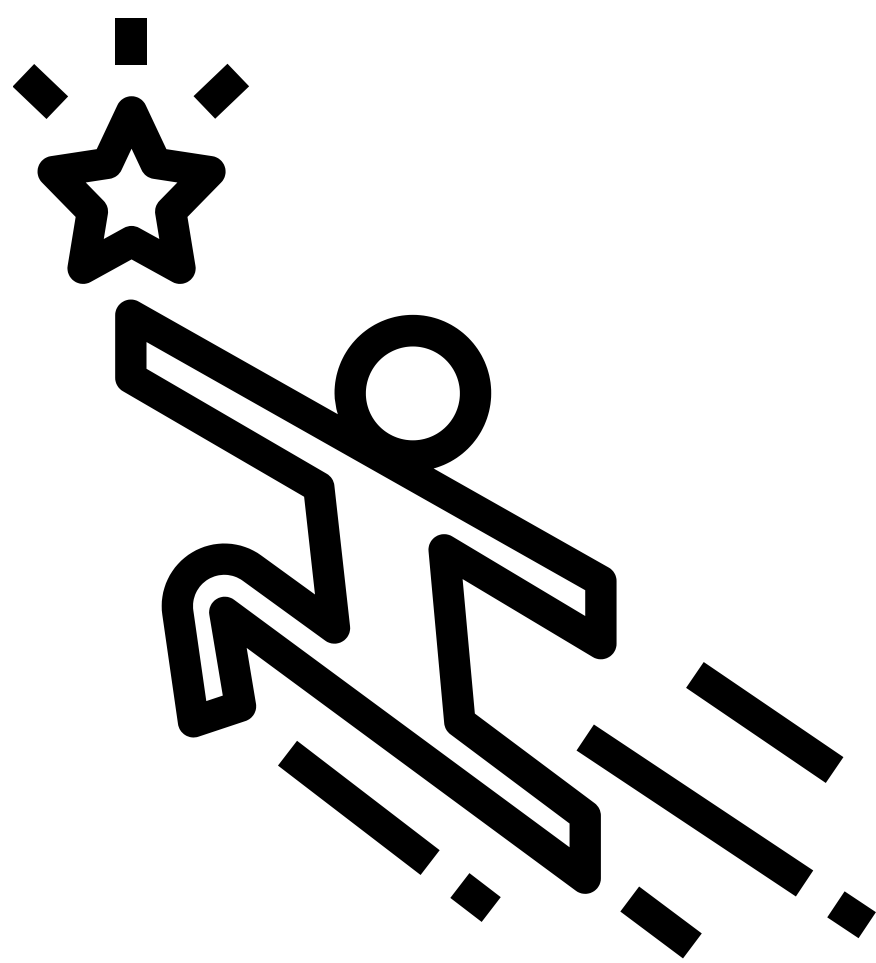




creative
EDUCATION

Get Outstanding Outcomes in GCSE English

**Empowering Students to Achieve in GCSE English:
Changing Approaches in the Classroom**



Empowering Students

Introduction - Course 1

In the course, we will address 4 basic requirements for learning as raised in these questions:

- Do the students have access to, and understand, the essential subject content?
- Are the students equipped and empowered to manage their own personal learning?
- Is the learning environment enhancing the students' learning?
- Does the learning engage with - and validate - each individual student's inner mental life?

Empowering Students

Embracing Success

Give yourself 5 minutes to identify some of the positive achievements you can expect of a student who has so far achieved Grade 3 or below at GCSE. Even though the student may make errors in spelling or grammar, in structure or in syntax – or even though they may show a paucity of vocabulary or a limited grasp of inference when reading – what successes might they evidence?



Successes

Empowering Students

Embracing Success

Here are some of successes in English that students, who have not reached Grade 4 or above at GCSE, can realise.

- Key messages are conveyed in writing.
- The answer appropriately addresses the question.
- There is a sense of audience and suitable format.
- A simple range of vocabulary is used accurately.
- The writer shows confidence in expressing and supporting opinions.
- Stages in a narrative are well structured.
- Text is written at an appropriate length and divided into sentences with full stops.
- Paragraphs are used.
- The writing has a suitable opener and a satisfactory conclusion.
- The writer shows imagination and a sense of style, humour, pathos or atmosphere.
- The writer shows evidence of observation and writes with honesty.
- The writer evidences effort and commitment and even enjoyment.
- As a reader, the student recognises the theme of an extended passage and can decipher the words and engage with the content.



Empowering Students

Embracing Success

Habitual Practice

in reading and writing, managed by the teacher

Discussion

about the content - what have I done well?

Improvement

what two or three aspects of my English can I improve? - avoid overload

Celebration

what improvements have I made and what am I now proud of in this work?



creative
EDUCATION

Empowering Students

Why English?

Great FE Teaching, Samantha Jones

GREAT

FE TEACHING

sharing good practice

SAMANTHA JONES



CORWIN

Empowering Students

The Learning Environment

There are 3 elements to consider when we set out to address the learning environment:

The Learning Environment

- The classroom
- The metaverse
- The students' private life

How can you affect these 3 elements of the learning environment, so they work in your students' favour and benefit their English?

Empowering Students

The Learning Environment

The Classroom

English activities demand stamina and resilience but, if we expect students to sit still for extended periods performing repetitive reading and writing tasks and still being productive, we will be disappointed. Constant intervention and stimulus will activate success. This can include:

- visual stimuli
- small groupwork and discussion
- games and quizzes
- and activities that require movement – to get the oxygen flowing and the brain engaging. (Getting the students on their feet to consult different documents on different table in small groups can enliven them.)



Empowering Students

The Learning Environment

The Metaverse

This is the immersive virtual world that is open to all of us and which our students access through their computers, phones and other digital devices. There are incidental benefits for the students' language use as they employ technology to exchange texts, glean ideas, look up news about their areas of interest, re-shape their minds with new information and generally communicate with others. But it is down to us as teachers to point the students in a direction where online activity can support their English development to GCSE. How can we do this?

- We can establish online learning networks for our students, which embrace reading groups or discussions or questions or recording of triumphs such as: 'what I learnt today'.
- We can direct our students to find information, read the opinions of others, select a text they'd like to read or a YouTube recording they'd like to review.
- We can set our students to read and critique examples of GCSE-type written work and then compare notes.
- We can allow students to write some of their written work as word documents so they can easily proof-read and edit and get used to this process.
- We can encourage students to write for an audience by directing their online work at others and taking feedback.
- We can organise quizzes or padlets or word games or questionnaires so the students can contribute in their own time from their own phones and get an instant response from others or from us as teachers.

