

# Introduction

Welcome to **Middle English**, a series for 11–14 year olds that offers a range of resource materials, including Shakespeare, media and poetry, to support the teaching of English.

**The Write Stuff** is a lively unit of three programmes presented by Sean Hughes and featuring John Hegley. The magazine-style format introduces examples of different aspects of literacy in an appealing and humorous way.

The programmes are designed to help meet some of the English department's needs in the area of writing. They focus on the basics of writing, and offer a historical and cultural context within which standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation can be addressed by the teacher.

## The programmes

### Programme 1: Handwriting

This programme makes handwriting into an area of focus and interest. The aim is to move from discussions of legibility and what handwriting says about character and personality into a wider consideration of presentational aspects.

### Programme 2: Spelling

This programme offers guidelines, advice and a historical perspective on spelling, within an entertaining format. It focuses on how irregular modern English spelling is and how words change and develop.

### Programme 3: Punctuation

This programme provides a framework to support writing in schools, emphasising common errors and the practical value of sound punctuation in effective communication.

## contents

Introduction	1
Background	2
Programme 1	
<b>Handwriting</b>	
Teacher Notes	3
Activity Sheet 1: Handwriting Tips	4
Activity Sheet 2: DIY Graphology 1	5
Activity Sheet 3: DIY Graphology 2	6
Activity Sheet 4: Others People's Writing	8
Activity Sheet 5: Best Writing 1	9
Activity Sheet 6: Best Writing 2	10
Programme 2	
<b>Spelling</b>	
Teacher Notes	11
Definitions	12
Activity Sheet 1: Interesting Words	13
Activity Sheet 2: Does Spelling Matter?	14
Activity Sheet 3: New Words 1	15
Activity Sheet 4: New Words 2	16
Activity Sheet 5: Spelling	17
Programme 3	
<b>Punctuation</b>	
Teacher Notes	18
Activity Sheet 1: Making It Fun	19
Activity Sheet 2: Practise the Comma	20
Activity Sheet 3: Bad Language	21
Activity Sheet 4: One to One	22
Activity Sheet 5: Punctuation Practice 1	23
Activity Sheet 6: Punctuation Practice 2	24
Credits	25

# Background

## Approaches to Literacy

Two factors make the timing of this series on writing particularly relevant to teachers of English for 11–14 year olds. The first is the worrying performance of all children, and of boys in particular, in the area of writing; and the second is the need to take forward the best practice from the National Literacy Strategy in primary schools into secondary English teaching.

There are reasons to believe that the focus of the curriculum may move towards a greater emphasis on standards of literacy. For example, the implications for secondary schools of the National Literacy Strategy include a greater focus on areas like improving the performance of boys, the use of non-fiction sources, the cross-curricular teaching of literacy, and the use of ICT.

Literacy is defined as, simply, the ability to read and write. In terms of writing, literate children should be able to:

- ◆ write with confidence, fluency and understanding
- ◆ plan, draft, revise and edit
- ◆ show an interest in words and word meanings, and develop a growing vocabulary
- ◆ understand the sound and spelling systems and use them to read and spell accurately
- ◆ produce fluent and legible handwriting

There are evident discrepancies between pupils' performances in writing and reading, and also between the performances of boys and girls. In the area of reading, schools are set to meet the government's performance targets of having 80% of 11 year olds performing at Level 4 or above by 2002, but in the area of writing there is much more to be done.

Schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland are already involved in the development of a secondary literacy strategy to improve standards. There, the focus is on helping teachers develop diagnostic strategies, to identify the specific weaknesses of pupils with literacy problems, and to tackle these weaknesses early.

## Using the programmes

The overall aim of these materials is to allow students to explore and reflect on the issues they raise. It is not possible to cover all of the vagaries of English spelling and grammar in one programme, but it is possible to develop in an entertaining way, for example, the notion that spelling is a system and that there are relationships between families of words.

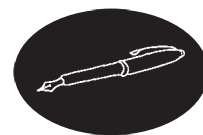
## Using the Study Guide

This Study Guide is intended for use with students, and is in three sections – one for each programme. These are subdivided into themes. The activity sheets provide students with ideas, information and advice. They are photocopiable and can be worked on individually, in groups or as a whole class. Students can work their way through the activities in the order in which they are presented, but a more 'pick-and-mix' approach is equally possible.

