villain) and what is likely to go wrong for the hero.<br><br>Longer narratives build tension in waves, with one problem after another accelerating the adventure in several sections or chapters, with the high point of tension near the end.<br><br>The story can take place in any setting where there is the potential for adventure through a danger or threat.<br><br>ICT 'adventure' texts often employ different structures, allowing the user to select different routes through the order of events, sometimes with different resolutions that depend on the choices made by the reader. | An effective blend of action, dialogue and description develops archetypical characters who the reader will care about, at the same time as moving the plot along at an exciting pace.<br><br>Description adds to the sense of adventure by heightening the reader's awareness, e.g. a sense of potential danger (The cliffs were high and jagged ...) or dropping clues to encourage involvement through prediction (The captain welcomed them aboard but his eyes were narrow and cruel-looking ...)<br><br>Dialogue is an element of characterisation but is used more to advance the action than to explore a character's feelings or motivation. "What was that noise? Did you hear it too?"<br><br>Language usually has a cinematic quality, with powerful, evocative vocabulary and strong, varied verbs for action scenes. (He leaped from his horse, charged into the banquet hall and hurtled himself onto the table where the prince was devouring a chicken.) | Create characters your readers will have a strong opinion about. Make the reader like your hero so they want him/her to succeed.<br><br>Create a villain that is a good match for the hero, someone the reader definitely doesn't want to win in the end. Don't forget that villains we dislike most often work in subtle ways. They do sneaky, mean things that they might just get away with.<br><br>Keep the plot moving but vary the pace:<br><ul><li>use fast-moving action to create excitement at a high point;</li><li>slow things down a little with description or dialogue when you want to build tension and create suspense.</li></ul><br>Can you surprise the reader at the end? Perhaps someone who seemed insignificant saves the day and turns out to be a real hero, or perhaps a character that appeared good and helpful turns out to be two-faced. |

# Narrative - Mystery

| Purpose: To intrigue and entertain. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Structure is often chronological, even in a longer narrative, but complex structural techniques are sometimes used for effect. Different structures can be used for layering of information or drip-feeding facts to build up a full picture for the reader, e.g. using flashbacks to fill in information needed that wasn't provided earlier in the story or organising sections so they tell the story both before and after a key event. Knowing what is going to happen and then reading about it happening can add to the suspense.<br><br>Settings are often places the main character is unfamiliar with. Different cultures often share views about the kinds of settings that seem mysterious (deep, dark forests, old, uninhabited places, lonely rural landscapes). Other settings can be very familiar places (school, home, the local town) but with an added ingredient that triggers the mystery (a stranger arrives in town, a parcel arrives, people begin acting strangely, something unusual happens). | The narrator uses questions to exaggerate the mystery, e.g. Who could it be? Why had the car suddenly stopped?<br><br>Language is used to intensify the mystery, particularly adjectives and adverbials. Some typical vocabulary is associated with this narrative type (puzzling, strange, peculiar, baffling, weird, odd, secretive, unexplained, bewildering).<br><br>Use of pronouns to create mystery by avoiding naming or defining characters, especially when they first appear in the story. (First line: He climbed in through the window on the stroke of midnight. The wind howled and there was no moon.)<br><br>Use of the pronoun 'it' to suggest a non-human or mysterious character. (And that's when I saw it, creeping carefully along behind the hedge. It wasn't much taller than me.) | Use questions to highlight key moments as the mystery deepens (A sudden noise! What could be making that low mumbling sound?).<br><br>Decide what the mystery is before you begin writing and introduce it fairly soon so the reader wants to find out the solution.<br><br>Keep readers interested by hinting and suggesting but don't give too much away too soon. Drop clues and puzzles for the reader to pick up and think about along the way.<br><br>Make adventurous word choices to make your reader really think about what you're describing.<br><br>Don't just say someone is 'mysterious', make them seem mysterious by describing them, their actions or what they say.<br><br>Don't describe everything in detail. What is left out can often be scarier than what is described. |

# Narrative – Science Fiction

| Purpose: | | |
|---|---|---|
| To entertain and, sometimes, to speculate about the future. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Can use any of the varied structures typical of narrative. The setting is often a time in the future so may use structures that play with the time sequence, such as flashbacks and time travel.<br><br>Science Fiction typically includes detail about the way that people might live in the future, predicting in a creative and imaginative way how technology might advance. | The plot usually includes adventure so action is fast-moving.<br><br>Where futuristic characters are created, dialogue may use unusual forms and vocabulary, or even alternative languages.<br><br>Description is important to convey imagined settings, technology, processes and characters. | Even if the story is set in the future, you still need to create a setting, characters and plot that readers can believe possible.<br><br>Make sure you have main characters the reader will care about (e.g. a likeable hero) even if the characters are non-human.<br><br>Use description carefully when you want your reader to imagine something they have never seen. |

# Narrative - Fantasy

| Purpose: | | |
|---|---|---|
| To entertain and to fuel the imagination. | | |

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| May simply be a basic chronological narrative set in a fantasy world but some fantasy narratives extend the 'fantastic' element to the structure as well. For example, the story may play with the concept of time so that characters find themselves moving through time in a different way.<br><br>Some fantasy structures focus on character development or description of setting at the expense of plot so that the actual order of events becomes less important or even impossible to follow. | Description is very important because fantasy uses settings (and often characters) that must be imagined by the reader.<br><br>Imagery plays an important role in helping to describe places and things the reader has never seen. | Choose adjectives carefully to describe the places and things in the story.<br><br>Use similes to help the reader imagine what you are describing more clearly. (The glass castle was as big as a football field and as tall as a skyscraper. It's clear walls sparkled like blocks of ice in the sun.)<br><br>Don't make everything so fantastic that it is unbelievable.<br><br>Make what happens as interesting and detailed as the setting where it happens. Don't get so involved in creating amazing places and characters that you forget to tell a good story about what happens to them. |