What is important here is that the students can see how development in English is open to them all the time, has infinite possibilities and can engage with them through the media they and their friends most value.

Empowering Students

The Learning Environment

The Learning Environment

We have the students' private life.

How do your students work on their English when they're not with you? How can you influence this? You'll have your own ideas which might include:

- discussing with them how they can preserve time for reading or how they can ensure they write at a proper table without interruption
- helping them to set up homework sessions with friends
- pointing them to libraries and study spaces
- getting them to tell you – and even sign an agreed document to this effect – when, where and how they will work on their English in their own time.



Empowering Students

Personal Engagement

How can you enable each of your students to connect with the requirements of the English GCSE exam? Begin by thinking of some of the things that engage you and make you want to speak, write, listen or read.

Look at this range of titles for short articles, for instance.

- The Power of a Healthy Diet
- A Stranger in a New Land
- Happiness and How To Find It
- Life on the Streets
- A Crazy Story
- My Team

Number or re-order these titles according to which you would most like to read, where number 1 is favourite and number 6 least favourite.

Empowering Students

Introduction - Course 2

But what does assessment do for the students? Here we have to put ourselves in their shoes and feel the impact.

How do the students feel?

How do we use assessment in a different way?

Empowering Students

Why English?

English Inside the Black Box, Marshall and Williams

Department of
Education &
Professional Studies

KING'S
College
LONDON

English inside the black box

Assessment for learning in the
English classroom

Bethan Marshall and Dylan Wiliam

The Black Box Assessment for Learning series
Editors: Paul Black, Christine Harrison, Bethan Marshall and Dylan Wiliam

Empowering Students

The Starting Point

English Self-Assessment

How confident do I feel about my reading and writing skills in English? (0 is not at all confident and 10 is fully confident)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

What was my reason for scoring myself as I did?

What one thing would make me feel more confident in English and raise my rating by at least 1 point?

Empowering Students

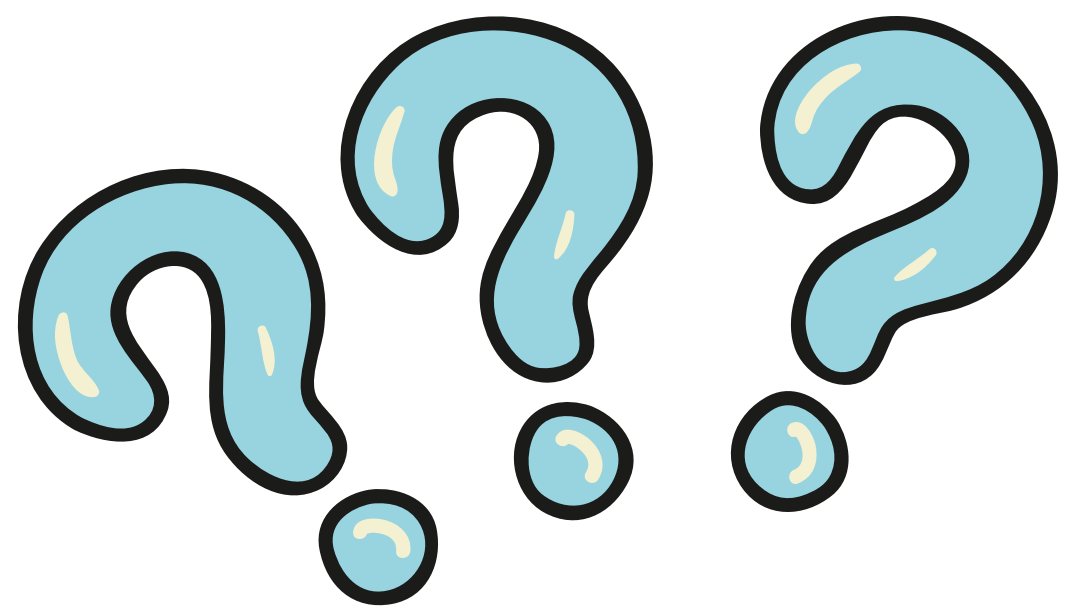
Success Criteria

What do I need to do better or differently to pass my GCSE?

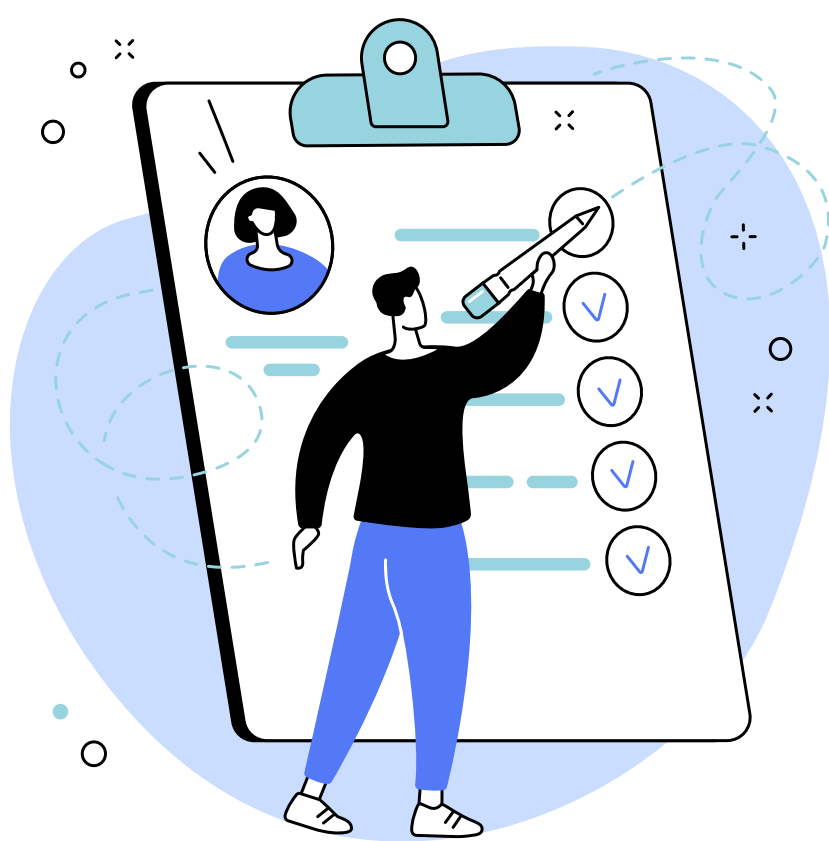
Assessment for Learning Principles



Learner Talk



Questioning



Self/Peer Assessment



Development of Judgement

Empowering Students

Learner Talk

Thinking Environment

A philosophy of powerful communication founded by author and coach Nancy Kline



TIME TO THINK

Ways of using Learner Talk to develop English:

- Open discussion
- Targeted discussion on a particular aspect of English or an English task
- Question/answer sessions
- Role play
- Sessions based on the 10 components of The Thinking Environment
- Listening critically to others
- Listening critically to texts delivered as podcasts
- Silence

Empowering Students

Questioning

How would you change your life if you had the chance?