Teachers will need to decide how best to use the activity sheets. Some of the sheets will clearly benefit from enlargement to A3 size, particularly where students are working in groups. Other materials required include felt-tipped pens and larger sheets of paper or card. The use of an activity sheet provides an extra stimulus alongside the programmes, which can help students engage with what is seen and heard.



# Programme 1: Handwriting



## Programme outline

Sean Hughes introduces the topic of handwriting as a skill that is still important. A sequence about the history of handwriting develops the idea of communication. This leads on to the idea of signatures being an expression of an individual's personality, and the way graphology is used to analyse character – particularly that of Tony Blair and the members of Boyzone. Finally, the importance of legibility in handwriting is emphasised.

## Whole-class work

Use an overhead projector transparency to show examples of handwriting from other members of staff. Use this to define the key terms used on Activity Sheet 3 – 'size', 'slant', 'width', 'zones', 'pattern', 'joins', 'lines', and 'spacing' – which can then be worked on in groups using the activity sheet.

Follow up the work on handwriting with a lesson on word-processed presentation. Use another transparency to discuss fonts and styles (regular, bold, italic).

serif

sans serif

decorated

contemporary

Use examples to show how particular fonts and styles are appropriate to particular purposes (for example, newspaper pages, invitations, coursework). If there is time, discuss examples of good and bad page formatting (characters per line, paragraph indentation, line spacing, and so on).

Visit the local public record office to find examples of handwriting from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. Take copies and enlarge them as overhead projector transparencies for discussion.

## Group work and homework

Looking at parents' and grandparents' handwriting is an interesting way of exploring changes in accepted style. Set the research as a homework task and ask the class to find out how other generations were taught and what they remember about their handwriting lessons.

Ask students to look at changes in their own handwriting by finding examples of their writing from their primary school days.

Bring in a range of pens with different-sized nibs and tips. Encourage the group to experiment with them by making presentation copies of short poems.

*Kind words can be short and easy to speak  
but their echoes are truly endless.*

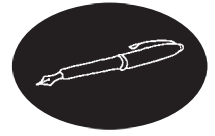
Mother Teresa

*I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

*'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves  
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.*

## Activity Sheet 1

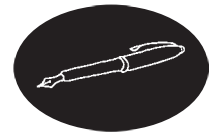
# Handwriting Tips



In the programme, you see and hear a number of tips for improving your handwriting.


- ▶ As you watch the programme again, note them down in the boxes below.
- ▶ After watching the programme, check your lists together as a group. Make sure that what you have written down makes sense and is spelt correctly. Decide which tips you think are the most important and helpful.
- ▶ Now, use the information and your discussion to design a poster for a primary school classroom that includes each of the tips you have been given.

# DIY Graphology 1



Don't write your name on this sheet.

- ▶ On the lines below, write a paragraph, filling the whole space, about what you did last Saturday.

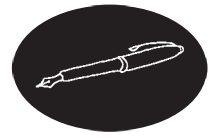
## NOTES


## Analysis of this writing

(Don't write anything here yet.)


## Activity Sheet 3

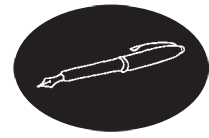
## DIY Graphology 2



► Use these checks to analyse the handwriting that you have been given. In the final column, draft your analysis of this person's character from what their handwriting says about them.

WRITING FEATURE	WHAT IT'S LIKE	WHAT IT SHOWS	WHAT YOU NOTICED
SIZE	large	A sign of ambition and thinking big. Someone who likes to be noticed. They could be good at art, drama or music.	
	small	A modest personality. This person may feel inferior. They like detailed work and could be good at science or maths.	
SLANT	to the left	A defensive personality. They may hide their feelings and feel that people are often against them.	
	to the right	An outgoing personality, friendly. Very sloped writing indicates an emotional, open, person.	
	both	A mixed personality, perhaps being defensive or outgoing depending on the situation.	
	neither	The more upright the letters, the more self-controlled is the writer. They could be poised and enjoy being in control.	
WIDTH	narrow letters	Narrow letters can mean narrow views and intolerance. These people can be shy or mean but also have inner strength.	
	wide letters	Uninhibited people who like to have fun and experiment but can end up getting into trouble as well.	
ZONES (zones are the spaces above and below each letter)	all equal	If letters split into three equal parts so that the <i>a</i> , the tail on <i>y</i> and the ascender on <i>h</i> are the same, look for an artistic person.	
	large upper zone	A large upper zone (ascenders) suggests a hard working person but one with little confidence.	
	large lower zone	A sign of a down-to-earth, basic person with strong ideas.	

