



Checkpoint Writes

What is a Checkpoint Write?

A *Checkpoint Write* is a regular (every 2–3 weeks) writing opportunity that allows pupils to apply key writing skills more independently than in a guided sequence. Its purpose is not to introduce new content, but to provide repeated practice in applying taught skills, building confidence, stamina, motivation and developing independence. These writes create a more balanced evidence base for assessment points, ensuring judgements are drawn from a range of pupil work.

Why Checkpoint Writes Matter

Checkpoint Writes offer strong formative assessment opportunities, helping teachers evaluate how securely pupils have grasped learning and adapt provision accordingly. They provide the retrieval and rehearsal opportunities that cognitive science shows are essential for knowledge and skills to transfer from short-term to long-term memory. They also align with a mastery approach, ensuring repetition, consolidation and application in varied contexts.

Consolidation Writes and Greater Depth

Checkpoint Writes are particularly powerful in enabling children to demonstrate greater depth. They create space for pupils to write with independence, fluency and creativity, shaping meaning with their own authentic voice. This goes beyond a single writing journey, allowing children to develop their distinctive style, innovate and show the deliberate choices that characterise greater depth writing.

Assessment Purpose:

Checkpoint Writes provide teachers with a clear, independent snapshot of what pupils can achieve at a specific point in the writing journey. By using shared benchmarks and exemplars, teachers can moderate consistently, improve assessment accuracy and identify precise next steps. These tasks support targeted teaching, allow pupils to apply skills in authentic contexts and encourage the development of independence in writing. They also form a key part of professional development, helping staff to reflect on progression, understand expected standards and plan effectively. Ultimately, Checkpoint Writes aim to raise writing standards, ensure more pupils meet Age-Related Expectations and increase the number working at Greater Depth, supporting the Trust-wide goal of improving combined outcomes across schools.



Structure of a Checkpoint Write

1. Genre & Hook
 - Task based on a familiar text type (e.g., narrative, report).
 - Begins with a purposeful, engaging hook to capture pupils' interest.
2. Time Allocation
 - Typically 30–45 minutes, depending on the year group.
 - Sufficient time for pupils to plan, draft, and begin editing.
3. Planning
 - Pupils may use brief scaffolds (e.g., TIPTOP, story mountain, word banks).
 - Encourages drawing ideas from reading or modelled texts.
4. Independent Drafting
 - Pupils write without teacher guidance, showing current ability.
 - Focus on applying skills in composition, VGP, and transcription.
5. Editing & Peer Feedback
 - Use a different coloured writing tool for corrections.
 - Option for partner editing: giving and receiving simple feedback.
6. Assessment & Reflection
 - Teachers use the significant AP QLA outcomes and exemplars to assess.
 - Helps identify next steps, plan targeted teaching and track progress toward Age-Related Expectations and Greater Depth.

Examples:

AP1 Year 3 *Brief narrative inspired by How to Train Your Dragon* (30-45 minutes) Children are given an engaging hook ***“You discover a dragon’s egg hidden deep inside the cliffs. What happens when it begins to crack open?”***

Level	Example Pupil Outcome	Key Features for Teachers to Notice
Not Yet Met	the egg was big and it brok a dragon come out it was red it was scary i run away the dragon run too the egg was on the floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No clear beginning, middle, end. - No paragraphs, written as notes. - Very limited description. - Repetitive sentence structure (“and/then”). - Punctuation mostly missing. - Purpose/audience not evident.
ARE	<p>The egg cracked loudly and Isla jumped back. Smoke curled up from the hole in the shell. Suddenly a small dragon poked out its head and squeaked. It was green, shiny and hot. Isla didn't know what to do. “Should I touch it?” she whispered. The dragon blinked and stretched its wings. Then it tumbled out and shook itself. At last, Isla smiled. She reached out her hand and the dragon curled its tail around her fingers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beginning, middle, and end clear. - TIPTOP paragraphing attempted. - Vocabulary borrowed from reading/models (“smoke curled”). - Correct use of full stops, capitals, question marks, exclamation mark, and commas in a list. - Apostrophe for contraction (“didn’t”). - Basic audience awareness (speech, tension).
Greater Depth	<p>Carefully, Isla brushed the sand away from the smooth, glowing shell. It was cracked in three places and a faint tapping echoed inside. The egg shuddered. Then, with a sharp snap, a tiny dragon pushed through, coughing out sparks. Its wings were silver and scaled like armour. Isla gasped. “You’re not dangerous, are you?” she whispered. She remembered that the elders had said every dragon must be trained with patience or it will turn wild. Taking a deep breath, Isla held out her hand. The dragon sniffed it and then curled up in her palm. From that moment, Isla knew she was its rider.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure beginning, middle, and end with build-up and resolution. - Paragraphs used deliberately for events/ideas. - Rich vocabulary (“glowing shell,” “scaled like armour”). - Technical detail/genre knowledge (elders’ advice). - Clear awareness of purpose and audience (tension, characterisation). - Secure punctuation, including speech. - Narrative extends beyond basic template, shows originality.