Writing Exciting Sentences: A Policy for Progression

The new national curriculum sets out expectations for children's writing skills from year one to year six. In the introduction to the programmes for each block of study, yearly for key stage one and two-yearly for key stage two, it is clear that children need to be exploring a variety of sentence structures and drawing on this learning when composing their own writing. '*Teachers should therefore be consolidating pupils' writing skills, their vocabulary, their grasp of sentence structure and their knowledge of linguistic terminology… Teachers should make sure that pupils build on what they have learnt, particularly in terms of the range of their writing and the more varied grammar, vocabulary and narrative structures from which they can draw to express their ideas,' (Lower Key Stage Two programme of study forward, p. 33).* This is echoed in both the year two and upper key stage two programmes of study and, interestingly, is highlighted as important for those children not currently meeting expectations in upper key stage two. Even though children's decoding skills may be poor, they should still be, '*hearing and learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures, and having a chance to talk about all of these', (Upper key stage two programme of study forward, p. 41).*

For us at Myton, it seems that Alan Peat's 'exciting sentences' will ensure that we are meeting this aspect of the national curriculum, giving the children to explore a variety of sentence structures across the key stages. In addition, children and teachers will have the opportunity to meet the expectations of the national curriculum, exploring a range of punctuation in context. For example, now children are required to use dashes to mark parentheses in year five, children can explore the 'Name – adjective pair – sentences' and see dashes at work in context. This can then be applied and extended in their writing. We have found that the use of the sentences has helped the teachers' subject knowledge and they are confident to teach this complex punctuation and are even beginning to use them in their own writing.

In order to meet the demands of the national curriculum, we have created a policy for progression which introduces these 'exciting sentences' at the right time to coincide with the expectations of the national curriculum. There are a minimum of three sentences and a maximum of six in each year group which means that these sentence types can be explored and extended throughout the year so that they are completely embedded in the child's sentence repertoire. Also, many of the sentence types can be applied to narrative, non-fiction and even poetry so children will have ample time to understand this. Of course, in the first few years we will be playing a game of catch up, exploring the sentence types from year three and four with year five for example, but ultimately we aim to have a progression across the school where the children's learning of sentence types builds from year to year. By the end of year six, we hope that children will have a repertoire of 20+ exciting sentence types in their arsenal as well as the sentences types that they have derived following the exploration of the target sentences.

As well as the sentence types applied to each year group, we also have additional sentence types which could be used in each year group. These sentences are particularly focused on figurative language and will give teachers the opportunity to explore complex narrative techniques with children when it is appropriate in their learning journey. As a school we need to focus on using poetry as a tool for extending vocabulary and meaning so these sentence types will be used to support this. We have not selected all of the sentence types to be used in our progression policy but many of the sentence types from Alan Peat's 'Writing exciting sentences' and many from his 'A second book of writing exciting sentences' have been included. We will continue to review this progression policy and adapt as we feel is necessary.

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Year 2	**All the Ws**	**Would** there ever be another opportunity like this one? **Who** would take over this role now? **What** if you had all of the money in the world? **Why** do zebras have stripes?	- Your short sentence must start with one of the following W words: - Who? What? When? Where? Why? Would? Was? What if?	- How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a statement, question, exclamation or command p. 75 (English Appendix 2) - Learn how to use sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command. p.32 (LKS2 programme of study)
	List sentences	It was a **dark, long, leafy** lane. She had a **cold, cruel** cackle. It was a **cold, wet, miserable** Wednesday afternoon. His hair was **long, brown** and **unwashed**.	- A list sentence must have 3 or 4 adjectives before the noun. Use *and* between the final 2 adjectives.	- Commas to separate items in a list p. 76 (English Appendix 2) - expanded noun phrases to describe and specify [for example, the blue butterfly] - p. 32 (LKS2 programme of study)
	Short	Oh no! Then it happened. He stopped. Everything failed. The door opened. What's wrong?	- 1-3 word sentences possibly with an exclamation mark or question mark. Begin to discuss exclamations, questions, statements and commands with the children.	- How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a statement, question, exclamation or command p. 75 (English Appendix 2) - Learn how to use sentences with different forms: statement, question, exclamation, command. p.32 (LKS2 programme of study)