What is the most important thing in your mind at the moment?

What one thing would make your work easier for you?

How would you like to spend your holidays?

How did the last few questions make you feel?

What do these questions have in common?

- How do you spell 'onomatopoeia'?
- Is the writer of this piece angry or just depressed?
- Wouldn't it be better to use the active and not the passive voice in this sentence?
- How can you liven up this description?
- Can you think of a synonym for 'shocking'?

How do you think questions like these would make the student feel...?

Where is the challenge and self-endorsement in answering questions where the teacher has already:

- pre-empted the answer, or...
- is using words the students don't know or...
- clearly already knows the answer or...
- wants the student simply to confirm what's already in the teacher's head?

Empowering Students

Questioning

- We need to ask open questions (those which do not expect a yes/no or single fact answer but invite a range of answers), e.g, 'How do you think the writer feels about walking in the snow?'
- We need to ask questions that show respect for the students' prior knowledge and opinions: e.g. 'In your opinion, what is the best way to travel from x to y?'
- We need to give the students time and space to answer – if necessary, prompting with further questions. We must never jump in and answer the question ourselves.
- We must direct our questions clearly – so that each individual knows if he or she has the responsibility to answer.
- We must be careful sometimes of saying 'good' or 'well done,' to a student's answer as this can seem judgmental. It's better to just say 'thank you'.
- We need to follow questions with further, more searching questions.: ;What do you think the writer is implying about the old man's lifestyle?' 'Why is his dog so important to him?' 'What does he hope for?'
- We need to answer questions with questions: Student to teacher: 'How do you spell 'original'?' Teacher: 'Can you work it out?' 'Why not try?'

Empowering Students

Teacher Preparation

1. We read the piece.
2. We note down any possible hooks*
3. We devise the questions.

*Things that might interest the students or relate to their experience

Snow and snowy landscapes

Life in a different land

Sport and competition

Showing off

Being scared

Jokes with friends

Taking orders

Eating sandwiches

Feeling like the odd one out

An accident

Meeting new people

Being cold

Empowering Students

Guild Knowledge



Dr Bethan Marshall of Kings College London

Realm 1 The student's existing skills	Realm 2 Target skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing in paragraphs • Writing in sentences • Using a range of simple vocabulary • Expressing opinion • Describing places and people • Using adjectives • Expressing simple ideas • Using simple verb tenses accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using 10 new words • Using 3 or 4 complex sentences with commas • Expressing new, more complex ideas • Using persuasive language • Using similes • Consistency with verb tenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing metaphors • Moving between short and long sentences for impact • Using a large and varied vocabulary • Expressing feelings through implication. • Using largely correct grammar

Empowering Students

Working Together

In class – Set out 7 or 8 short English activities on 7 or 8 tables. These can include anything from:

- reading and answering multiple choice comprehension questions
- gap fill vocabulary or grammar exercises
- punctuation
- ordering of paragraphs
- joining sentences together using words like 'although' or 'because'
- correcting spellings
- showing where words have been mistakenly missed out
- showing where there is repetition

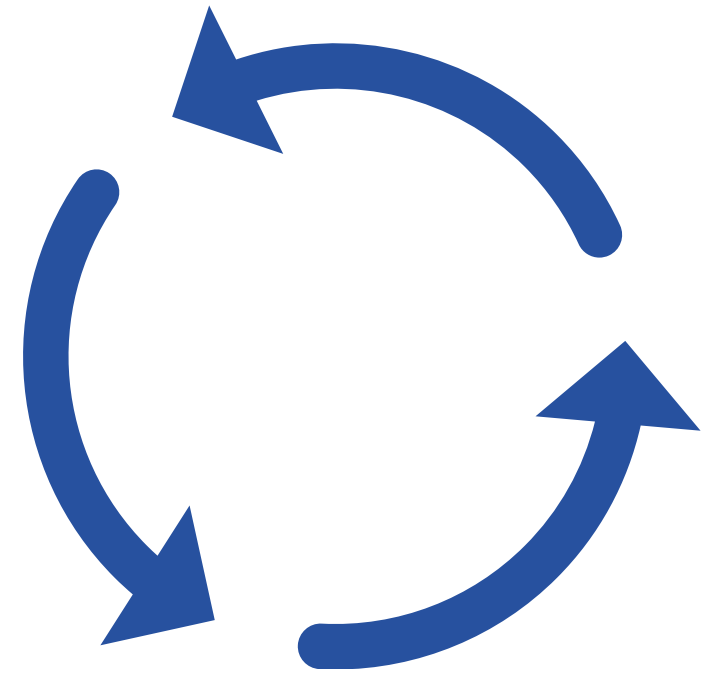
The advantages for the students are paramount:

- They practise essential skills.
- They have the fun of a competition.
- They don't have time to get bored or lose interest.
- They practise working at speed.
- They are energised by the company of others.
- They feel they are part of the club.
- They stimulate the brain by getting up and moving

Empowering Students

Working Together

7 or 8 tables workshop style –
students rotate and work
against time.



Pairs or trios for work in own
time

Group feedback from 'noticing'
diaries



Empowering Students

Preparing the Ground

Start by inviting them to tell you what they already read and write. Their reading can include:

- Free newspapers or magazines
- Books they've read at school
- Specific articles like sports or fashion reports
- Instructions, forms, questionnaires, advertising material
Documents related to their vocational courses
- Online material: google, social media, emails, blogs
- Books they and their friends have chosen
- Graphic novels

Their writing list may include such activities as:

- Forms and questionnaires
- Notes, texts and emails
- Diaries
- Poetry
- Song lyrics
- Notes, reports, tests, records, time sheets, job specifications for their vocational work
- Stories
- Jokes
- Slogans

