

Writing at BPPS

We use a similar approach for the teaching of writing. We always need to be aware of how our students view themselves as writers and their level of engagement – this underpins all we do.

Again, regardless of where your child sits on the learning sequence, we focus on some key skills and behaviours. In teaching writing, our aim is to develop writers who can compose texts with a clear message, an appropriate structure and an ability to add detail using relevant word choices. We also develop our students' ability to use the conventions of language –spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting are taught explicitly within our writing program.

Our daily writing lessons consist of explicit modelling of writing practices combined with the use of rich language and student discussions to generate ideas. Following the modelled writing, students are given the opportunity to involve themselves at their level and time to practise what has been demonstrated. During this time, to develop the students' craft of writing, teachers run small focus groups using guided and interactive writing or clinic one on one with students.

All students have a personal writing goal to guide their learning. Goal setting helps students to be more aware of the learning that they are expected to experience. This awareness helps them to be more engaged in the learning process. Mastery-oriented goals give students the opportunity to focus on learning standards and their own growth.

To support the teaching of writing we utilise the 6+1 Traits of Writing approach. The Traits is not a program and as such aligns with our existing program and curriculum content. The Six Traits are those qualities deemed characteristics of 'good writing'.

The Six Traits of Writing are:

- IDEAS
- ORGANISATION
- VOICE
- WORD CHOICE
- SENTENCE FLUENCY
- CONVENTIONS
- PRESENTATION (the plus 1)

Within each Trait, teaching is narrowed to specific skills as these relate to writing tasks. Central to all instruction is attention to purpose and audience.

Key features of Traits-based learning are the use of quality texts, construction of meaningful assessment tools and data-driven instruction. Foundations for teaching the Traits include:

- learning to recognise the Traits in the writing of others
- aligning teaching content to diagnostic tools (rubrics)
- matching teaching content to specific learners
- guiding students to apply specific skills
- writing frequently
- using descriptive feedback
- engaging students in goal setting and accountability

This Traits-based instruction supports teachers to plan meaningful lessons, isolate and identify specific text features, develop a metalanguage to talk about writing and support students to develop self-reliance and writing-improvement strategies.

WRITING at BPPS

Our Writing Program provides a clear whole school approach to enhance teaching and learning practices and improve student outcomes. At the core of our work, like in all areas, is the concept of engagement. We always need to be aware of how our students view themselves as writers and their level of engagement – this underpins all we do.

They learn how to correctly write a variety of text type (genres) such as recounts, letter writing, information reports, persuasive arguments, historical narratives. Currently, the genre focus is aligned to what each Team is doing for the Integrated Studies whole school concept and the assessment task students will be working towards. For example, if students are learning about science the genre will be information reports and explanation texts.

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Our daily writing lessons consist of explicit modelling of writing practices by the teacher combined with the use of rich language and student discussions to generate ideas. Following the modelled writing, students are given the opportunity to involve themselves at their level and time to practice what has been demonstrated. During this time, to develop the students' craft of writing, teachers run small focus groups using guided and interactive writing or clinic one on one with students.

Our school uses 'Words Their Way' to teach spelling. This is a teacher-directed, student-centred approach to vocabulary growth and spelling development where engage in a variety of sound, pattern and meaning activities, sorting pictures and words. 'Words Their Way' enables teachers to assess, clearly identify and document each student's spelling stage, group students with common needs and tailor activities to improve students' spelling knowledge. In this manner students are actively constructing their own knowledge of spelling patterns. Our spelling program is not a stand alone program. They are immersed in texts from Prep and are encouraged to become 'code breakers'. Using their knowledge to segment unfamiliar words into sounds when the read and also apply their knowledge of sounds and spelling rules to accurately spell words. As they move through the school they explore the meaning of words through grammar, word morphology and etymological knowledge.

6 TRAITS + 1 Whole School PL

As a school we are constantly reflecting and evaluating what is working well, what can we do better, how we can further develop our programs. At the end of last year Cat Fleming, our Literacy Learning Specialist, investigated the '6 Traits + 1 Writing' to see how it could enhance our writing program. This was enthusiastically embraced by Team 5-6 who trialled it in Term 4. No mean feat when we were in lockdown! The benefits was seen as significant with feedback from our grade 5-6 students being extremely positive in how it helped develop and improve their writing, and gave a clear focus for their goal and how to achieve it. As a result, the 'Traits' were formally introduced into the Years 3 – 6 writing program in 2021. Starting next year Teams Foundation and 1-2 will be using the Traits in their planning of writing.

On Monday 1 November, all staff will be undertaking a whole day of professional learning on the '6 Traits + 1'. The 6 Traits is an approach for planning, teaching, and assessing students' writing. The approach has gathered momentum over past decades due to explicitly teaching of writing skills and behaviours for students of all ages, teaching at all stages of the writing process, active involvement of students in assessment and monitoring and clear consistent language. The 'Traits' is **not** a program and as such aligns with our existing program and curriculum content.

The Six Traits are those qualities deemed characteristics of 'good writing'.

What are the Traits?

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- IDEAS
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