# Narrative – Historical fiction

| Purpose: | | |
|---|---|---|
| To entertain and, sometimes, to inform. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| The narrative is about something that has already happened in the past so a series of events is usually the underlying structure.<br><br>The writer can adapt the structure to achieve a specific effect. For example, the story can begin with a main character looking back and reflecting on the past (I was just a lad then. Let me tell you what happened …).<br><br>Sometimes, a historical narrative begins with the final event and then goes on to explain what led up to that by moving back in time to tell the whole story.<br><br>Historical fiction requires a historical setting but can also be an adventure or a mystery.<br><br>It can also give a fictionalised account of real events or additional, fictional detail to things that really happened. | Historical settings need detail to make them authentic and to give important 'mapping' clues to the reader. When was this happening? Whereabouts is this story taking place?<br><br>Appropriate archaic language is used, including old-fashioned words that have fallen out of usage, e.g. Let me carry thy basket, old dame.<br><br>It can also include models of sentence grammar no longer commonly or informally used, e.g. That which you seek, you shall find in the forest. | Include accurate historical detail to create the setting (The winter of 1509 was bitterly cold and many poor country folk were starving) or let the reader work it out (The young prince had just been crowned King Henry VIII when a country boy called Tom arrived in London).<br><br>Use the right kind of old-fashioned language when characters speak to one another.<br><br>Description is important for the setting and characters but you can add historical detail in different ways to give variety:<br><br>Description: The little girl was wearing a long cloak and woollen hood.<br><br>Action: He threw his sword to the floor and rushed down the stone spiral staircase.<br><br>Dialogue: Wait, I'll get a candle to light our way. |

# Narrative – Contemporary fiction

| Purpose: |
| --- |
| To entertain and, sometimes, to create empathy with familiar characters. |

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Contemporary settings are often familiar ones.<br><br>This type of narrative includes school stories, things that happen in the home or in local settings that children either know themselves or recognise. Stories therefore often reflect children's own experiences, are often personal and structured as a recount. | Dialogue plays an important part in the characterisation.<br><br>Characters tend to use language familiar to children.<br><br>Contemporary language features include the informal dialogue children use themselves, as well as familiar phrases from adults at home and school (Don't let me tell you again!) | Hero and villain characters are more difficult to create because the characters look like ordinary people, not superheroes or monsters. You can still create strong characters because they aren't always what they seem on the outside – a nervous little boy might turn out to be a brave hero and a smiling old lady might not really be a kind character.<br><br>You don't need to write everything that is said to tell the story. Make sure you only use dialogue because it helps to create a character, provides information for the reader or moves the action along. |

# Narrative – Stories which raise dilemmas

| Purpose: To entertain and to explore issues or dilemmas. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| The strength of the story often depends on a character facing a difficult (or seemingly impossible) dilemma, with a limited choice of actions. A strong, simple story structure usually leads the character to the dilemma quite quickly and then makes the reader wait to find out how it is dealt with. | Characterisation is fundamental. The main characters are often well-established from the beginning with additional detail such as background, history or interests included. The reader understands why a character feels the way they do. | Make sure the dilemma or issue to be faced is a really tricky one to deal with. If there is no easy or obvious answer, it will be even more interesting to read what your main character decides to do. |
| The narrative makes the waiting interesting by adding to the suspense, for example by increasing the complexity or gravity of the dilemma or by threatening the right/chosen course of action. (The main character has decided to apologise just in time and is on the way to do so but has an accident and is taken to hospital - soon it will be too late.)<br><br>Most forms of narrative can include stories which raise dilemmas. | Key characters also develop and change over time, usually as a result of the events that take place in the story and particularly as a result of the dilemma they face and their resulting actions.<br><br>Description, action and dialogue are all important for developing and deepening character and showing both why and how someone has changed. | If characters change during the story, decide how to show this.<br><br>Do they behave differently? Do they speak differently? |

# Narrative – Traditional tales

Traditional or 'folk' tales include myths, legends, fables and fairy tales. Often originating in the oral tradition, examples exist in most cultures, providing a rich, culturally diverse resource for children's reading and writing. Many of these stories served an original purpose of passing on traditional knowledge or sharing cultural beliefs.

They tend to have themes that deal with life's important issues and their narrative structures are often based on a quest, a journey or a series of trials and forfeits.

Characters usually represent the archetypical opposites of good and evil, hero and villain, strong and weak or wise and foolish.

The style of traditional stories usually retains links with their origins in oral storytelling: rich, evocative vocabulary, repetition and patterned language, and strong use of imagery. When written in a traditional style, they also use some archaic language forms and vocabulary. Many regional stories include localised vocabulary and dialect forms.

Different types of traditional tales tend to have some narrative features (purpose, characters, language, style, structure) of their own.

# Narrative-Myths

**Purpose:**
To provide a fictional explanation for natural phenomena. Many cultures use myths to explain the world and its mysteries by handing them down from one generation to the next. Myths can also pass on cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs and traditions.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| The plot is often based on a long and dangerous journey, a quest or a series of trials for the hero.<br><br>The plot usually includes incredible or miraculous events, where characters behave in superhuman ways using unusual powers or with the help of superhuman beings.<br><br>Myths are often much longer texts than other traditional stories (apart from some legends) especially in their original form. They provide a very useful contrast with shorter forms of traditional narrative such as fables. | Rich vocabulary evoking the power and splendour of the characters and settings: Hercules hurled the glittering spear with all the strength of a mighty army.<br><br>Use of imagery to help the reader imagine. Simile is used widely to help convey grand settings and describe awe-inspiring characters: Thor's hammer was as heavy as a mountain.<br><br>Vivid description of characters and settings. Fast-moving narration of action to keep the drama moving along. Myths tend to make less use of dialogue and repetition than some other types of traditional story.<br><br>Myths often provide good examples of the use of symbols: Theseus unwinds a thread behind him in the Minotaur's den – a thread could be seen as a symbol of his link between the real world of humans and the supernatural world of the gods. | Make the characters larger than life by giving them supernatural powers or strong characteristics like courage and wisdom.<br><br>Create a negative character who is the opposite of your hero: good and evil, brave and cowardly, strong and weak.<br><br>Consider including a character who is a 'trickster' to add to the fun or to create twists in the plot.<br><br>Choose a setting that gives a dramatic backdrop for the action: (a huge, dense forest, a mountain shrouded in icy fog or a wide, sun-baked desert).<br><br>Weave description, dialogue and action together but don't slow down the story with too much detail about who said what. |