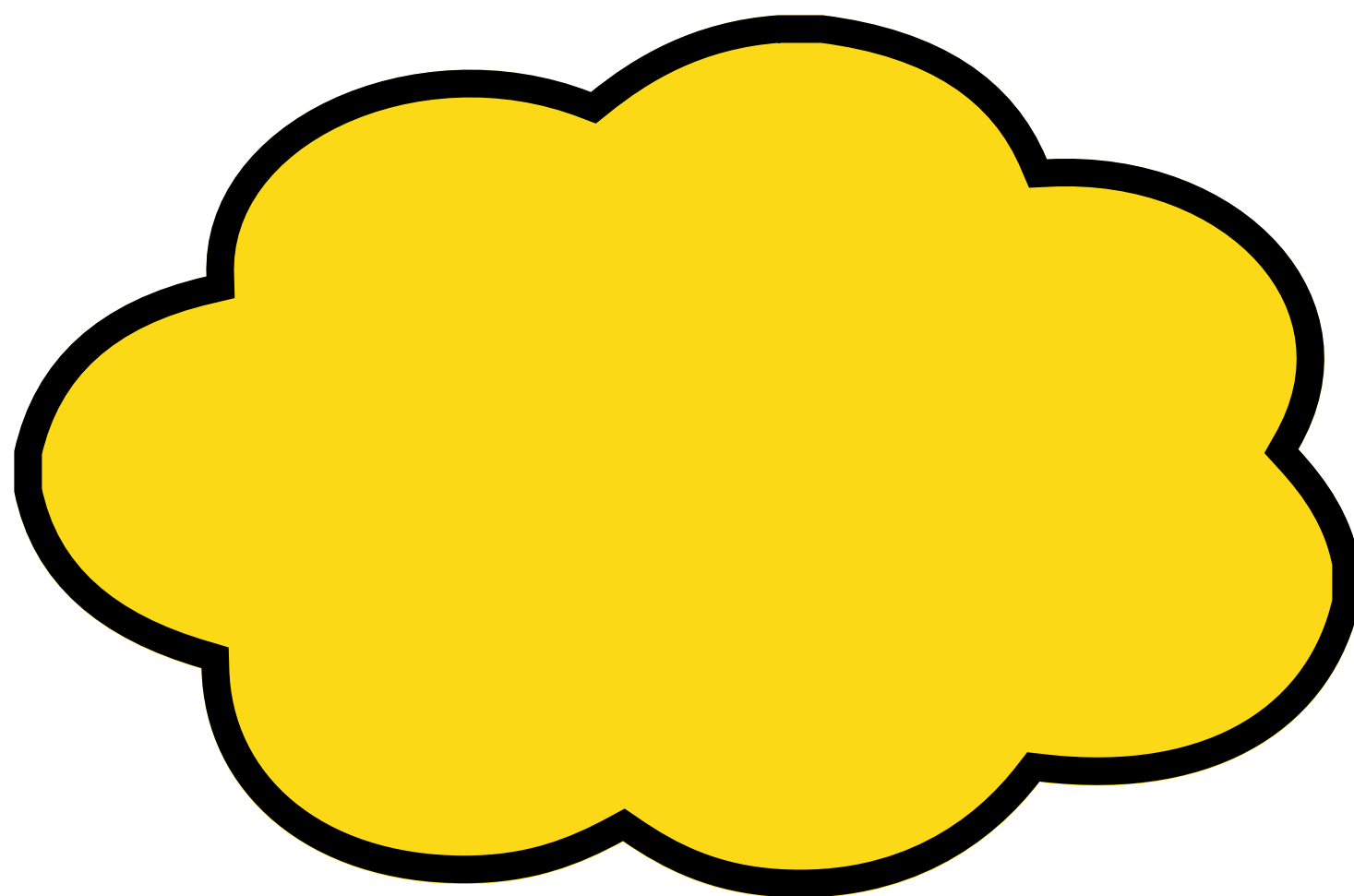
Empowering Students

Writing ... More Writing

To overcome students' resistance to writing, we first have to understand its origins.

Most of us, when faced with a blank page on which we are going to write, feel momentary trepidation – even those of us who write regularly.

And why is this? Take a moment to think.



Empowering Students

Investment in Meaning

Take a look at these sentences and then look at the questions about them.

The because blue her round satisfy, softly cheek anymore up.

Angry hello as raining, sliced although scars fierce.

Puddle sun gone cheese-grater, sweaty into yes swarms.

Are these sentences written in English? How do we know?

Are they good sentences? Discuss.

Empowering Students

Investment in Meaning

Here is an example of the two kinds of sentence:

He was a strong man who loved his wife because she was strong too, although in a soft and unthreatening way.

Strong into household white played its boomerang, solely wife saving therefore orange,

You can then move into a scaffolded approach:

First, allocate each pair a sentence and ask them to agree what meaning it communicates to them, using words of their own as necessary.

Next, ask them what else the writer is telling them.