## DIY Graphology 2 (continued)

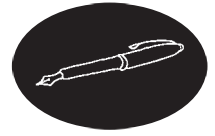


WRITING FEATURE	WHAT IT'S LIKE	WHAT IT SHOWS	WHAT YOU NOTICED
PATTERN	regular	A regular pattern indicates a person who is well organised and plans ahead.	
	irregular	Irregular writing could indicate confusion or an original thinker who does not like to be tied down.	
JOINS	mostly joined	Flowing linked handwriting is a sign of people who are sociable and well adjusted. They are usually logical people.	
	mostly unjoined	Can be a sign of brilliance or of a nit-picking personality.	
LINES	line falls	People whose writing moves down the page as they write may be pessimistic in outlook, or they may just be tired.	
	line rises	A sign of optimism linked with cheerful people who have hopes for the future.	
SPACING	wide space	People who leave large gaps between words are independent but can be isolated and lonely as well.	
	narrow space between words	These people are sociable. They like almost anybody and enjoy being in a crowd.	
	between lines	If the descenders on one line mix with the ascenders on the next, this person is not well-organised.	

► Now go back to Activity Sheet 2 and write your analysis in the box provided. Find out who it belongs to and discuss with them how accurate your analysis is. Share your views with the rest of the group.

## Activity Sheet 4

## Other People's Writing



► Look at the examples of handwriting on this page. Use the graphology tips on Activity Sheet 3 to analyse the handwriting.

1 I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

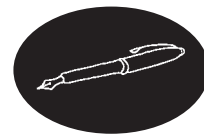
2 I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

3 I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

4 I spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

5 I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

# Best Writing 1



You can change your handwriting style either for effect or for fun. The most common handwriting is joined up – something like this:

*I like to try to improve my handwriting*

or

*I like to try to improve my handwriting.*

These are versions of the kind of writing you were probably taught at primary school. Generally, joined-up writing is neater and more fluent, but most adults use a range of joins, as you can see when you study their writing closely. Look at how people write the letters 'r', 'h' and 'j', and at how they link the letters 'e' and 'o', to see some common differences.

- ▶ Can you see two ways in which the examples above differ in the way the handwriting is joined?

Another very popular kind of handwriting is *italic*, which is not always joined up. It is something like this:

*I like to try to improve my handwriting*

or

*I like to try to improve my handwriting*

*Calligraphy* is the art of handwriting. It has been practised since books were copied by hand by monks. Nowadays, printing and computers allow all sorts of writing styles at the flick of a key.

*I like to try to improve my handwriting.*

or

*I like to try to improve my handwriting.*

or

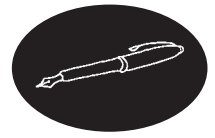
*I like to try to improve my handwriting.*

One way to change your writing is to change your pen. The italic handwriting above uses a broad nib for drawing wide and thin lines, but most joined-up writing uses a line of even thickness.

- ▶ Experiment with your handwriting style using the examples on Activity Sheet 6.

## Activity Sheet 6

## Best Writing 2



Using a variety of pens and writing styles, write out each of the following on A5 paper:

- ▶ The menu for tonight's meal at Andre's Bistro. Here it is as scribbled down by Andre. You can add your favourite dish.

*Prawns in a white sauce or  
carrot & sweetcorn soup  
followed by fillet of Venison or  
cod steaks served with  
green beans & scalloped potatoes  
and a selection of desserts from the trolley.*

Remember that layout is important and so is the size of your writing.

- ▶ A letter to a boyfriend or girlfriend who is moving away. Here is the rough version. You can change it slightly if you like.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I know now that you must go and that time like the sun and the stars move on around us but please treasure this letter for ever for it comes from the heart of a very dear friend.

Yours everlastingly,

- ▶ An advertisement for your old car that you can stick inside the back window. You can change the model if you like.