# Narrative-Legends

| Purpose: | | |
|---|---|---|
| To provide information about the way particular people lived, and what they believed. Legends also help us to reflect on our own lives because they often deal with issues that are cross-cultural and relevant today. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Structure is usually chronological, with one episode told after another, for example as the phases of a journey or the stages of an ongoing battle. Some legends tell the whole life story of their hero as a series of linked episodes; each one may be a story in its own right<br><br>Common structures include:<br><br>▪ chronological episodes;<br>▪ journey stories;<br>▪ sequential stories;<br>▪ life stories and community histories. | Language features are very similar to those of myths:<br><br>▪ rich, evocative vocabulary;<br>▪ memorable language use;<br>▪ use of rhythm and repetition techniques;<br>▪ formulaic openings and endings;<br>▪ imagery: simile, metaphor and symbolism.<br><br>Legends written in a traditional style often use more literary language than fairy tales or fables. Modern versions such as twenty-first century retellings or new legends may use more contemporary, informal language. | Work out how the story will tell of a struggle, e.g. between good and evil, friend and foe, wise and foolish.<br><br>When you've decided on your main character, decide on the structure you will use and what will be included in each episode/each stage of the journey or quest.<br><br>Consider adding ingredients of magic or the supernatural to make your legend different from other kinds of stories.<br><br>Use symbols your reader will recognise to help them get involved in the story, e.g. red for anger/danger, darkness for danger/evil, a light or flame for goodness and hope. |

# Narrative-Fairy Tales

| Purpose: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fairy tales were originally intended for adults and children. They were passed down orally to amuse and to convey cultural information that influences behaviour, such as where it is safe to travel and where it is dangerous to go. Fairy tales are found in most cultures and many derive from the oldest stories ever told. Some modern fairy tales could be included in the more recently categorised genre of 'fantasy'. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Setting is nearly always vague. (Once upon a time ... A long, long time ago ...)<br><br>Structure is most typically a recount in chronological order, where events retell what happened to a main character that came into contact with the 'fairy world'.<br><br>Often the hero or heroine is searching for something (a home, love, acceptance, wealth, wisdom) and in many tales dreams are fulfilled with a little help from magic. 'Fairy tale endings' (where everything turns out for the best) are common but many fairy tales are darker and have a sad ending. | Formulaic sentences are used: Once upon a time ... There was once a ... Long ago in the ... And it came to pass ...<br><br>Language often reflects the settings, in the past, using archaic or regional vocabulary and grammar: Say these words thrice! I shall return and take thy gold. He knew not where he was. | Characters may be fairy folk or even talking animals but make sure they are still interesting, believable characters your reader will care about, e.g. a good-hearted hero, a scheming villain, a wise helper.<br><br>Decide how the world of people and the world of fairy land will come into contact and how this will cause a problem.<br><br>Use numbers and patterns that usually appear in fairy tales: Numbers 3 and 7.<br><br>Use phrases that have a strong rhyme or rhythm or another kind of pattern: a magic sentence is repeated several times during the story, the hero must say a secret rhyme to escape, a line is used at the beginning of each section or chapter. (On and on walked the little old man.)<br><br>Use different styles of language for the human beings and the characters from the fairy world when they speak, to make a strong contrast between them:<br><br>"Eeeek! Who are you, you wrinkly old thing?" asked Tom.<br><br>"Beware, child and address me with respect. I am not of your world," came the goblin's whispered reply. |

# Narrative-Fables

**Purpose:**
A fable sets out to teach the reader or listener a lesson they should learn about life. The narrative drives towards the closing moral statement, the fable's theme: the early bird gets the worm, where there's a will there's a way, work hard and always plan ahead for lean times, charity is a virtue. The clear presence of a moral distinguishes fables from other folk tales.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| There is a shared understanding between storyteller and audience that the events told did not actually happen so fables do not need to convince and their structure is usually simple. They are often very short with few characters – sometimes only two.<br><br>Structure is typically the simplest kind of narrative with a beginning, a complication and a resolution. Two characters (often animals) meet, an event occurs and they go on their way with one of them having learned an important lesson about life. | The short and simple structure of the narrative leaves little room for additional details of description or character development.<br><br>Dialogue is used to advance the plot or to state the moral, rather than to engage a reader with the characters and their qualities.<br><br>Characterisation is limited but specific: A lazy duck was making its way to the river ... A crafty raven was sitting on a branch ...<br><br>There is limited use of description because settings are less important than the events that take place.<br><br>Action and dialogue are used to move the story on because the all-important moral is most clearly evident in what the main characters do and say.<br><br>Connectives are an important language feature to show cause and effect and to give coherence to a short narrative. | They are portrayed as simple stereotypes rather than multidimensional heroes or villains.<br><br>If your main characters are animals, make them behave like human stereotypes: a brave little ant, a wise old turtle, a cunning fox, a lazy donkey.<br><br>Use the main characters to give your fable a title: The Ant and the Elephant.<br><br>State the moral of your fable clearly at the end: a wise person always plans ahead.<br><br>Establish the setting in the first line and introduce the two main characters as soon as you can.<br><br>Give clues to your reader about what might happen: a greedy but impatient fox was watching the chickens from behind a tree.<br><br>Don't add too much detail of description and only use dialogue that helps to tell what happened.<br><br>Use connectives when characters talk to one another, to explain or show cause and effect: "If you will give me your hand, I will help you over the river", said the wolf. "I can't possibly eat you because I'm a vegetarian," lied the bear.<br><br>Use connectives to show your reader quickly and easily when things happened and how time passed: (One morning... as he was... first he saw... then he saw... When winter came... And then the grasshopper understood...)<br><br>Questions are often the way one character introduces themselves to another in a fable: Why do you howl so loudly? What are you writing so busily in your book, little bird? |