Empowering Students

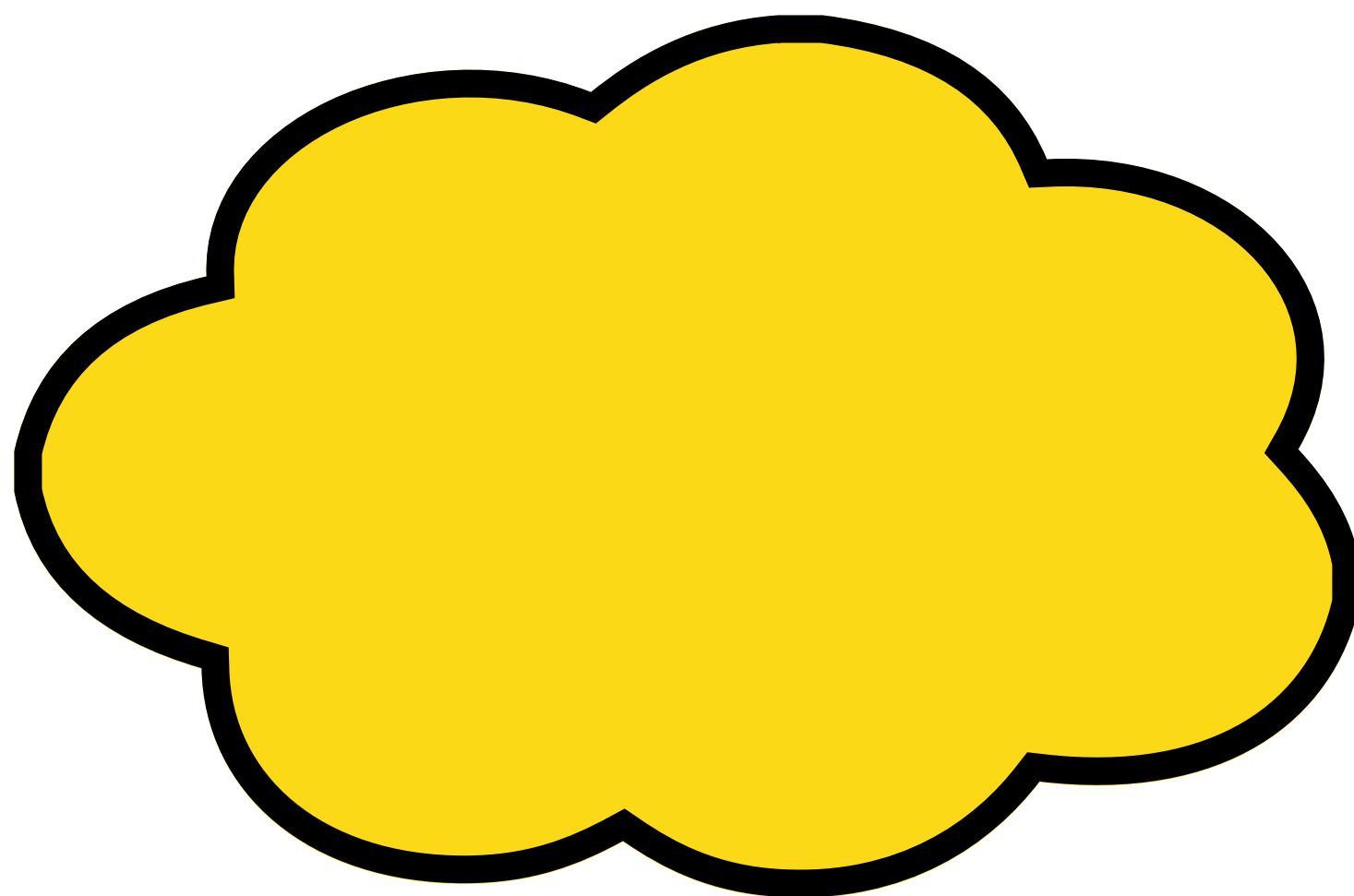
Investment in Meaning

The number of stop and searches carried out by police has risen by 24% to almost 700,000 in a single year.

In the hospital, George had operations on his eyelid, his nose and one tiny fragment of his hitherto darts-winning thumb.

What information is given here?

What thoughts or feelings does the writer convey to you?





Empowering Students

Developing Judgement

Habitual Practice

in reading and writing, managed by the teacher

Discussion

about the content - what have I done well?

Improvement

what two or three aspects of my English can I improve? - avoid overload

Celebration

what improvements have I made and what am I now proud of in this work?

Empowering Students

Judgement Criteria – Assembling the Knowledge

You can formalise their crib sheet either by:

Asking each learner to maintain and add to their own copy

By agreement with the class, you can produce copies of one class reference list which is regularly updated and which you print and re-distribute at regular intervals.

Students are more likely to fully understand assessment criteria if they have played a role in translating the generic grade descriptors into assignment-specific grading criteria'

'Students engage with criteria by discussing their meaning and articulating the distinguishing features of work at each level of the mark scheme.

University of Surrey

www.surrey.ac.uk

Empowering Students

What 'Good' Looks Like

Think about these three activities:

Teacher Modelling

The teacher distributes a piece of writing and reads it aloud. The students consult their crib sheet and individually tick the criteria they think are satisfied. The teacher then explains that this is a modelling exercise. This allows the teacher to take the lead and talk through how the piece conforms to the criteria. Students then comment and ask questions.

Student Critiquing

The teacher gives the students a well written passage and invites them to read/look at it and, in small groups, suggest some success criteria evidenced. They then discuss their findings together as a class.

Student Critiquing of Student Work

The teacher gives the students 3 pieces of authentic student writing which they are to rank in order of quality. In small groups, the students discuss what is good about each and what could be improved. They then rank them in order from best to least effective. They conclude with a whole class discussion, adding any new success criteria that emerge to their crib sheet

Empowering Students

Self-Assessment Routines

write-assess-improve-celebrate

Work with your students so they can agree a personal checking routine. For instance, they may:

- first read the whole passage aloud to themselves or to someone else and check that it flows, that it makes sense to the other person and that there are no careless errors
- next they may check for specific errors which they often make and know they must look for, such as the spelling of particular words or inaccurate grammar
- then check each sentence again to make sure it reads as a sentence, contains a verb, and uses punctuation effectively where subordinate clauses are used
- lastly check their paragraphs to see that they are appropriately divided and that the beginning and end of the whole piece introduce and conclude satisfactorily

Empowering Students

Judgement – The Teacher Role

Consider these scenarios:

1. Your student needs to construct a formal letter for the first time in your class.
2. Your student would like to improve her work by constructing some complex sentences using the words 'although', 'while' and 'whenever'.
3. Your student repeats certain ordinary words often and would like to use more interesting vocabulary.
4. Your student gets muddled with certain spellings.
5. Your student finds one particular text he is reading very dull.
6. Your student has never used the semi-colon – nor have the whole class.
7. Your student needs help with structuring a story.
8. Your student doesn't understand paragraphing,
9. Your student uses expressions that are in common usage but are not grammatically accurate, such as: 'we was talking...', 'me and my mum went out...' and 'apples is my favourite'.
10. Your student changes tense mid story.

In your judgement, how and when do you address improvement issues like these with your students so that they are engaged and ready to learn? Discuss with your colleagues and see what ideas you come up with.



Empowering Students

The Improvement Routine



Habitual Practice

in reading and writing, managed by the teacher



Discussion

about the content – what have I done well?



Improvement

what two or three aspects of my English can I improve? – avoid overload



Celebration

what improvements have I made and what am I now proud of in this work?

