

TEACHING FOR

CREATIVITY

IN ENGLISH WRITING FOR YEAR 4

UNIT OF WORK EXEMPLAR

Alex Caunt

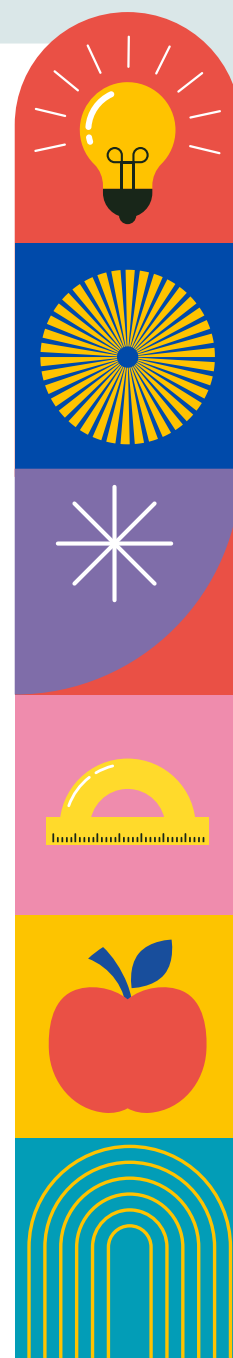
Cupernham Junior School



How to read this document

This document contains three main components

- A description of the Creativity Collaborative programme context and our framework of teaching for creativity
- The key unit information provides an overview next
- Finally, the full unit description gives detailed information



Context: UWinAT Creativity Collaborative

Creativity Collaboratives is an action research programme, funded by Arts Council England and the Freeland Foundation, that aims to build networks of schools to test a range of innovative practices in teaching for creativity, with the explicit intention that learning is shared to facilitate system-wide change. The University of Winchester, the University of Winchester Academy Trust, and a network of Hampshire Infant, Junior and Primary schools became one of the eight national funded collaboratives, coming together with the key ambition of fostering pupils' creativity in subjects drawn from across the curriculum. Overall, our collaborative aims to enrich children's life chances by developing them into confident and creative problem-solvers, engaging them through authentic, meaningful problems, embedded in their schools and lives.

The focus on creativity as a key skill in education is increasing (James et al.,

2019), reflecting its value within wider society. Indeed, according to the 2023 'Future of Jobs Report' (World Economic Forum, 2023) creative thinking is the skill showing the greatest increase in importance for employers (p. 38) and after analytical thinking, is the second most frequently cited skill that is 'core' for the workplace (p. 39). Our collaborative has focused on:

- Understanding and addressing the barriers and enablers of creative thinking
- Developing leadership for creativity in schools
- Developing new approaches to teaching for creativity across the curriculum
- Building children's and teachers' knowledge and understanding of creativity
- Developing children's and teachers' sense of themselves as creative and their ability to be creative in subjects across the school curriculum..

The Creativity Navigator: A Framework of Teaching for Creativity

To support our planning and implementation of teaching for creativity, we use a planning tool called the Creativity Navigator (see back cover). This was co-developed in our Creativity Collaborative and draws on a wide range of models, theories and frameworks of creativity. The Navigator emphasises that creativity can be a planned for process, that follows a typical sequence of explore – ideate – evaluate, but that this sequence can be varied and cycled around many times whilst working through a creative process. The process starts with the question 'where next?' emphasising the importance of metacognitive planning and monitoring throughout a creative process.

In a classroom context, a creative process can be operationalised through a set of learning behaviours. These behaviours can be grouped under creative 'habits' each of which can be used to support the creative

process. For instance, a think-pair-share learning behaviour could support children to collaborate on gathering relevant information as they explore at the beginning of a creative learning task. The same collaborative habit could later be used to support the evaluate stage of the creative process through getting constructive feedback from peers on each other's creative work and how it might be improved further.