# Narrative – Dialogue, play scripts, and film narrative

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|---|---|
| **Purpose:**<br>Although these forms of storytelling differ from narrative in that they are not necessarily 'narrated', they usually share the same purposes: to tell a story and to have a deliberate effect on the viewer/listener/reader.  They include scripts for film/digital viewing or audio (e.g. digital audio recording or radio plays) and stories told using images and speech bubbles (such as comic strips) sometimes supplemented with an additional narrative element. | |
| **Generic structure** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Structural conventions for scripting vary, particularly in their layout on the page or screen but they usually include:<br><br>▪  name of character and the words they speak:<br>        MRS GRAY<br><br>    Hello dear. How are you?<br><br>▪  organisational information (Scene 2 The kitchen DAY);<br>▪  stage directions (ENTER Sita, dancing).<br><br><br>Comic strip and some digital animations usually include speech bubbles within the images; interactive texts may include combinations of on-screen speech bubbles and audio dialogue, e.g. accessed by rollover or mouse click. | Knowledge of standard narrative for writer PLUS:<br><br>▪  Use only direct speech.<br>▪  Playscripts: apply the presentational conventions of a script consistently throughout.<br>▪  Comic strip with speech bubbles, animations, multimedia and other dialogue: keep the text fairly short and only include dialogue that moves the story on or gives important information; make the images and words work well together so they each add something special to the story. |

# Non-fiction

Non-fiction texts are wide ranging and occur in many forms in everyday life. The following tables and supporting guidance select the most common forms of non-fiction. Many non-fiction texts in real life blur the boundaries between text types and their features. The most common language features are listed for each text type but variants of all text types occur, especially when they are used in combination. The features listed are **often** but **not always** present.

## Non-fiction – Discussion texts

Discussion texts are not limited to controversial issues but polarised views are generally used to teach this text type as this makes it easier to teach children how to present different viewpoints and provide evidence for them. Discussions contrast with persuasion texts which generally only develop one viewpoint and may present a biased view, often the writer's own.

Like all text types, discussion texts vary widely and elements of discussion writing are often found within other text types.

| Purpose: To present a reasoned and balanced overview of an issue or controversial topic. Usually aims to provide two or more different views on an issue, each with elaborations, evidence and/ or examples. | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| The most common structure includes:<br><br>▪ a statement of the issues involved and a preview of the main arguments;<br>▪ arguments for, with supporting evidence/examples;<br>▪ arguments against or alternative views, with supporting evidence/examples.<br><br>Another common structure presents the arguments 'for' and 'against' alternatively.<br><br>Discussion texts usually end with a summary and a statement of recommendation or conclusion. The summary may develop one particular viewpoint using reasoned judgements based on the evidence provided. | Written in simple present tense.<br><br>Generalises the participants and things it refers to using uncountable noun phrases (some people, most dogs), nouns that categorise (vehicles, pollution) and abstract nouns (power).<br><br>Uses connectives (for example, therefore, however).<br><br>Generic statements are often followed by specific examples (Most vegetarians disagree. Dave Smith, a vegetarian for 20 years, finds that ...)<br><br>Sometimes combined with diagrams, illustrations, moving images and sound to provide additional information or give evidence. | Questions often make good titles. (Should everyone travel less to conserve global energy?)<br><br>Use the introduction to show why you are debating the issue. (There is always a lot of disagreement about x and people's views vary a lot.)<br><br>Make sure you show both/all sides of the argument fairly.<br><br>Support each viewpoint you present with reasons and evidence.<br><br>If you opt to support one particular view in the conclusion, give reasons for your decision.<br><br>Don't forget that discussion texts can be combined with other text types depending on your audience and purpose. |

# Non-fiction – Explanatory texts

Explanatory texts generally go beyond simple 'description' in that they include information about causes, motives or reasons. Explanations and reports are sometimes confused when children are asked to 'explain' and they actually provide a report, e.g. what they did (or what happened) but not how and why. Although some children's dictionaries do include an encyclopaedia-like explanation, others are inaccurately categorised as explanation texts when they simply define a word's meaning.

Like all text types, explanatory texts vary widely and are often found combined with other text types.

**Purpose**:
To explain how or why, e.g. to explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena or to explain why something is the way it is.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| A general statement to introduce the topic being explained. (In the winter some animals hibernate.)<br><br>The steps or phases in a process are explained logically, in order. (**When** the nights get longer ... **because** the temperature begins to drop ... **so** the hedgehog looks for a safe place to hide.) | Written in simple present tense. (Hedgehogs wake up again in the spring.)<br><br>Use of temporal connectives, e.g. first, then, after that, finally.<br><br>Use of causal connectives, e.g. so, because of this. | Choose a title that shows what you are explaining, perhaps using why or how. (How do hedgehogs survive the winter? Why does it get dark at night?)<br><br>Decide whether you need to include images or other features to help your reader, e.g. diagrams, photographs, a flow chart, a text box, captions, a list or a glossary.<br><br>Use the first paragraph to introduce what you will be explaining.<br><br>Plan the steps in your explanation and check that you have included any necessary information about how and why things happen as they do.<br><br>Add a few interesting details.<br><br>Interest the reader by talking directly to them (You'll be surprised to know that ... Have you ever thought about the way that ...?) or by relating the subject to their own experience at the end (So next time you see a pile of dead leaves in the autumn ...).<br><br>Re-read your explanation as if you know nothing at all about the subject. Check that there are no gaps in the information.<br><br>Remember that you can adapt explanatory texts or combine them with other text types to make them work effectively for your audience and purpose. |

# Non-fiction – Instructional/procedural texts

Like all text types, variants of instructions occur and they can be combined with other text types. They may be visual only (e.g. a series of diagrams with an image for each step in the process) or a combination of words and images. Instructions and procedural texts are found in all areas of the curriculum and include rules for games, recipes, instructions for making something and directions.