# FOR SALE

MAESTRO 1986

FULL M.O.T., 6 MONTHS TAX

CONTACT PAUL ON

01977 833646 AFTER 6PM

- ▶ A nice quotation to stick on your noticeboard. You can choose another if you like.

*Kind words can be short and easy to speak  
but their echoes are truly endless.*

Mother Teresa

# Programme 2: Spelling



## Programme outline

This programme presents some of the ways in which we put our knowledge of spelling to good use: in writing, obviously; in playing scrabble, where knowledge of prefixes and suffixes is very useful; and in spelling competitions.

Sean Hughes considers homophones, and a representative from the Simplified Spelling Society makes a case for dropping silent letters in words. A brief journey into the history of writing tells us that, although we speak modern English, we write using much the same spelling that became 'fixed' following the introduction of the printing press by Caxton in the fourteenth century.

New words come into the English language from many different sources, principally the media and particularly through advertising. The programme suggests that the biggest influence on spelling today is from the Internet, where acronyms such as IMHO ('in my humble opinion') are creating new words.

## Whole-class work

Reinforce the work on spelling rules and tips covered by the programme, revising each of the spelling tips with additional examples.

Using the background information on page 12, discuss with the class how words are formed. Teach the meanings of the emboldened terms on page 12, with examples. (Remember that, in a primary school literacy hour, the whole-class session is directed at the ability level of the top 20% of the class.)

Use the list of words, given by the speaker from the Simplified Spelling Society, containing a 'sh' sound but not the letters 'sh', (for example, 'sure', 'special', 'pension', 'mention', 'machine', 'crescendo', 'conscience', 'mission', 'anxious', 'moustache', 'luxury') as part of an exercise on phonetic spelling. Encourage pupils to find examples with other sounds, for example 'f' as in 'photograph' and 'enough'.

## Group work and homework

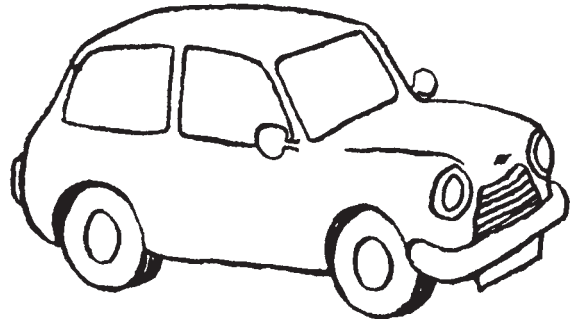
Douglas Adams has invented a game in which the players are given local place names and then have to invent likely definitions for these words. For example, Cheadle might be a verb, 'to cheadle', meaning to complain to your teenage children about the state of their bedrooms.

Another idea is to make up new words for things that have not been invented: the four-wheeled cycle, the digital book, the solar-powered vacuum cleaner, a watch that displays messages, a jet-ski that you can use on snow, and so on. Reversing this idea, collect neologisms and acronyms from colour-supplement advertisements and car and computing magazines.

It can be interesting for students to devise a ten-item spelling test to try out on family and friends. This needs to be sensitively handled. Encourage groups to include some recent words and some that are commonly misspelt. The group may well find that they are, in fact, quite competent spellers when compared to society at large.

### Activity Sheet 3 answers

*Car models:* There are a few genuine coinages – *Megane* is simply meant to sound like an interesting French word; *Freelander* is a compound; *Focus* and *Neon* are examples of shifting; *space-* is a common prefix nowadays; *Boxster* is a blend.



'**cheadle**, *vi.*, To complain...' '**cheadle**, *vi.*, To complain...' '**cheadle**, *vi.*, To complain...'

# Definitions



**Neologisms** are new words that relate to one or more existing words: for example, *Freelander*.

**Word coinage**, or the creation of new words, is less common. *Kodak* (films and cameras) is said to have been a pure invention, in contrast, for example, to *Microsoft* or *Hoover* where the origins are more traceable. A *googol* is a word for  $10^{100}$ , and was invented by a mathematician's son. Car manufacturers have taken to coinage as a way of marketing their models in all language communities, but the words they create (*Ka*, *Vectra*, *Safrane*) often make reference to existing words and meanings.