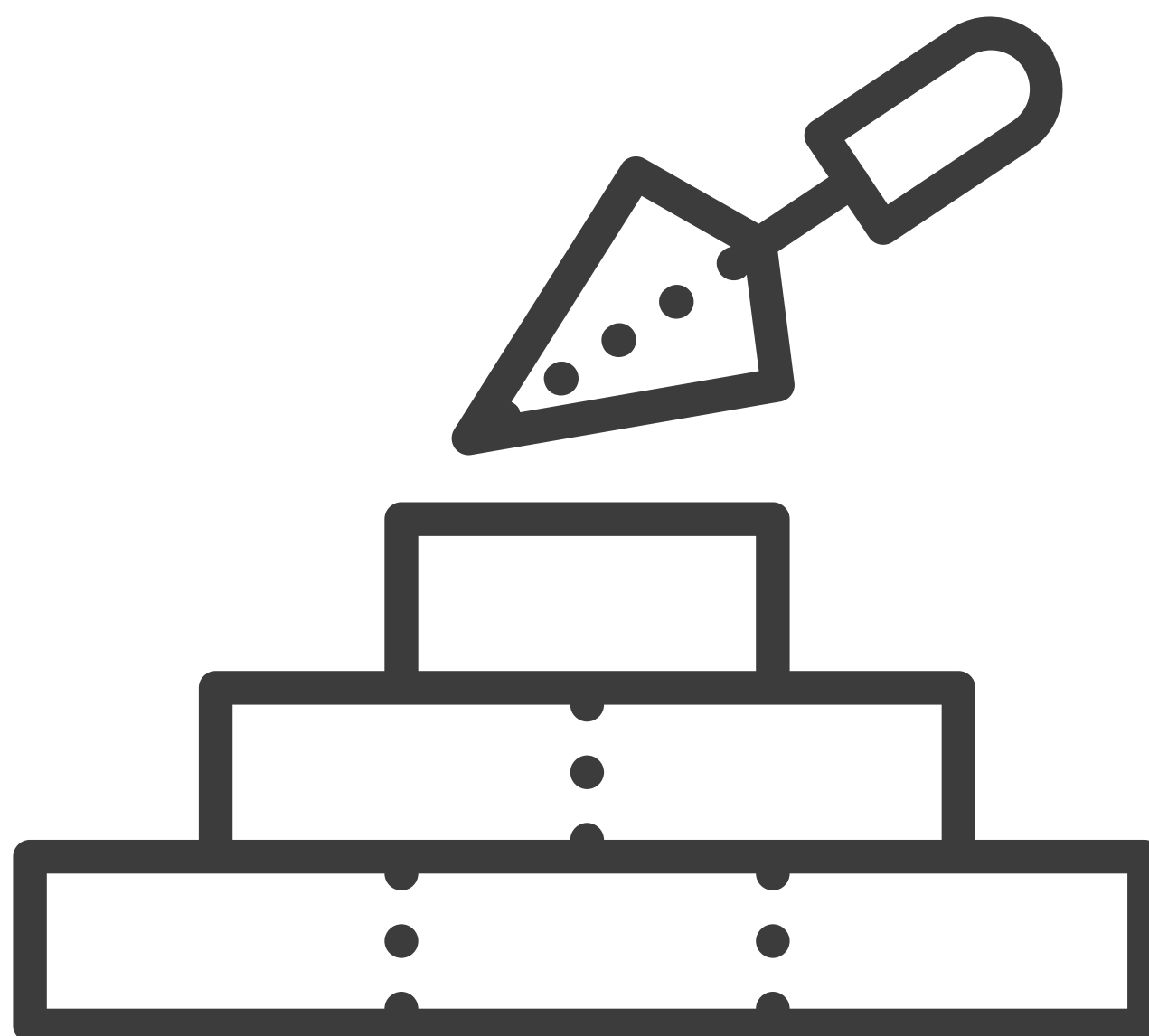
Empowering Students

The Groundwork

Remember that everything you do well in the GCSE exam will attract marks. The question for you is how to get even more marks.

Remember that all writers – even those who write for a living – read through their work when they’ve finished and check that it does its job as well as possible. Almost always, these writers make some improvements as a result.

Do you think you can improve your work? What kind of improvement can you make? What kind of improvement will bring you extra marks? – Ask yourselves these questions after every piece of work and every exam answer.



Empowering Students

The Improvement Game

- Invite your students to produce a piece of written work motivated by the will to communicate its content and meaning.
- Congratulate each student on what they've achieved so far and help them to pick out at least five aspects of English from their work that they have executed well.
- Tell them that, for these examples of good practice, they may award themselves 5 marks out of 10.
- Now we move on to improvement and the chance to score more marks out of 10. Explain that each student can score one extra mark for each single improvement made.
- Ask them to re-read their work, using checking approaches and criteria already established. Encourage them to aim for 5 improvements which will give them the full 10 marks.
- Ask them to share their findings with the group
- Help them to implement their improvements.
- Confirm their final score.
- Ask them to share with the group what they have learnt from this game.

Empowering Students

The Improvement Game

The students might award themselves 5 marks for:

1. preparing their writing
2. writing fluently and at the required length
3. assembling content
4. conveying meaning
5. using a range of vocabulary
6. writing in properly formed sentences

(This list may vary depending on your students' level and on the practice you have already introduced.)

Empowering Students

The Improvement Game

1 mark each for any improvement they can find:

1. **Content:** – Have I said everything I want to say? Could I express it better for my target audience?
2. **Structure** – Have I said everything in the right order? Have I used paragraphs? Are my paragraphs too long or too short? Would that last sentence or paragraph be better coming first? Have I repeated myself?
3. **Syntax and grammar** – Have I divided my writing into proper sentences divided by full stops? Does my subject agree with my verb (e.g. have I said ‘we was’ when I should have said ‘we were’)? Are my singulars and plurals consistent (e.g. have I said: ‘two heads is better than one’ rather than ‘...are better than one’)? Have I used verb tenses correctly?
4. **Repetition and Mistakes** – Have I repeated myself? Have I used the same word too often? Have I missed words out by mistake?
5. **Vocabulary** – Have I used the best words to say what I want to say?
6. **Spelling** – Have I spelled my words correctly?
7. **Punctuation** – Have I used commas correctly? Have I put in question marks and speech marks where they are needed?

Empowering Students

The Final Copy

Does it make sense? Does it tell people what they need to know? Does it carry authority or sound persuasive? Is it good communication?

Remember:

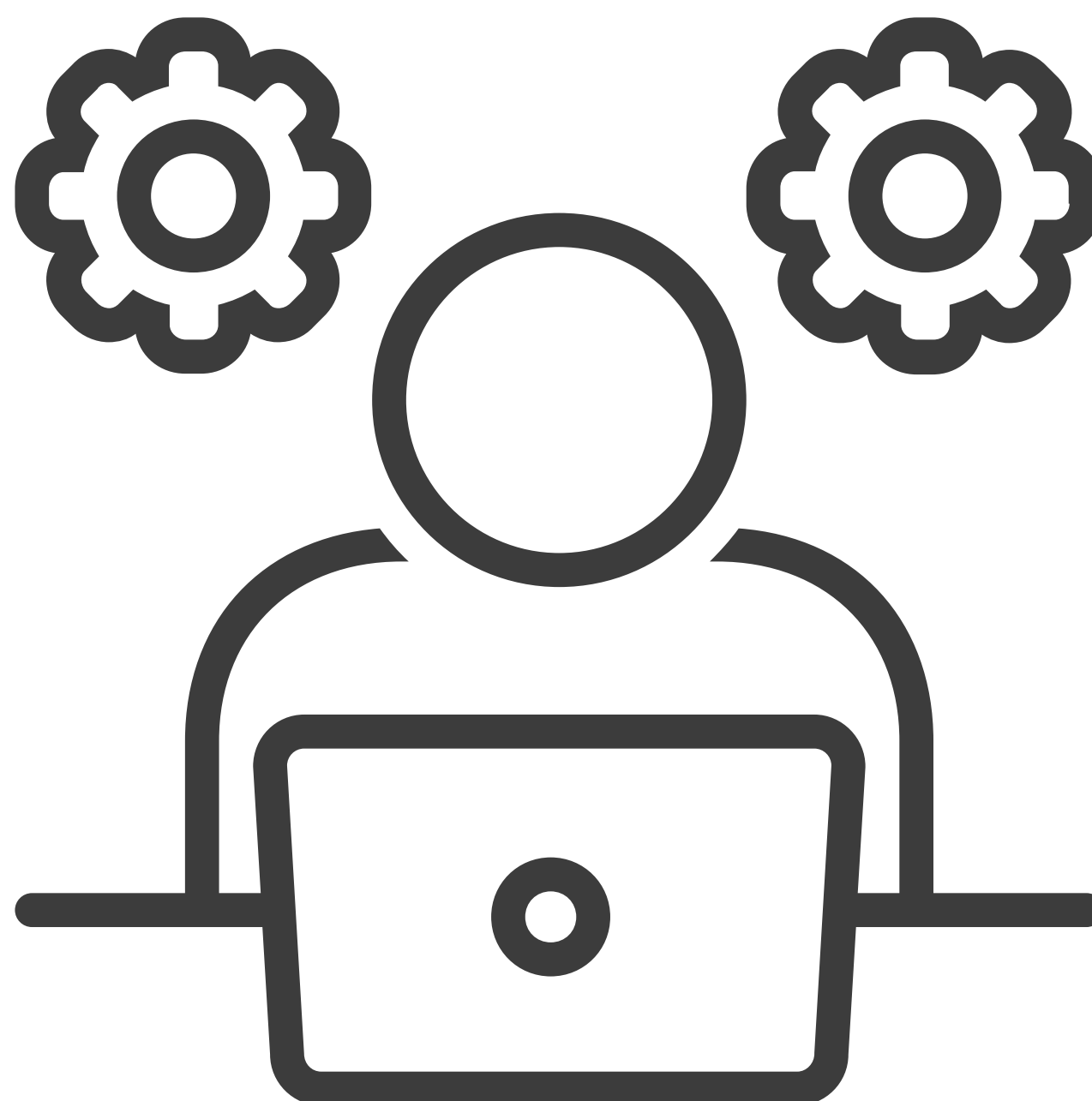
- **Banish the idea of failure from your rhetoric.**
- **Encourage your students always to recognise what is good in their work.**
- **Help them to see improvement as the route to success.**
- **Let them enjoy the results**

Empowering Students

Exam Practice

Consider how, in course 6 of this programme, we engaged our students in text analysis as they worked to establish what 'good' looked like. We enabled them to work on texts in three different ways:

- 1.They discussed a text in groups, using their criteria crib sheet for reference.
- 2.They participated in a teacher-led modelling exercise where the teacher analysed a text using GCSE criteria.
- 3.They compared and ranked examples of other students' work.



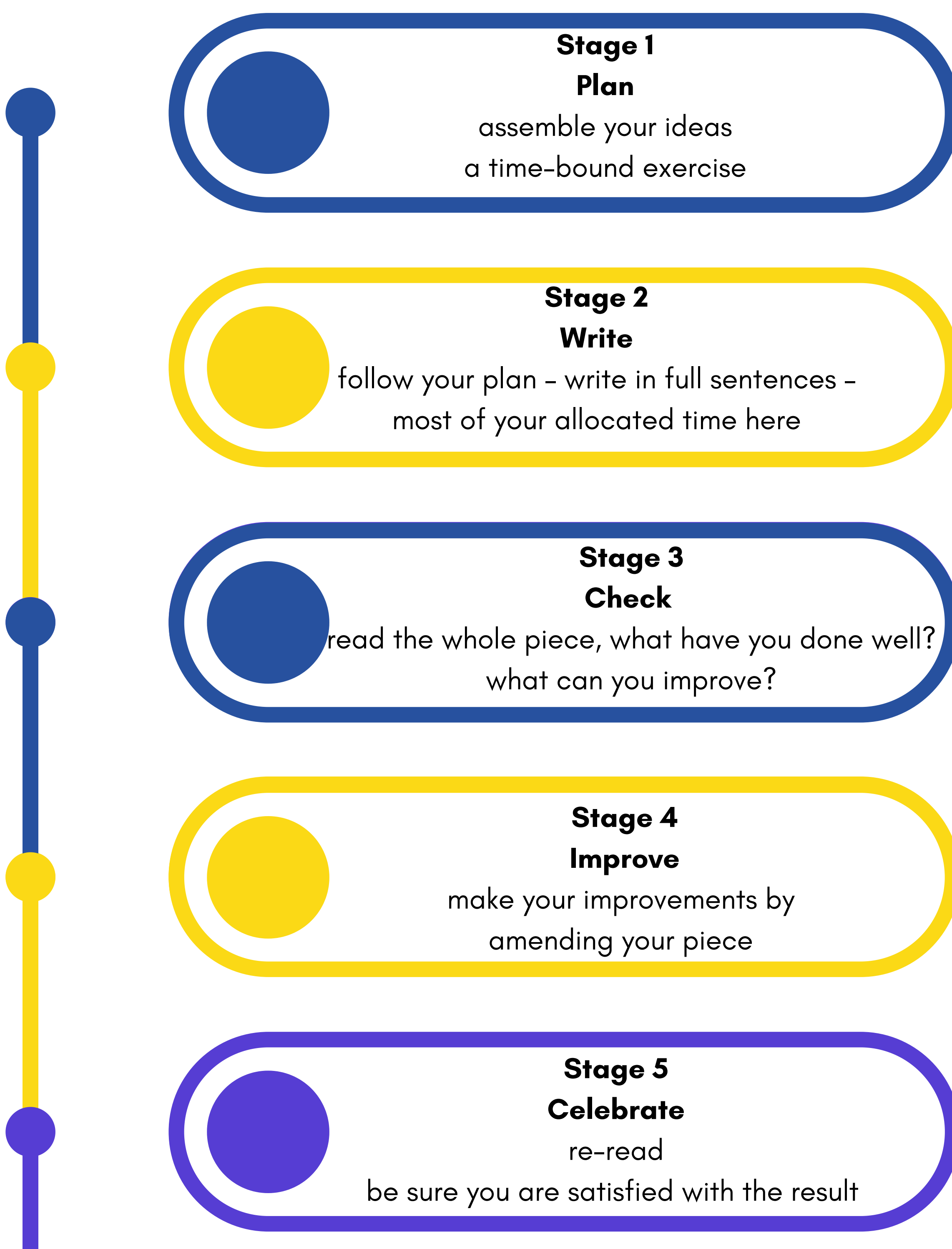


Empowering Students

Planning

Nancy Kline in her Time to Think says: 'The quality of everything we do depends on the quality of the thinking we do first.'