**Purpose:**
To ensure something is done effectively and/or correctly with a successful outcome for the participant(s).

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| Begin by defining the goal or desired outcome. (How to make a board game.)<br><br>List any material or equipment needed, in order.<br><br>Provide simple, clear instructions. If a process is to be undertaken, keep to the order in which the steps need to be followed to achieve the stated goal.<br><br>Diagrams or illustrations are often integral and may even take the place of some text. (Diagram B shows you how to connect the wires.) | Use of imperative verbs (commands), e.g. **Cut** the card ... **Paint** your design ...<br><br>Instructions may include negative commands. (Do not use any glue at this stage.)<br><br>Additional advice (It's a good idea to leave it overnight if you have time. If the mixture separates ...) or suggested alternatives (If you would like to make a bigger decoration, you could either double the dimensions of the base or just draw bigger flowers.). | Use the title to show what the instructions are about. (How to look after goldfish.)<br><br>Work out exactly what sequence is needed to achieve the planned goal.<br><br>Decide on the important points you need to include at each stage.<br><br>Decide how formal or informal the text will be. (Cook for 20 minutes/Pop your cheesecake in the oven for 20 minutes.<br><br>Present the text clearly. Think about using bullet points, numbers or letters to help your reader keep track as they work their way through each step.<br><br>Keep sentences as short and simple as possible.<br><br>Avoid unnecessary adjectives and adverbs or technical words, especially if your readers are young.<br><br>Appeal directly to the reader's interest and enthusiasm. (You will really enjoy this game. Why not try out this delicious recipe on your friends? Only one more thing left to do now.)<br><br>Include a final evaluative statement to wrap up the process. (Now go and enjoy playing your new game. Your beautiful summer salad is now ready to eat.)<br><br>Re-read your instructions as if you know nothing about the procedure involved. Make sure you haven't missed out any important stages or details and check that the language is as simple and clear as possible.<br><br>Use procedural texts within other text types when you need a set of rules, guidelines or instructions to make something really clear for the reader. |

# Non-fiction – Persuasion texts

Persuasive texts can be written, oral or written to be spoken, e.g. a script for a television advert or presentation. The persuasive intention may be covert and not necessarily recognised by the reader or listener. Texts vary considerably according to context and audience so that persuasion is not always a distinct text-type that stands alone. Elements of persuasive writing are found in many different texts including moving image texts and digital multimedia texts. Some examples may include evidence of bias and opinion being subtly presented as facts.

| Purpose: To argue a case from a particular point of view and to encourage the reader/listener towards the same way of seeing things. | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| An opening statement (thesis) that sums up the viewpoint being presented. (Greentrees Hotel is the best in the world. School uniform is a good idea.)<br><br>Strategically organised information presents and then elaborates on the desired viewpoint. (Vote for me because I am very experienced. I have been a school councillor three times and I have ...)<br><br>A closing statement repeats and reinforces the original thesis. (All the evidence shows that ... It's quite clear that ... Having seen all that we offer you, there can be no doubt that we are the best.) | Written in simple present tense.<br><br>Often refers to generic rather than specific participants (Vegetables are good for you. They ...).<br><br>Uses logical rather than temporal connectives (This proves that ... So it's clear ... Therefore ...).<br><br>Tends to move from general to specific when key points are being presented. (The hotel is comfortable. The beds are soft, the chairs are specially made to support your back and all rooms have thick carpet.)<br><br>Use of rhetorical questions. (Do you want to get left behind in the race to be fashionable? Want to be the most relaxed person in town? So what do you have to do to?)<br><br>Text is often combined with other media to emotively enhance an aspect of the argument, e.g. a photo of a secluded beach, the sound of birds in a forest glade or a picture of a cute puppy. | Decide on the viewpoint you want to present and carefully select the information that supports it.<br><br>Organise the main points to be made in the best order and decide which persuasive information you will add to support each.<br><br>Plan some elaboration/explanation, evidence and example(s) for each key point but avoid ending up with text that sounds like a list.<br><br>Think about counter arguments your reader might come up with and include evidence to make them seem incorrect or irrelevant.<br><br>Try to appear reasonable and use facts rather than emotive comments.<br><br>Choose strong, positive words and phrases and avoid sounding negative. Use short sentences for emphasis.<br><br>Use techniques to get the reader on your side:<br><ul><li>address them directly (This is just what you've been waiting for.)</li><li>adopt a friendly and informal tone;=</li><li>use memorable or alliterative slogans (Happy Holidays at Hazel House)</li><li>use simple psychology to appeal to the reader's judgement. (Everyone knows that ... Nine out of ten people agree that ... Choosing this will make you happy and contented. You'd be foolish not to sign up.)</li></ul>Re-read the text as if you have no opinion and decide if you would be persuaded.<br><br>Remember that you can use persuasive writing within other text types. |

# Non-fiction – Non-chronological reports

Non-chronological reports describe things the way they are, so they usually present information in an objective way. Sometimes, the selection of information by the writer can result in a biased report. As with all text types, variants occur and non-chronological reports can be combined with other text types. A text that is essentially a non-chronological report written in the present tense may include other text types such as other types of report, e.g. when a specific example is provided to add detail to a statement. (Sharks are often seen around the coasts of Britain but they rarely attack people. In 2006, a man was surfing in Cornwall when he was badly bitten but it was the only incident recorded there for twenty years.)