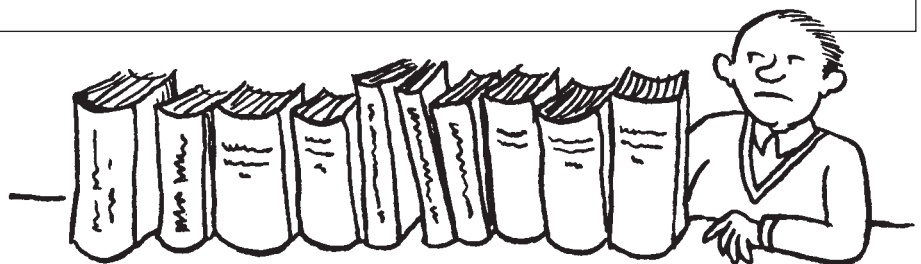
**Affixing** is one way by which neologisms are formed. For example, the word *workaholic*, meaning someone who is addicted to work, uses the suffix *-holic* (itself derived from *alcoholic*). The prefixes *video-*, *tele-* and *Euro-* have been widely used in recent years.

**Compounding** is another way neologisms are formed – for example, *homework*. A *spin-doctor* is a person who manipulates the media professionally. A *deep-pocket* is a source of funding for projects. *Cashpoint* is only rarely hyphenated.

**Conversion** is a basic process of word formation. Three interesting processes for students to think about are **extension** (where a word widens its meaning), **narrowing** (where a word becomes more specialised), and **shift** (where a word is used in different circumstances). In contemporary slang, *bad* and *wicked* have undergone conversion. Many words have acquired new meanings in computing: for example, *memory*, *clipboard*, *font* and *dump*.

Neologisms are also formed by compressing words. **Blends** are words (such as *brunch*) that combine two existing words (*breakfast* and *lunch*). Trade names often make use of blending. A *poodlador* is a cross between a poodle and a labrador. **Clippings** are shortened versions of words, such as *phone* for telephone or *flu* for influenza. Recent clippings include *exam* for examination and *ad* or *advert* for advertisement.

Abbreviated words can be formed from sets of initials. Where these are sounded as a new word they are known as **acronyms**. So, a *quango* is a 'quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation' and a *dinky* is a one of a couple with a 'double income, no kids yet'. Sometimes the initials are sounded separately, as in *BBC* or *CNN*: this is known as **initialisation**. The ease of pronunciation determines whether the initials are pronounced as a word or separately: thus *AIDS* (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) is acronymic but *CJD* (Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease) is an example of initialisation.



# Interesting Words



- ▶ On a separate piece of paper jot down interesting words that you hear as you watch the programme again. They can be long words, new words, unusual words or words that you have difficulty spelling. You will have to work quickly.
- ▶ Next, work from your list to complete this grid.

WORD (check the spelling)	DEFINITION (look up the meaning and summarise it in your own words)



## Activity Sheet 2

## Does Spelling Matter?



- On your own, list (correctly and in alphabetical order) the ten misspelt words in this paragraph:

*After I received a leter from my aunt, I traveled to Transylvania where I encountered Count Dracula and his misterious servent. I might have dyed but, luckilly, I had rememberd to pack my sharpend wooden steak.*



- Two of the words have a homophone (another word pronounced the same but spelt differently). Which are they?
- In a small group, compare your answers. Then, discuss your answers to these questions:
- ◆ If you noticed that a friend had misspelt a word on a letter they had written, how would you react? Would you tell them?
  - ◆ If you noticed that a teacher had misspelt a word on the blackboard, would you react in the same way? If not, can you say why?
  - ◆ Why do you think spelling mistakes in printed documents like newspapers or magazines can look worse than those in handwriting?
  - ◆ Do you think that employers notice spelling mistakes in job applications?
  - ◆ What are the differences between...?
    - ◆ a spelling dictionary
    - ◆ a thesaurus
    - ◆ a spell-checker
    - ◆ an etymological dictionary
- Report your answers back to the class. For homework, write what you would say in a short talk answering the question: does spelling matter?

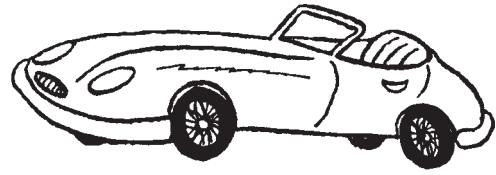


# Activity Sheet 3

## New Words 1



► Working as a group, brainstorm the names of new car models. Think of as many as you can belonging to different manufacturers. (For example, Ford, Vauxhall, Rover, Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Alfa Romeo, Renault, Fiat.)

