

SKILLS PROGRESSION: EXPLANATORY TEXTS



Purpose:

To explain how or why, e.g. to explain the processes involved in natural/social phenomena or to explain why something is the way it is.

Examples of text type:

- Explaining electricity, forces, food chains etc. in science
- Explaining the causes of historic events such as wars and revolutions.
- Explaining the role of the Nile in determining the seasons in Ancient Egypt
- Explaining phenomena such as the water cycle or how a volcano erupts in geography
- Explaining religious traditions and practices in RE
- Encyclopaedia entries
- Technical manuals

Generic Text Structure

- A general statement to introduce the topic being explained. E.g. In the winter some animals hibernate.
- The steps or phases in a process are explained logically, in order. E.g. When the nights get longer ... because the temperature begins to drop ... so the hedgehog looks for a safe place to hide.

Planning and Preparation

- Choose a title that shows what you are explaining, perhaps using why or how.
- Decide whether you need to include images or other features to help your reader, e.g. diagrams, photographs, a flow chart, a text box, captions, a list or a glossary.
- Use the first paragraph to introduce what you will be explaining.
- Plan the steps in your explanation and check that you have included any necessary information about how and why things happen as they do.
- Add a few interesting details.
- Interest the reader by talking directly to them
- Re-read your explanation as if you know nothing at all about the subject. Check that there are no gaps in the information
- Remember that you can adapt explanatory texts or combine them with other text types to make them work effectively for your audience and purpose.

SKILLS PROGRESSION	
EYFS	N/A
YEAR 1	N/A
YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent use of present tense e.g. Hedgehogs wake up again in the spring. • Questions can be used to form titles e.g. How do hedgehogs survive in the winter? Why does it get dark at night? • Question marks are used to denote questions (Y1) Use conjunctions e.g. so...because
YEAR 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express time, place and cause using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conjunctions e.g. so, because ○ Adverbs e.g. first, then after that, finally. ○ Prepositions e.g. before, after.... • Use of paragraphs to organise ideas.
YEAR 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use fronted adverbials e.g. During the night, nocturnal animals.... • Use of paragraphs to organise ideas • Create cohesion and avoid repetition through the use of nouns and pronouns e.g. Many mammals... They feed their young...
YEAR 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate degrees of possibility using adverbs e.g. Perhaps....surely or modal verbs e.g. might, should, will.... • Use layout devices to provide additional information and guide the reader e.g. subheadings, columns, bullets etc. • Create cohesion within paragraphs using adverbials e.g. therefore, however • Relative clauses can be used to add further information e.g. Hedgehogs, which are mammals... • Parenthesis can be used to add clarification of technical words e.g. oxygen (a gas found in air).

YEAR 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt degrees of formality and informality to suit the form of the explanation. An informal tone can sometimes be appropriate e.g. You'll be surprised to know that...Have you ever thought about the way that...? Or a formal authoritative tone can also be adopted e.g. oxygen is constantly replaced in the bloodstream.... • Create cohesion across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices which can include adverbials. • The passive voice can also be used e.g. gases are carried. • Brackets, dashes and commas can be used to add extra information e.g. photosynthesis, a process whereby a plant makes it's own food, can never take place without sunlight....