

Explanation Toolkit



Y1/2:

Y3/4: as in Y1/2 & ...

Y5/6: as in Y3/4 & ...

To explain something:

The following tools may be used to fuel discussion around key topics explored by the class. Whilst explanation may not have a transcriptional focus in Y1, it is important that children are building confidence in some key phrasing for explanation.

- Introduce the reader to the subject using a simple *Why* sentence: **There are many reasons why dragons are afraid of mice.**
- Use descriptive detail to make the explanation clear: **Mice have a strong, disgusting smell.**
- Tell the reader why using causal conjunctions: **because/so/this means that/etc.**
- Add more information by introducing your points with 'adding on' openers (fronted adverbials): **Also, ... As well as ...**
- Present and sequence the explanation in small chunks so that the reader can process each point: **Firstly, ... Secondly, ...**

- Introduce the reader to the subject using a simple *Why* or *How* sentence: **This explanation will clearly show how the prince to frog potion works.**
- Show cause and effect through a wider variety of causal conjunctions: **If... then..., As a result, ... Consequently, ... Therefore, ... this means that, ...**
- Make your explanation link the ideas: **Press the red button on the top of the machine. This will result in the ignition of machine.**
- Add more information by introducing your points with more sophisticated 'adding on' openers: **Additionally, ... Moreover, ... Furthermore, In addition, ...**
- Explain the sequence through time adverbials: **Later on, ..., Months afterwards, ..., Subsequently, ...**
- Engage the reader by asking them rhetorical questions: **Does your prince have an intolerable ego?**

- Consider your audience and vary your tone and formality for a desired effect:
 - Formal: **The purpose of this experiment is to discover ...**
 - Informal: **Let's find out why ...**
- Explain hypothetical outcomes using degrees of possibility (modal verbs): **could, should, might, may, etc.**
- Explain the impact on different stakeholders, varying the reasons accordingly: **The closing of zoos will clearly impact conservation since ...**

Explanation – structure



Y1/2:	Y3/4: as in Y1/2 & ...	Y5/6: as in Y3/4 & ...
To structure explanation writing:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a title to tell the reader what you are explaining: Why dragons are afraid of mice <p>Beginning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce what will be explained to the reader. <p>Middle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a series of key points that explain why something happens: Firstly, mice can hypnotise dragons. <p>End</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a statement to round it off: So that is why you never see photographs of dragons and mice together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a title that captures the nature of the text: How the Prince to frog potion works <p>Beginning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure your opening introduces the subject and grabs the reader's attention: All princes ooze arrogance and revel in their own beauty. The Prince Transformation Potion destroys these dislikeable attributes. When this happens, they turn into an everyday frog. <p>Middle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use sub-headings or topic sentences to organise and introduce key points to be explained: As the potion is digested, it is pumped around the bloodstream until the skin begins to take on a greenish hue. Help your reader understand by organising information into paragraphs. Use fact boxes, diagrams, flowcharts, images or <u>underlining</u> to illustrate what is being explained or make it stand out. <p>End</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a conclusion that sums up the explanation: The final part of the process strips away the dislikeable attributes: self-adoration, smarminess and good looks, resulting in a wart-covered amphibian. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulate the organisation of your writing to suit the audience: an experiment write up, a manual, a guide, a letter, a historical document, etc. Consider how you may feature other non-fiction purposes, such as elements of persuasion: Do you suffer from a grumpy teacher? If so, then use the 'Teacher-Pleaser' machine and soon your teacher will become the jolliest person in school. Relate the explanation to the reader: If <u>you</u> treat the 'Tidy Your Bedroom' machine with care, it will last for years. Make sure that the spring is not over-used as it runs the risk of breaking. This will mean that you will have to tidy <u>your</u> own mess! Help the reader understand technical terms by including a glossary.