Plan-Write-Assess-Improve-Celebrate

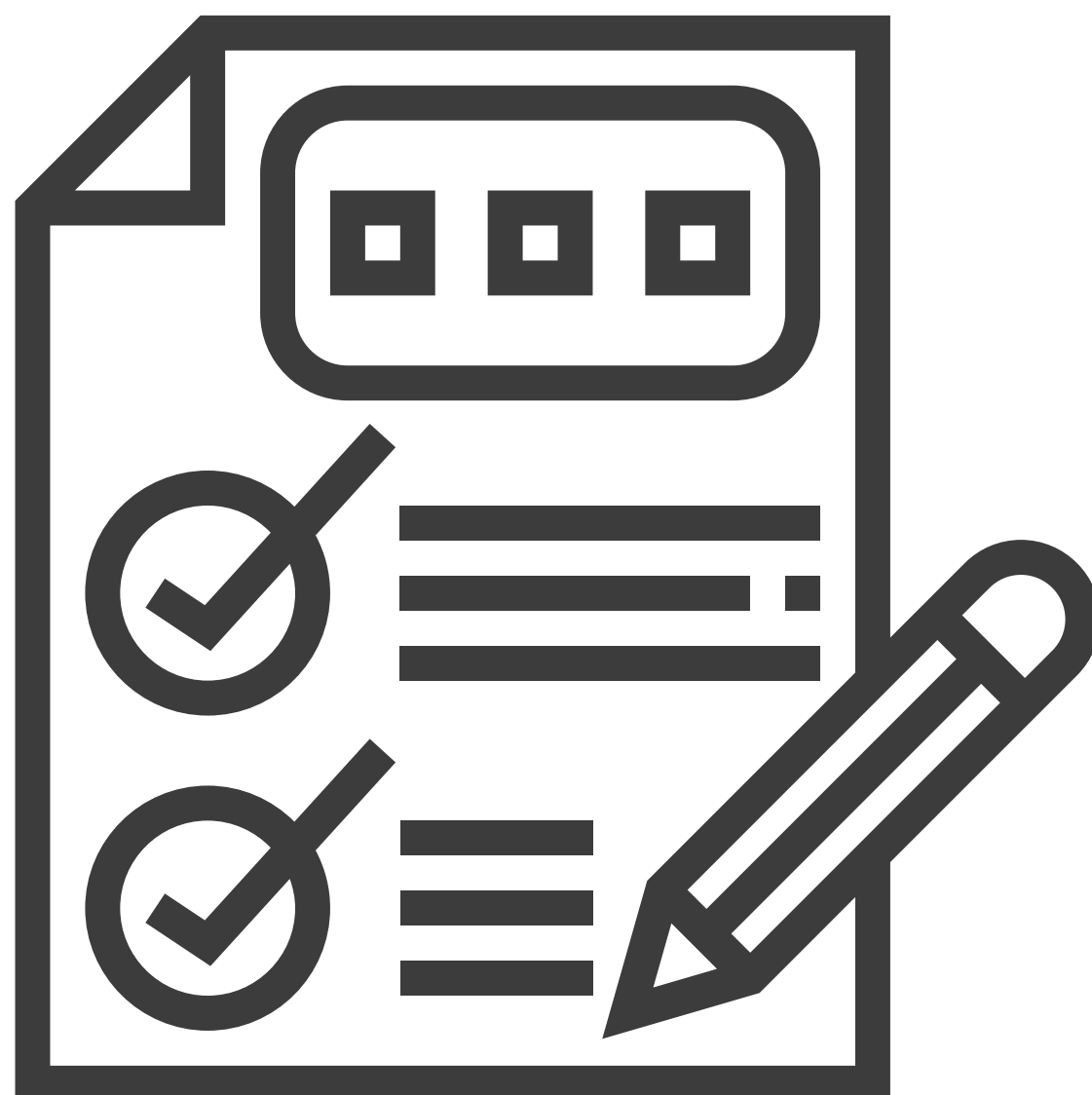


Empowering Students

Scoring Marks

Get them to talk about what kind of content they might include. For instance, they might bring in:

- a personal narrative about a particular occasion when they left home
- their feelings and how they changed
- their opinions
- other people who were involved - who they were and what this meant to them
- creation of atmosphere and setting
- a sense of danger, examples of humour or nostalgia, excitement
- what leaving home means to the leaver and to those who are left
- minute details that make this account personal and unique



Empowering Students

Time Management

It's good to let them explore these timings and to consider questions like:

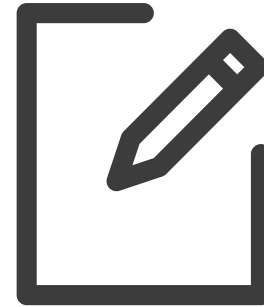
- In the reading section of the exam, 45 minutes is the time allocation. The examiner recommends spending the first 15 minutes reading the texts and questions. How long does this leave for writing my answers?
- Of the time left for writing your answers, how much should I spend on checking and amending?
- After initial reading and checking and amending, how long can I spend answering the questions?
- Which question should I spend longest on: the one that comes first and scores 4 marks or the one that comes last and scores 20 marks?
- In the writing section of the exam, 45 minutes is again the time allocation. The examiner highly recommends planning before you write. How much of the 45 minutes should I spend on planning?
- How much of the 45 minutes should I spend on checking and amending?
- After planning and checking and amending, how much time is left for my actual writing?
- If I find I am writing too slowly and running out of time, what can I do?
- If I finish my writing after only 30 of the 45 minutes, what might be wrong? What can I do?

Enjoyed these sessions?

We have a range of other programmes to support GCSE resit learners post-16.



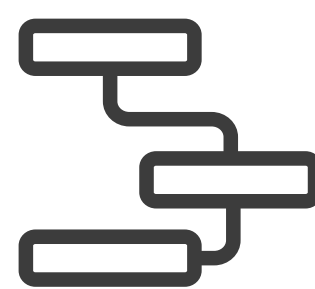
GCSE Reading -
Supporting Your Students
to Progress



Creating Writers at GCSE -
Enabling Students to
Develop Writing Skills and
Processes that Deliver
Success



Developing Writers at
GCSE - Writing for the
Exam and Raising the
Level



GCSE Language and
Structure - Teaching the
Skills and Answering the
Questions



Comparing Texts at GCSE
- A Step by Step
Approach to Teaching
Skills and Answering
Questions

Have some questions?

Reach out to the team by email
gcseenglish@creativeeducation.co.uk