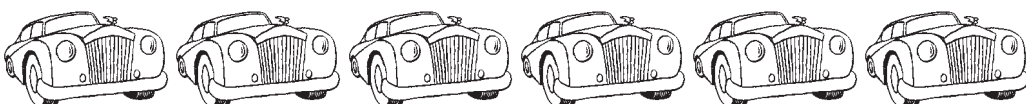


► Now working with a partner, pick six of the words to enter in this grid. Complete it.

Means of formation	Name of a car model formed in this way	Why the manufacturers might have chosen this word. What does it make you think of?
coinage		
blending		
shift		
compounding		
clipping		
affixing		

► Imagine that your group has been asked to help some manufacturers launch a new range of models. See who can come up with the best names for these.

Model	Name chosen	Reasons for choosing this name
Volkswagen's new luxury Bentley. A fast saloon car for the very rich.	Bentley ...	
Rover's new mini-car – small, cheap and economical.	Rover ...	
Toyota's new off-road sports car – fast on the road but able to drive across fields as well.	Toyota ...	
The new Honda sports car. Very fast with sleek lines.	Honda ...	



## Activity Sheet 4

## New Words 2



► Working with a partner, see if you can match these words from the world of computing with their definitions. Draw lines to match them up.

## Definitions

- 1 Someone who spends all day playing with a computer.
- 2 Messages sent out in large numbers on the Internet.
- 3 A program that uses too much memory.
- 4 A practised user of the world-wide web.
- 5 An internet game played by many users simultaneously.
- 6 An internet information channel that can carry many messages.

## Words

- a internaut
- b MUD
- c superhighway
- d mouse potato
- e bloatware
- f spam

► Now write down the words you think they have been formed from.

► Carry out your own research into the history of some of the words used in computing. Use a recent dictionary to find out the definition and original meaning of each word, and then learn the spellings.

gigabyte	modem	ROM	applet	website
monitor	DVD	virus	cache	processor



## Activity Sheet 5

## Spelling



Here is John Hegley's story with a dozen exceptions to the spelling rule: 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'.

One night at quite a *height*,  
 The world was white underneath the *weight*  
 Of the great *freight*  
 Of *eight* thousand Christmas presents  
 When Santa heard a *foreign* sound  
 From the front of his *sleigh*:  
 A *neigh* it was, a *neigh*.  
 Surely he should have been hearing *reindeering*,  
 At the end of his *reins*...  
 And through a hole in his beard  
 And a gap in his teeth  
 Santa said, '*weird*',  
 To his assistant, *Keith*.



Another form of this spelling rule is: 'i' before 'e' except after 'c', when the sound is 'ee'. For example, *their* does not have an 'ee' sound in the middle, so 'e' comes before 'i'. There are, however, exceptions.

► Fill in the missing letters in these words. You have a choice between 'ei' or 'ie'. Use a dictionary if you like.

rec\_\_ve    s\_\_ve    p\_\_ce    s\_\_ze    qu\_\_t    br\_\_f  
 th\_\_f    w\_\_rd    fr\_\_nd    pr\_\_st    c\_\_ling    sc\_\_nce

John Hegley also describes a way of remembering how to spell words that are commonly misspelt: to make an acrostic of the word. This means making up a fun phrase using each letter of the word you want to remember. Here is his example for *salmon*:

Sally  
Always  
Liked  
Mike's  
Oblong  
Nostril.



► The words *disappear*, *address*, *unnecessary*, *stationery* (writing provisions) and *their* (belonging to them) are commonly misspelt. Choose four of these words and make up an acrostic to help you remember how to spell them.

# Programme 3: Punctuation



## Programme outline

This programme looks at punctuation in a light-hearted way, emphasising that its main purpose is clarity of meaning. A foray into the history of writing shows how punctuation was developed to reflect the subtle intonations and pauses that people use when they speak. The programme suggests that new technologies such as the Internet are reshaping the ways we use punctuation.

We meet the editorial team at a teen magazine, *Top Hits*, to find out how they use punctuation in the magazine. Then the poet John Hegley performs a specially written poem with no punctuation at all. This is followed by the football-style dialogue of the 'Punctuation Commentators'.