**Purpose:**
To provide detailed information about the way things are or were.
To help readers/listeners understand what is being described by organising or categorising information.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| In the absence of a temporal (chronological) structure where events happen in a particular order, non-chronological reports usually have a logical structure. They tend to group information, often moving from general to more specific detail and examples or elaborations. A common structure includes:<br><br>▪ an opening statement, often a general classification (Sparrows are birds);<br><br>▪ sometimes followed by a more detailed or technical classification (Their Latin name is...);<br><br>▪ a description of whatever is the subject of the report organised in some way to help the reader make sense of the information. For example:<br><br>➢ its qualities (Like most birds, sparrows have feathers.);<br><br>➢ its parts and their functions (The beak is small and strong so that it can ...);<br><br>➢ its habits/behaviour/ uses (Sparrows nest in ...). | Often written in the third person and present tense. (They like to build their nests ... It is a cold and dangerous place to live.)<br><br>Sometimes written in the past tense, as in a historical report. (Children as young as seven worked in factories. They were poorly fed and clothed and they did dangerous work.)<br><br>The passive voice is frequently used to avoid personalisation, to avoid naming the agent of a verb, to add variety to sentences or to maintain an appropriate level of formality for the context and purpose of writing. (Sparrows are found in ...  Sharks are hunted ... Gold is highly valued ...)<br><br>Tends to focus on generic subjects (Dogs) rather than specific subjects (My dog Ben).<br><br>Description is usually an important feature, including the language of comparison and contrast. (Polar bears are the biggest carnivores of all. They hibernate, just like other bears. A polar bear's nose is as black as a piece of coal.)<br><br>Description is generally used for precision rather than to create an emotional response so imagery is not heavily used. | Plan how you will organise the information you want to include, e.g. use paragraph headings, a spidergram or a grid.<br><br>Gather information from a wide range of sources and collect it under the headings you've planned.<br><br>Consider using a question in the title to interest your reader (Vitamins – why are they so important?).<br><br>Try to find a new way to approach the subject and compose an opening that will attract the reader or capture their interest. Use the opening to make very clear what you are writing about.<br><br>Include tables, diagrams or images (e.g. imported photographs or drawings) that add or summarise information.<br><br>Find ways of making links with your reader. You could ask a direct question (Have you ever heard of a hammerhead shark?) or add a personal touch to the text (So next time you choose a pet, think about getting a dog).<br><br>Re-read the report as if you know nothing about its subject. Check that information is logically organised and clear.<br><br>Use other text-types within your report if they will make it more effective for your purpose and audience. |

# Non-fiction - Recounts

Recounts are sometimes referred to as 'accounts'. They are the most common text type we encounter as readers and listeners, not least because they are the basic form of many storytelling texts. Stories and anecdotes can have a range of purposes, frequently depending on the genre being used, and they often set out to achieve a deliberate effect on the reader/listener. In non-fiction texts they are used to provide an account of events. Recounts can be combined with other text types, for example, newspaper reports of an event often consist of a recount that includes elements of explanation.

| Purpose: The primary purpose of recounts is to retell events. Their most common intentions are to inform and/or entertain. | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Structure often includes:<br><br>▪ orientation such as scene-setting or establishing context (It was the school holidays. I went to the park ...);<br>▪ an account of the events that took place, often in chronological order (The first person to arrive was ...);<br>▪ some additional detail about each event (He was surprised to see me.);<br>▪ reorientation, e.g. a closing statement that may include elaboration. (I hope I can go to the park again next week. It was fun.)<br><br>Structure sometimes reorganises the chronology of events using techniques such as flashbacks, moving the focus backwards and forwards in time, but these strategies are more often used in fiction recounts. | Usually written in the past tense. Some forms may use present tense, e.g. informal anecdotal storytelling (Just imagine – I'm in the park and I suddenly see a giant bat flying towards me!).<br><br>Events being recounted have a chronological order so temporal connectives are common (then, next, first, afterwards, just before that, at last, meanwhile).<br><br>The subject of a recount tends to focus on individual or group participants (third person: they all shouted, she crept out, it looked like an animal of some kind).<br><br>Personal recounts are common (first person: I was on my way to school ... We got on the bus). | Plan how you will organise the way you retell the events. You could use a timeline to help you plan.<br><br>Details are important to create a recount rather than a simple list of events in order. Try using When? Where? Who? What? Why? questions to help you plan what to include.<br><br>Decide how you will finish the recount. You'll need a definite ending, perhaps a summary or a comment on what happened (I think our school trip to the Science Museum was the best we have ever had).<br><br>Read the text through as if you don't know anything about what it is being recounted. Is it clear what happened and when?<br><br>Is the style right for the genre you are using? (Technical/formal language to recount a science experiment, powerful verbs and vivid description to recount an adventure, informal, personal language to tell your friends about something funny that happened to you.) |

# Poetry

Poetry is a very wide-ranging type of text and has many purposes and forms. Often written or spoken for an intended reader, it may also be composed for a personal outcome because the concise and powerful nature of poetry conveys emotion particularly well. Like oral storytelling, poetry has strong social and historical links with cultures and communities.

The fact that poetry often plays with words makes it an attractive text type for children and one that they experiment with in their early language experiences. Features of other text types are frequently used as the basis for a poem, e.g. lists, dialogue, questions and answers. As children become familiar with a wider range of poetic forms and language techniques they can make increasingly effective use of wordplay to explore and develop ideas through poetry.

**Purpose:**
Poems can have many different purposes, e.g. to amuse, to entertain, to reflect, to convey information, to tell a story, to share knowledge or to pass on cultural heritage. Some forms of poetry are associated with certain purposes, e.g. prayers to thank, celebrate, praise; advertising jingles to persuade; limericks to amuse.

Although a poem may share the same purpose as the text type it is related to (e.g. to recount) the context for writing does not always mean that a poem is the most appropriate choice of text type.

| Generic structures | General language features | Knowledge for the writer |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Poems are often grouped for learning and teaching by theme, structure, form or language features.<br><br>**Themes**: Poetry selections or anthologies often group poems by their content or subject matter and include different examples of structures.<br><br>**Structure**: Poetry has an extremely wide range of structural variety, from poems that follow a rigid textual structure to those that have only a visual or graphic basis. The most common structures include patterns of rhyme (e.g. ABABCC) or metre (di-dum di-dum di-dum). Structures based on syllable counts (such as haiku and some versions of cinquains) are also common. Other structures rely on repetition of grammatical patterns rather than rhythm. For example, some list poems, dialogue poems and question and answer poems follow a specific structure even though they don't include rhyme or follow a pattern of line length. | Poems use the same language features as other text types but each feature is often used more intensively to achieve a concentrated effect, e.g. of mood, humour, musicality: frequent alliteration, use of imagery or repetitive rhythm. Rhyme is used almost exclusively by poetic texts.<br><br>The language features used depend on context, purpose and audience and also on the intended style of a poem.<br><br>Different poetic forms tend to use different language features. The most common are rhyme, metre and imagery.<br><br>**Rhyme**: many traditional forms use particular rhyme patterns which are usually described using an alphabetic system. AABBA is the usual rhyme pattern of a limerick. Other common patterns in children's poetry are AABB and ABABCC for each verse. The usual order of clauses or words is sometimes deliberately rearranged to create a rhyme at the end of a line. For example, Did he smile <u>his work to see</u>? Did he who made the lamb make thee? (William Blake 'The Tyger'.) Playing with rhyme and creating nonsense poems is an important element in exploring and manipulating language. Children also need to learn how to avoid the danger of 'forced rhyme' where they use a word simply because it rhymes, not because it is what | Depending on the kind of poetry being written:<br><br>▪ observe carefully and include detail, drawing on all your senses;<br>▪ when writing from memory or imagination, create a detailed picture in your mind before you begin writing;<br>▪ be creative about the way you use words – use powerful or unusual vocabulary, or even create new words and phrases;<br>▪ when using few words, make every word count;<br>▪ play with the sounds or meanings of words to add an extra layer of enjoyment for your audience, e.g. use alliteration or assonance, a pun or double meaning;<br>▪ use imagery to help your reader/listener visualise what |