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Year 3	**BOYS Sentences**	He was a friendly man most of the time, **but** he could become nasty. He could be really friendly **or** he could be really miserable. It was a beautiful morning for a walk **so** he set off quite happily.	- A B.O.Y.S sentence is a two-part sentence. The first part of the sentence <u>always</u> ends with a comma (,) and the last part <u>always</u> begins with a connective.	- using conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to express time and cause p.40 (English Appendix 2) - Expressing time, place and cause using **conjunctions,** adverbs or prepositions (p. 76) (English Appendix 2) -
	As –ly	**As** the rain came down **heavily**, the children ran for shelter. **As** the wind screamed **wildly**, the lost giant lumbered along the path. **As** the water heats up **quickly**, a change of state happens called 'evaporation'.	- The first part of the sentence opens with an action description which starts with the word *As…* and ends with an adverb. - The second part of the sentence is a description of a related, and often consequential, action.	- Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions, **adverbs** or prepositions (p. 76) (English Appendix 2) - Terminology for pupils: subordinate clause (English Appendix 2) -
	__ing, __ed.	**Walking** in the bush, she **stopped** at the sight of a crocodile facing her. **Running** near the beach, he **halted** as the ground gave way. **Jumping** quickly through the air, she **landed** on her feet before sprinting away	- The sentence must begin with a subordinate clause which begins with a verb ending in 'ing', followed by the location of the action. - Focus on the use of prepositions in the first part of the sentence (subordinate clause) to explain **where** the action is happening.	- Terminology for pupils: subordinate clause (English Appendix 2) - Using conjunctions, adverbs and **prepositions** to express time and cause. p.40 (English Appendix 2)
	Doubly –ly ending	He swam **slowly** and **falteringly.** He rode **determinedly** and **swiftly.** He laughed **loudly** and **heartily.** He tiptoed **quietly** and **carefully.**	- The sentence must end in two adverbs which add detail to and describe how the verb within the sentence is being carried out.	- Expressing time, place and cause using conjunctions, **adverbs** or prepositions (p. 76) (English Appendix 2)

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Year 4	**2A Sentences**	He was a **tall, awkward** man with an **old, crumpled** jacket. It was an **overgrown, messy** garden with a **leafless, lifeless** tree. The **huge, green** tractor ploughed the **wet, muddy** field.	- A 2Ad sentence has <u>two adjectives</u> before the first noun and <u>two adjectives</u> before the second noun. This sentence creates a clear picture for the reader.	- Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases p.77 (English Appendix 2) -
	Emotion, comma	**Desperate**, she screamed for help. **Terrified**, he froze instantly on the spot where he stood. **Anxious**, they began to realise they were lost. **Happily**, the astronaut stepped safely from the shuttle.	- Emotion first followed by the actions that are caused by the emotion. Putting the word first gives more weight to the emotion. - When teaching, provide an A-Z list of emotions the children could use.	- Using fronted adverbials… using commas after fronted adverbials p.40 - Fronted adverbials p.77 (English Appendix 2)
	Verb, person	**Running, Sarah** almost tripped over her own feet. **Tiptoeing, he** tried to sneak out across the landing without waking anybody up.	- A sentence starts with a verb to give it more importance. The verb is always followed by a comma and then a name or a personal pronoun (he, she, they, it) followed by the rest of the sentence. -	- choosing nouns or pronouns appropriately for clarity and cohesion and to avoid repetition (p.40) (LKS2 programme of study)
	If, if, if, then.	**If** the alarm had gone off, **if** the bus had been on time, if the road repairs had been finished, **then** he might have got to school on time. **If** I hadn't found the watch, **if** the alarm hadn't gone off, **if** I hadn't scared those burglars, **then** I wouldn't be sitting here today.	- Summarising a dramatic plot (key plots) at beginning or the end of a story in groups of 3. The emphasis should be on using the comma after each clause. - Each clause always begins with an **if** or a **then** and each clause ends with a comma (,) or a full stop (.)	- extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when**,** **if**, because, although p.40 (LKS2 programme of study)
	With a(n) action, more action	**With a smile**, Greg **waved** goodbye. **With a weary wail**, Thor **launched** his final attack. **With a deep breath**, Neil Armstrong **stepped** carefully on to the surface of the moon.	- This two-part sentence starts with a subordinate clause which starts with the phrase '**With a(n)…**' followed by an action and a comma. The main clause then describes more action which occurs simultaneously.	- extending the range of sentences with more than one clause by using a wider range of conjunctions, including when**,** **if**, because, although p.40 (LKS2 programme of study) -