An explanation of how to use the ubiquitous apostrophe leads us finally to the vaults of London University, where Hari Jagdev, an examiner, gives advice about how to use punctuation effectively.

## Whole-class work

Using OHP transparencies or the board, briefly revise sentence marking. You could begin with punctuation at text level (capital letters, full stops, question marks, exclamation marks), then move on to sentence-level punctuation (comma, colon, semicolon, dash, brackets), and then to word-level punctuation (apostrophe, speech marks and quotation marks). The National Literacy Strategy documentation is worth consulting here. A similar approach is to consider punctuation that separates sentences and then punctuation that separates words.

## Group work and homework

Set the class to find out and explain what the following symbols mean in writing. What is each one called?

\*\*\* 'D\*\*n and bl\*\*st you,'

I shouted at the pirate king.

... and then, everything began to go blurred...

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† Sir Reginald Cruddock †1993

& Wallace & Grommit

Find five website addresses from magazines and newspapers. Ask the students to comment on the punctuation of these addresses. You should be able to identify at least four odd features.

Encourage the students to become 'punctuation spotters'. They could work in teams and spend a week collecting examples of incorrect punctuation, making copies of them or taking photographs – particularly shop signs and displays, street names, and stories in the local newspaper. Collect them together for a display and award a prize to the team that finds the most.

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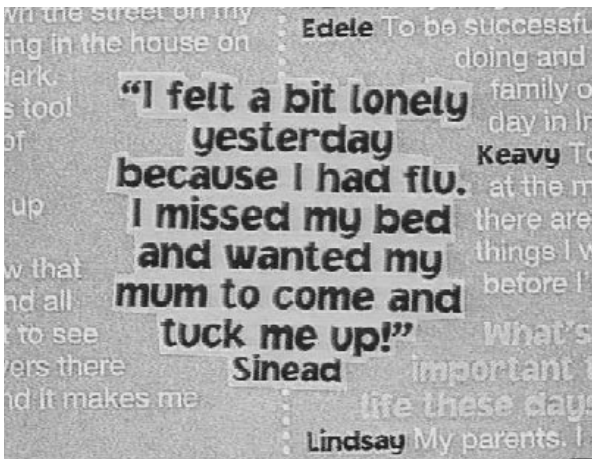
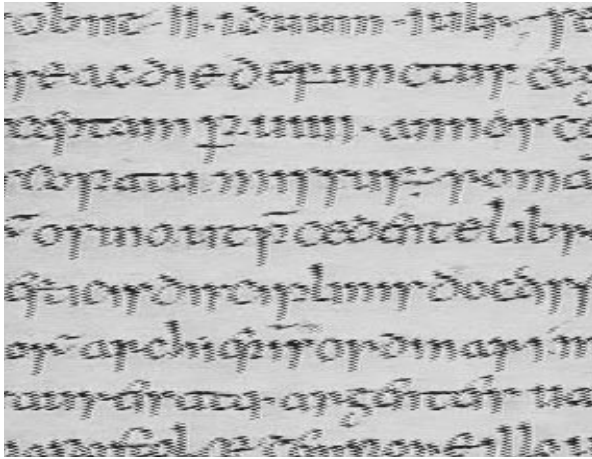
## Activity Sheet 1

## Making It Fun



► With a partner, look at the pictures on this page. Say what each one shows, and try to remember where it came in the programme. Talk about:

- ◆ what the film-maker is trying to show you
- ◆ the methods used
- ◆ why it is done in this way



► Join with another pair to make a group of four. If you wanted to make another programme about punctuation, what would you do to make the programme interesting? You could think about using drama or ICT, for example. Come up with one or two proposals to present to the class.

## Activity Sheet 2

## Practise the Comma



The comma is used in several different ways. Add the commas to this story and write out the punctuated version underneath.

- **Use 1:** To mark off words in a sentence that are subordinate to the overall meaning.

*ages ago while playing in the bath with my toy duck I got my foot stuck in the tap*




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- **Use 2:** To separate items in a list.

*I shouted for mum dad jenny and gary but I knew that they had all gone out shopping together*




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- **Use 3:** To mark off reported speech.

*I said kevin you've really gone and done it now*




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- **Use 4:** After phrases that begin with words like *when, if, unless, although*.

*after a few minutes I heard a noise in the hallway and footsteps on the stairs*




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- How would you punctuate this sentence?

