

Progression in Explanation

Possible outcomes:

- Processes
- Diagrams
- Flow charts

Purpose:

Explanation text is generally one in which a process is being explained, not described. An explanation generally answers 'how' or 'why' questions and includes causes, motives or reasons. The verb 'explained', however, is often loosely used to mean 'report', 'Explain what you did' generally means 'tell me, or describe what you did' and may not have any reasons attached to it. The verb 'explain' is also used in place of 'define' so dictionary definitions are sometimes inaccurately categorised as explanation texts. (However, children's dictionaries are often a hybrid between a dictionary and an encyclopaedia so could reasonably be consulted for an explanation).

Like all text types, variants of recounts can occur and they can be combined with other text types.

Audience:

Children should listen to, speak, read and write explanation texts for a wide range of audiences, varying language features and text structures to suit the audience and purpose.

Generic text structure:

The structure of an explanation text are often (but not always):

- A general statement to introduce the topic, for example, in the autumn some birds migrate
- A series of logical steps explaining how or why something occurs, for example because hours of daylight shorten...
- Steps continue until the final state is produced or the explanation is complete

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Language features:

The language features of an explanation text are often (but not always):

- Written in the simple present tense, for example, many birds fly south
- Use conjunctions that signal time, for example, then, next, several months later
- Use causal conjunctions, for example, because, so, this causes

Knowledge for the writer:

- Decide whether diagrams, charts, illustrations or a flow chart would help to explain
- Use a title that shows what you are writing about
- Using how or why in the title helps. Try to make the title intrigue the reader, for example, Why do sloths hang about?
- Use the first paragraph to introduce your subject to the reader
- Organise the writing and illustrations to explain: what you need, how it works, why it works (cause and effect), when and where it works, and what it is used for
- Add in extra, interesting information
- Try to end by relating the subject to the reader
- If you use specialised terminology, a glossary may be needed
- Interest the reader with exclamation, for example Beware – whirlwinds can kill! Or use questions: Did you know that?
- Draw the reader in, for example strange as it may seem...; not many people know that... etc
- Re-read your explanation pretending to know nothing about the subject – is it clear?
- Recognise that explanation texts can be adapted or combined with other text types depending on the audience and purpose

Progression is achieved through:

- Speaking and listening preceding reading and writing
- Teacher modelling and scribing preceding children's independent attempt
- Increased understanding by the children of the form and features of the text type
- Increasing complexity, such as length, obscurity of task, adding additional features such as diagrams

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Children learning English as an additional language may require some support in developing:

- Accuracy in subject-verb agreements and use of prepositions, appropriate use of modals and range of determiners
- The use of academic and technical language with abstract nouns and nouns made from other word classes
- Impersonal style and passive voice

Year group	Progression in explanation	Grammar (to include revision from previous year groups)	
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about why things happen and how things work; ask questions and speculate • Listen to someone explain a process and ask questions • Give oral explanations e.g their or another’s motives; why and how they made a construction 	<p>ELG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils write simple sentences that can be read by themselves and others • Speaking: Pupils develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events • Speaking: Pupils use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future • Pupils use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds • Some words are spelt correctly and they are phonetically plausible • Pupils can write some irregular common words • Pupils handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing 	<p>Exceeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils use key features of narrative in their own writing • Speaking: Pupils recount experiences and imagine possibilities, often connecting ideas. They use a range of vocabulary in imaginative ways to add information, express ideas or to explain or justify actions or events • Pupils can spell phonetically regular words of more than one syllable • Pupils can spell many irregular but high frequency words • Pupils hold paper in position and use their preferred hand for writing, using a correct pencil grip. They are beginning to be able to write on lines and control letter size

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Year group	Progression in Explanation	Grammar (to include revision from previous year groups)
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read captions, pictures and diagrams on wall displays and in simple books that explain a process. Draw pictures to illustrate a process and use the picture to explain the process orally. • Use captions and sequenced sentences to write a simple explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question mark • Capital letters • Full stops • Co-ordinating conjunction - and
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After carrying out a practical activity,(e.g experiment, investigation, construction task) contribute to creating a flowchart or cyclical diagram to explain the process, as member of group with the teacher. After seeing and hearing an oral explanation of the process, explain the same process orally also using flowchart, language and gestures appropriately. • Read, with help, flowcharts or cyclical diagrams explaining other processes and then read others independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present tense • Time conjunctions • Subordinating conjunctions • Co-ordinating conjunctions • questions
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create diagrams such as flow charts to summarise or make notes of stages in a process (e.g in science, D&T or geography), ensuring items are clearly sequenced • Explain processes orally, using these notes, ensuring relevant details are included and accounts ended effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causal conjunctions • Subordinate clauses • adverbs
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and analyse explanatory texts to identify key features. Distinguish between explanatory texts, reports and recounts while recognising that an information book might contain examples of all these forms of text or a combination of these forms • Orally summarise processes carried out in the classroom and on screen in flowcharts or cyclical diagrams as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clauses • Commas for clarity

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the shared writing of an explanation where the teacher acts as scribe and models the use of paragraphs, conjunctions and the other key language and structural features appropriate to explanatory writing; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - purpose: to explain a process or to answer a question - structure: introduction, followed by sequential explanation, organised into paragraphs - language features: usually present tense; use of conjunctions of time and cause and effect; use of passive voice presentation: use of diagrams and other illustrations, paragraphing, conjunctions, subheadings, numbering After oral rehearsal, write explanatory texts independently from a flowchart or other diagrammatic plan, using the conventions modelled in shared writing. 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and analyse a range of explanatory texts, investigating and noting features of impersonal style: use of passive voice; technical vocabulary; use of words/phrases to make sequential, causal or logical connections Engage in teacher demonstration of how to research and plan a page for a reference book on one aspect of a class topic using shared note-making and writing of the page, using an impersonal style, hypothetical language (if...then, might, when the...) and causal and temporal connections (e.g while, during, after, because, as a result, due to, only when, so) as appropriate In shared writing and independent, plan, compose, edit and refine explanatory texts, using reading as a source, focusing on clarity, conciseness and impersonal style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Punctuation for parenthesis – dashes, brackets Conjunctions Verbification of nouns/adjectives e.g As the water gets colder, it will begin to solidify (the noun solid becomes the verb solidify)
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the appropriate form of writing and style to suit a specific purpose and audience, drawing on knowledge of different non-fiction text types. Use the language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject and object Passive/active voice e.g As the wheel is turned...

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	conventions and grammatical features of the different types of text, as appropriate	
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