they want to say.

**Metre**: rhythm, stress patterns (e.g. **dum**-de, **dum**-de or de-**dum**, de-**dum**) syllable patterns (e.g. 5, 7, 5 syllables in the three lines of a haiku).

**Imagery**: e.g. simile, metaphor, personification. The effective use of imagery is often a key ingredient in powerful, memorable poetry. Children usually begin using imagery by comparing one thing with another and by saying what something was like.

**Rich vocabulary:** powerful nouns, verbs, adjectives, invented words and unusual word combinations.

**Sound effects**: alliteration, assonance (repetition of the same vowel phoneme in the middle of a word, especially where rhyme is absent: cool/food) onomatopoeia (where the sound of a word suggests its meaning: hiss, splutter).

When a poem does not use rhyme at all, it is often the distinct combination of metre, imagery and vocabulary that distinguishes it from prose.

The language effects found in poems can be different across time and cultures because poems reflect the way that language is used by people.

you are describing but don't weigh the poem down with too many adjectives or similes;
- use the poem's shape or pattern to emphasise meaning, e.g. make an important line stand out by leaving space around it;
- read the text aloud as you draft, to check how it sounds when read aloud or performed;
- improve it by checking that every word does an important job, changing the vocabulary to use more surprising or powerful words;
- use images that help your reader easily imagine what you are writing about – think of comparisons they will recognise from their own lives;
- try to think of new, different ways to describe what things are like and avoid using too many predictable similes (her hair was as white as snow).

# Poetry – Free verse

| Structures: | | |
|---|---|---|
| Free verse is not restricted by conventions of form or pattern and does not have to rhyme or maintain a consistent structure (such as line-length) throughout. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| Free verse is so-called because it does <u>not</u> have to follow particular forms but some examples can be grouped as follows: | Poetry often makes use of language forms associated with informal and spoken language, relying more on the patterns and vocabulary of speech than on poetic conventions of rhyme and metre. | Make the most of the wide choices that free verse gives you and try out different ways of using words, lines or verses instead of sticking to predictable patterns. |
| monologue | Written in the first person, a single voice. Often a recount or an explanation of a personal viewpoint. May address the reader directly, for example by asking questions or using language as if the reader is taking part in a conversation with the writer. (Is it hard to believe? Guess what happened next! ) There are many examples in the poetry of Michael Rosen. | Maintain a strong style that helps to hold your poem together in the absence of a particular structure, e.g. using informal spoken language as if you are talking to the reader. |
| conversation poems | As above, but two or more voices present. Can be a dialogue taking place or a series of questions and answers, as in the traditional poem, Who killed Cock Robin? | Use layout to control the way the poem is read, for example by creating space around important lines or phrases. |
| | | If you're using the style of spoken language, make sure the lines don't get too long. |
| | | Think about the types of sentences you use and decide if you need questions as well as statements. |
| | | Don't forget that poetry allows you to use words in many ways, not just in sentences. |
| | | Use questions directed to your reader to draw them in, e.g. Do you know what I mean? |
| | | Make punctuation work for you and guide your reader in the way you want the poem to sound, if read aloud. |
| All the examples above can <u>also </u>be structured poems, for example using rhyme or line patterns. | | |

# Example Free verse poems

| monologue | list poem |
|---|---|
| **Peas Please** | **A Day on the Farm** |
| Last night we had peas for tea | A tiny lamb just born, still wobbly. |
| And I told my dad I don't like peas | Mother pig, bold and fierce with me but soft and gentle with her piglets. |
| But he put them on my plate | The farmer's old hat. He said could it tell stories. |
| And I told him again that I don't like peas | A deep, green pond like a dark emerald, |
| So he said I had to eat them | older than the farmer, older than the farmhouse, older than the fields. |
| And I told him AGAIN that I don't like peas | A red combine harvester, waiting, waiting, waiting in the barn |
| But he said there was ice-cream for later | for the moment |
| (After the peas) | when the corn is ready |
| So I ate the peas | These are my memory pictures. |
| Every single one | |
| And d'you know what? | |
| I like peas! | |

# Poetry – Visual poems

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Structures:** Visual poems are based (often exclusively) on visual appearance and/or sound. The words are presented to create a particular shape, to create an image or to convey a visual message. Letter shapes may be exaggerated in the design. Meaning may be literal or rely on metaphor. | | |
| **Generic structure** | **Language features** | **Knowledge for the writer** |
| calligrams and shape poems | A calligram can be a poem, a phrase or even a single word. Calligrams use the shape of the letters, words or whole poem to show the subject of the calligram in a visual way.<br><br>Examples<br><br>A one-word calligram could use a wobbly font or handwriting style for the word TERRIFIED. A shape poem about eating fruit to stay healthy could be presented to look like the shape of an apple on the page or screen by adapting line length. | Think about words in different ways. Listen to the way they sound and look carefully at their letters and shapes on the page or screen.<br><br>Find out more about word meanings by using a thesaurus to get ideas.<br><br>Stick to simple shapes that you can recreate by typing or writing.<br><br>Get more ideas by exploring font options and text effects. The way they make words look will help you plan visual poems. |
| concrete poetry | The simplest concrete poems are shape poems but others blur the boundaries between poetry and art. They can include sounds and images and can also be 3-D. New technologies have brought about innovative forms that include multilayered texts with hyperlinks to 'poems within poems', visual stories, audio files and images that form part of the poem itself. | Remember that some visual poems only work by looking at them, not by reading them aloud. Others only make sense when you read them and hear the sound of the words. |