*tracey williams who was the biggest gossip in school and my sister's best friend was peering round the door and laughing fit to bust*




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# Bad Language



The sentences below have a double meaning: they can be read in two ways. In most cases one meaning is rude or daft. Look at the sentences and write a new version underneath each one with punctuation that makes the meaning clear.



- 1 visit your dentist every six months and floss on sundays
- 2 take your pens and beaver away until I tell you to stop said the teacher
- 3 have you seen my bottom asked the shakespearean actor your bottom said the journalist is wonderful
- 4 it makes me laugh when I see my little dog said lady ermintrude going to the toilet in the street
- 5 on my birthday I had chicken curry trifle with whipped cream and felt sick
- 6 all our new models are out standing in mud said the range rover salesman

## Activity Sheet 4

# One to One



In the programme, you saw how the pages of a teenage magazine can use headlines, sub-headings, columns and colour to add to, and sometimes take the place of, punctuation marks.

Your task is to write and design the pages of a modern magazine which will include an interview – conducted by you – with a personality of your choice. It could be a famous person, a pop star, a film actor, or someone from television.



► First, decide who to interview. Plan your questions beforehand. To get your answers, role-play the interview with a partner who pretends to be that person. Audiotape the interview – this will make the role-play more authentic.

► Next, transcribe (copy out) what was said. You are likely to have too much, so you will have to edit it, cutting out the boring stuff and keeping in what will appeal to your readers. Before you do this, look at how much space for words there is on a magazine page. It is probably less than you think. Now you have your *copy* (the words to go on the page).

► Start to plan how your page might look. You will want to include a picture of the person somewhere and, for an interview, you can use a column for each speaker.

You need to think about:

- ◆ How you will show who said what. Different colours? Including names as in a play script?
- ◆ How you will make the interview interesting and realistic. Using question marks, exclamation marks, brackets, ellipses, asterisks?
- ◆ How you will incorporate a headline and sub-headings.

Look at other magazines to get additional ideas.

► Lastly, create your pages. You may be able to use a desktop publishing program. Alternatively, use felt-tipped pens (limit yourself to three colours) and draw columns and headings on your page. Or you could plan the page in this way and then use a computer to create the finished page.

# Punctuation Practice 1



► This is the poem that John Hegley performed to music in the programme. Try to read it and then rewrite it as a poem, putting in the punctuation so that it is easier to read.

## we dont like punctuation

we dont like punctuation exclamation marks they make us narky  
if we were dogs theyd make us barky  
those fullstops and commas please take them from us  
we dont like quotation marks or apostrophes  
we prefer our sentences all running into one dont start hyphenating thats no  
fun that bracket  
racket aint none either  
capital letters are capital punishment thats what we believe  
when i say we i mean me and my instrument  
you may be wondering what its called its called steve with a small s



## Activity Sheet 6

## Punctuation Practice 2



Working with a partner, punctuate the following extracts. The tips will help you. There are no definitive 'right answers'. Use the punctuation marks to make the meaning clear.

*Tip: Watch out for commas within sentences, an apostrophe and a possible exclamation mark.*



▶ one day a man went into a pub and started trying to light a cigarette whatever he did his match would not catch fire another man offered him his lighter and asked him what was wrong with it i dont know said the first man it worked fine yesterday



*Tip: You'll need to make some decisions here about where to put the commas. There is also a chance to use a semicolon and a dash.*



▶ sarah had black hair brown eyes a lovely smile and a fat pink tongue that hung out of her mouth her first walk was to the shops the second to my friends house but on the third she met gnasher shes having puppies soon

*Tip: Some tricky decisions here and a chance to use the colon and semicolon. You'll need to think about the commas.*

▶ on my first day at work experience i was sent to fetch the portable ibm computer with the long lead a teak finish office desk surplus to requirements in the office across the road and five cups of coffee the next day i was sent to get the long weight from mr bennett he kept me hanging about for ages



*Tip: Direct speech is never easy. Remember that punctuation marks go inside the speech marks, the speech marks go around what is spoken, and you use a new line for a new speaker.*

▶ can you go to the shop my granny asked and get me a lottery ticket its illegal i said im too young to gamble too lazy more likely she replied but if you go now well share the winnings im off then i answered

## **Credits**

**The Write Stuff** was produced for  
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