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Year 5	3 __ed	**Frightened**, **terrified**, **exhausted**, they ran from the creature. **Amused, amazed, excited,** he left the circus reluctantly. **Confused, troubled, worried,** she didn't know what had happened.	- Stars with three adjectives that end in _ed and describe emotions. The _ed words MUST be followed by commas.	- using expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely p.40 - using commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing p.48 (UKS2 programme of study)
	Noun, which/who/where	**Cakes**, **which** taste fantastic, are not so good for your health. **Snakes**, **which** scare me, are not always poisonous. **Tom**, **who** was a little shorter than the others, still made it into the football team.	- Use commas to embed a clause within a sentence, add information that links with the sentence topic and start the clause with <u>which</u>, <u>who</u> or <u>where.</u>	- Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun p.78 (English Appendix 2) -
	2 pairs sentences	**Exhausted and worried**, **cold and hungry**, they didn't know how much further they had to go. **Injured and terrified**, **numb and fearful**, he couldn't believe that this was happening to him. **Quickly and quietly, silently and carefully** he tiptoed out of the house.	- Begins with two pairs of related adjectives. Each pair is: o Followed by a comma o Separated by *and*	- Indicating degrees of possibility using adverbs p.78 (English Appendix 2) -
	3 bad – (dash) question?	Cold, dark, airlessness – which would kill the spaceman first? Greed, jealousy, hatred – which of these is most evil?	- 3 negative followed by a dash and then a question which relates to the three adjectives.	- Brackets, **dashes** or commas to indicate parenthesis p.78 (English Appendix 2) -
	Name – adjective pair – sentences	Little Tim – **happy and generous** – was always fun to be around. Ben Roberts – **weak and nervy** – was actually a secret superhero. Glass – **fragile and dangerous** – must be handled with care.	- This works on a show and tell basis where the name and details form the main clause (tell). The added information within the dashes **shows** what the character was like. The two must be linked.	- Brackets, **dashes** or commas to indicate parenthesis p.78 (English Appendix 2) -
	O. (I.)	She told the little girl not to be so naughty**.** **(**Inside, however, she was secretly amused by what she had done.**)** I was delighted **(**but I felt scared that something was about to go wrong**).** Bravely I looked behind me **(**but I was deeply worried**).**	- The first sentence tells the reader a character's outward action and the second reveals their true feelings. - If the sentence within the brackets is **complete**, the full stop goes **inside** the bracket. If it is **not complete**, the full stop goes **outside**.	- **Brackets**, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis p.78 (English Appendix 2) -

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum

Year 6	De:De Sentence	The vampire is a dreadful creature: It kills by sucking all the blood from its victims.
		Snails are slow: They take hours to cross the shortest of distances.
		I was exhausted: I hadn't slept for more than two days.
			- Two independent clauses (they make sense on their own) are separated by a colon (:)
			  o The first clause is descriptive
			  o The second adds further detail
				- Use of the semi-colon, **colon** and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses p.79 (English Appendix 2)

	Some; others	**Some** people like football; **others** hate it. **Some** days are full of enjoyment; **others** are long and boring. **Some** dogs were running around happily; **others** looked tired.	- Some; others sentences begin with the word *some* and have a semi-colon to replace the word *but.* - There is <u>no</u> capital letter after the semi-colon.	- Use of the **semi-colon,** colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses p.79 (English Appendix 2) -
	Imagine 3 examples:	Imagine a place where the sun always, shines, where wars never happen, where no-one ever dies: in the Andromeda 5 system, there is such a planet	Sentence begins with - The word imagine - Then describes three parts of something - The first two parts are separated by commas - The third ends with a colon	- Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun p.78 (English Appendix 2) - Use of the colon to introduce a list and use of semi-colons within lists p.79 (English Appendix 2)
	The more, the more	**The more** it rained, **the more** depressed he became. **The more** the crowd cheered, **the more** he looked forward to the race. **The more** upset she was, **the more** she cried.	- This sentence type is particularly useful when developing a character trait in a story. The first **more** should be followed by an **emotive** word and the second **more** should be followed by a **related action.**	- Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: repetition of a word or phrase, grammatical connections and ellipsis p.79 (English Appendix 2) -
	'Irony' sentences	Our 'luxury' hotel turned out to be a farm building. With dawn breaking, the 'beautiful view' which the brochure described, revealed itself to be a scrap-yard and a rubbish tip. The 'trip of our dreams' was, in fact, our worst nightmare.	- An irony sentence deliberately overstates how good or bad something is and this is placed in 'inverted commas'. The overstated word is then shown to be false through the remainder of the sentence which reveals the truth.	- The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing p.78 (English Appendix 2) -