# Example Visual poems

| calligram | concrete poem |
|---|---|
| P<br><br>YR<br><br>AMIDS<br><br>are wonders<br><br>that show what<br><br>numbers and people<br><br>can do if they get together. | **EXAMPLE 1**<br><br>In art and design, children in Year 2 have been investigating different kinds of art. They make a clay sculpture and carve carefully chosen words into the surface to reflect their own feelings about a particular topic or issue, creating a 3-D poem that relies on the words and the sculpture working together. For example, they create a sculpture of a hand with two or three words in the palm to convey their own feelings.<br><br>**EXAMPLE 2**<br><br>Children use a graphics program to create an illustration. They add a hyperlink to a sound file that plays when the cursor rolls over a hotspot or when the link is clicked. For example, working in pairs, children draw two characters and add two sound files, one for each 'voice' in a dialogue poem they have written. The poem is only complete when the reader can not only HEAR the dialogue but also SEE who the two speakers are. |

# Poetry – Structured poems

**Structures:**

Structured poems follow a consistent framework based on features such as line length, syllable count, rhyme pattern, rhythm, metre or a combination of these.

A poem's structure (particularly rhythm and rhyme) generally influences the way it sounds when read aloud and helps to make it memorable. Poems with a clear, simple structure are often used as models or writing frames for children's own writing.

The structure of a poem sometimes helps to organise the content. For example, a longer narrative poem (such as a ballad) may be organised chronologically into verses or parts. An important line may be repeated as a chorus or refrain.

The range of poetry structures presented as ICT texts is even wider and includes multimodal and/or interactive poems that contain hypertext, live links, moving images and sounds.

| Generic structure | Language features | Knowledge for the writer |
|---|---|---|
| There are many forms of structured poetry. Some are culturally specific.<br><br>Some of the most common forms are: | | Double-check that any deliberate patterns of rhyme or rhythm work all the way through.<br><br>Remove clichés and change any rhymes that sound forced.<br><br>Avoid choosing words just because they fit the pattern or rhyme – only use words that really work.<br><br>Re-read aloud as you write, to check how the structure sounds, especially to hear rhyme and metre.<br><br>When you have few words to use (e.g. haiku, couplets) make sure that every word works hard for |
| cinquain | A generic name for a five-line poem. One of the most commonly used forms follows a syllable pattern for each line: 2, 4, 6, 8, 2. There are many different types of cinquains providing a wide range of opportunities for children to experiment with rhyme or syllabification. For example, *reverse cinquains* where the line pattern works backward, quintiles where cinquains are grouped in multiples to create a longer poem and English *quintains* that have a rhyme pattern (ABABB) but no specific line length. | |
| quatrain | Quatrain is a generic term for a four-line stanza or poem of any kind. | |
| couplets | Two successive lines, usually part of a poem longer than two lines and typically at the end of a verse or stanza. Couplets have two lines, each with the same metre and often share the same rhyme (rhyming couplets). | |
| rap | Rap is an example that straddles the boundaries between poetry, talk and song. It is one of the central elements of hip hop culture and uses strong musical rhythm and repeated rhyme patterns. The content is often focused on social commentary. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| limerick | A traditional five-line rhyming form, usually with humorous subject matter. Popularised in the nineteenth century by Edward Lear's Book of Nonsense.   The rhyme pattern is usually AABBA. The first line of a limerick is typically: There once was a xx from xxx, | meaning and effect.

Don't let the poem's structure take over and make all the choices for you – you are the writer so you decide what works and what doesn't. |
| kennings | Derived from Old English and Norse poetry, kennings use compound nouns to refer to a person or thing without using the actual name. Anglo-Saxons often used kennings to name their swords. A kenning is a type of list poem. Although kennings follow a list structure, they could be described as free verse in other respects because they rarely rhyme. | |
| | **Haiku, tanka** and **renga** all derive from Japanese poetry forms and are all based on syllabic line patterns. In their original form they were based on Japanese sound units which do not translate exactly to 'syllables' in English. There are no hard and fast rules for the structure of these forms written in English but the following conventions are widely applied: | |
| haiku | Three lines: syllable pattern 5, 7, 5. A personal but universal comment on nature and/or humankind's place in the world. The poet aims to capture a single moment or thought and also aims to leave half the work for the reader to do. | |
| tanka | Five lines: syllable pattern 5, 7, 5, 7, 7. Typically a haiku with two additional lines. The first three lines may describe a state or situation and the last two provide more detail, or the poet's comment. | |
| renga | Haiku-like verses linked together can be described as renga and are often written by more than one poet. Each is linked by two additional lines, each of seven syllables. The line/syllable pattern is:

5, 7, 5

7, 7

5, 7, 5

7, 7

and so on. | |
| ballads | Ballads are narrative poems, usually of some length. Rhyme and musical rhythm patterns make them memorable for oral retelling. They often recount heroic deeds or legends. Ballads typically include a chorus between each verse or a refrain that repeats key lines. | |
| question and answer poems | question and answer poems may not rhyme or maintain the same metre but they are often tightly structured as a series of questions, each followed by an answer. | |

# Example Structured poems

| rhyming couplet | question and answer poem | haiku |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I wonder why the sky is dark at night... <br> Perhaps the moon and stars put out the light. | **PUPPY IN THE HOUSE** <br><br> Who broke the window? <br> It wasn't me. Wag, wag! <br><br> Who chewed the rug? <br> It wasn't me. Lick, lick! <br><br> Who made a puddle? <br> It wasn't me. Woof, woof! <br><br> Who's the best puppy in the world? <br> That would be ME (Wag, lick,woof!) | Light shines through a glass <br> But not through me, and that's why <br> I HAVE A SHADOW! |