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Year 6 (AA)	**Emotion – consequence**	Davis was angry – he threw his toy at the wall. The professor was inconsolable – he wept for days on end. King Henry was furious – he ordered the execution of his wife.	- This two part sentence starts with a description of a character's emotion followed by a dash (-) and a description of a consequence of that feeling.	-
	Tell: show 3 examples; sentences	He was feeling relaxed: shoes off; shirt undone; lying on the sofa. The commander was tense: sweat dripping; eyes narrowed; staring out on the battlefield. It was a sleepy town: shops shuttered; cats lazing in the shade; dogs snoozing in the sun.	- This is a two part sentence. The first part **tells** the reader a broad-ranging fact/opinion. - This is followed by a colon which demonstrates that a list of examples will follow. - After the colon the list of 3 examples follows. As this is a phrase list, semi-colons are used between the details rather than commas.	-
	When; when; when, then sentences.	**When** tumultuous thunder shakes the ground**; when** blinding lightning tears the sky**; when** storm clouds block every ray of hopeful light**, then** you know the Kraken is approaching. **When** you look at the remains of Tutankhamen**; when** you examine the damage to his skull**; when** you look at the motives of his advisors**, then** it is clear that the young Pharaoh's death should be treated as suspicious.	- The sentence type ends with a statement e.g. *the haunting begins.* -	-

Additional Sentence Types

These sentence types can be used in any year group from years 3-6 and although they do not have a direct correlation to the national curriculum programmes of study, they could be useful in developing sentences particularly in narrative. These sentences are particularly focused on the use of figurative language (similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia) which is mentioned in the introduction to the English national curriculum, 'As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language' (p.15)

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
Years 3-6	**Description, which + simile sentences**	Greg had huge nostrils**, which** made him look **like a hippo**. Doctor Swogflop bathed only once a year**, which** meant he was **as smelly as a skunk's bottom** most of the time. The valleys have crooked ravines**, which** curve around **like the blade of a scimitar**.	- The sentence is introduced by a description which is followed by a comma (,) and then the word 'which' followed by a **simile**, further describing the description.	- Relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that, or an omitted relative pronoun p.78 (English Appendix 2: Year 5)
	This is that sentence	His eyes were dark tunnels. The lake was a mirror. The explorers knew they were standing on the shoulders of giants.	- This sentence is an example of a **metaphor**: a figure of speech that describes a subject by stating that it is, by way of a point of comparison, the same as another otherwise unrelated object.	- teachers should show pupils how to… develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language' (p.15)
	Sound! Cause	Splat! The water balloon burst as it hit the wall. Bang! The lift exploded as it reached the ground floor, covering the hallway in thick smoke. Whump! Another sandstone block fell into place. The pyramid was beginning to take shape.	- This sentence open with an attention-grabbing **onomatopoeic** word and then unfolds with the explanation of what caused the sound.	As above

Year	Sentence Type	Example	Rule	Link to National Curriculum
	The question is:	Jack disappeared. **The question is:** where did he go? Theron had betrayed his king. **The question is:** could he still be trusted? Tutankhamen was the youngest Pharaoh ever. **The question is:** how did he die?	- The first sentence is a short description of an action or statement of fact. - The second sentence begins with the phrase *The question is***:** (colon) followed by an intriguing question which draws the reader into the text.	
	Action as if	The boy **cried** and **screamed as if** that would change his mother's mind. William **stared** intently at the clock **as if** it would make the hands turn faster. Pilate **washed** his hands **as if** ridding himself of all responsibilities.	- This sentence opens with a description of an action which is usually quite intense in nature. - This is followed by the words 'as if' then a description of the character's intent.	