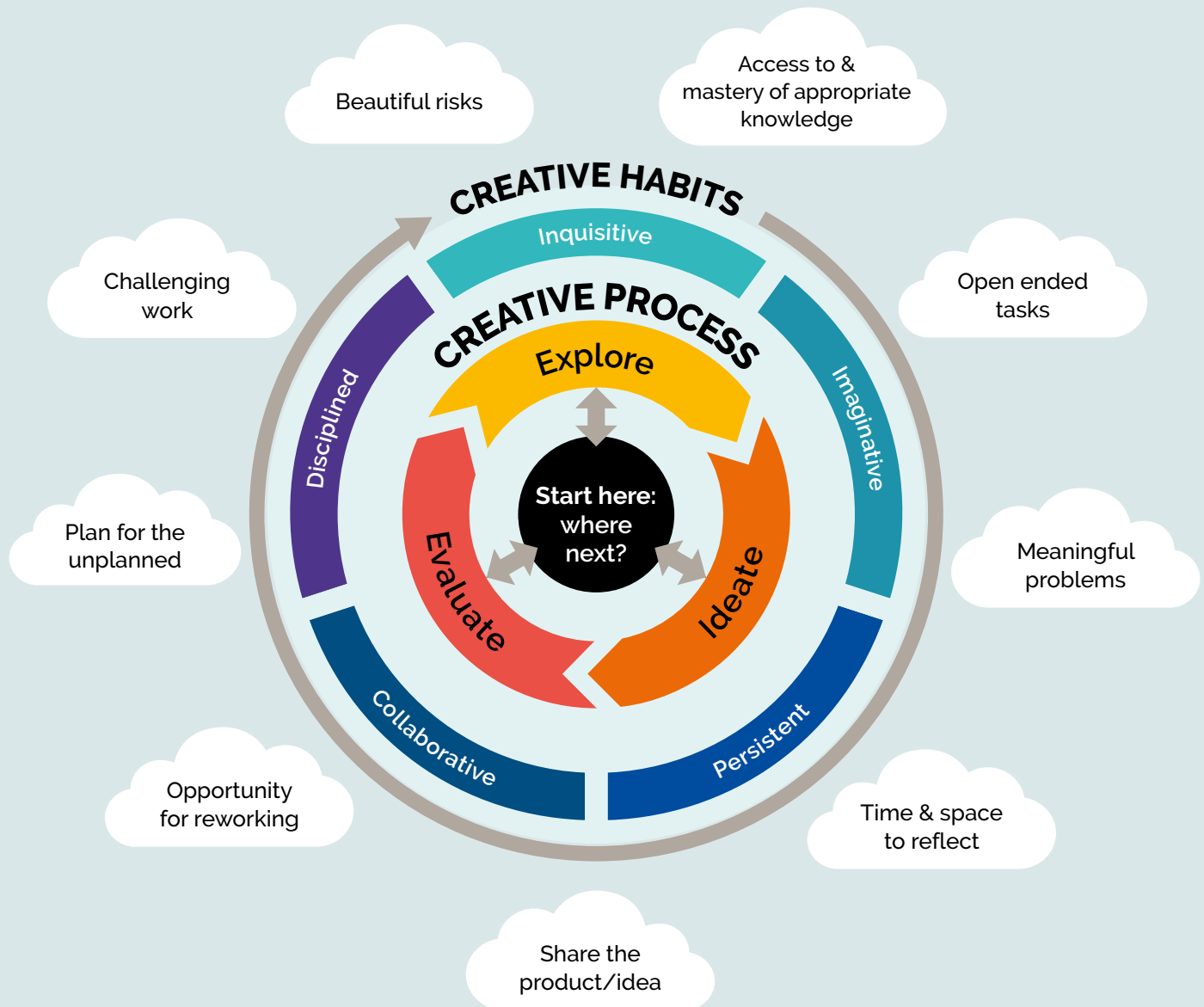
The final aspect of our Creativity Navigator focuses on the types of climate and task design that can support creativity to flourish in the classroom. For instance, tasks need to be personally meaningful, challenging, and open-ended, with children having some autonomy over aspect(s) of their learning. The classroom climate needs to provide psychological safety for children to take risks, make mistakes, learn from them and rework.



TO CITE THE CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR PLEASE USE:

Sowden, P.T., Warren, F., Seymour, M. Martin, C., Kauer, A. Spencer, E., Mansfield, S., Waite, J. (2025). A Creativity Navigator to Guide Teaching for Creativity: Implementation and Teacher Impacts in a Creativity Collaborative of Schools. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 59(2), e70005. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.70005>

CREATIVITY NAVIGATOR



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KEY UNIT INFORMATION

Playground Persuasion!



INTENDED FOR:
Year 4



SUBJECT FOCUS:
English (Writing)



UNIT DURATION & FORMAT:
2-week unit, with daily 1-hour lessons completed



LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES:

1. National Curriculum:

- a. Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- b. Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas

2. Creative Outcome:

To produce a persuasive argument (in the form of a letter) to the Headteacher, Governors and PTA, that justified their choices in detail.

This unit of writing aimed to improve the children's understanding and ability to use persuasive devices in their writing. Mr. Frost, our Headteacher, spoke to the children about the possibility of buying some new and improved equipment for the school playground, but explained how he needed their help in choosing it! Their task was to research and hone their choices to their top 3 'must haves', before writing a letter to himself, the PTA and the Governors, that would persuade them to go with their choices over someone else's.

All children across the year group were incredibly engaged throughout the whole topic, and the children really rose to the increased sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning. They utilised the creative habits throughout the process and were able to vocalise and identify how they had been creative throughout the duration of the unit. We were incredibly pleased with the outcomes!



STEPS FOR SUCCESS:

1. Allow children plenty of time and resources to complete their research. I found that giving them the chance to browse catalogues, websites, and physical resources led to higher engagement and more commitment to the persuasion element, due to the increased level of ownership.
2. Explain and model the need for discipline (children had to be realistic with their 'must haves', but try not to direct them too much). The freedom of this writing project is what led to such fantastic levels of engagement, enjoyment, and outcomes.



FULL UNIT DESCRIPTION

Playground Persuasion!

Introduction

This writing unit focused on developing children's knowledge and ability to use persuasive devices in their writing. Our Headteacher, Mr. Frost, challenged the children to conduct research into some new playground equipment, and write a letter to himself, the PTA and the Governors that would persuade them to buy their equipment for the school.

I taught this unit of writing daily, in 45-60 minute sessions across a fortnight. Ordinarily, I'd probably have used one week to deliver this unit of work. However, spacing the learning across 2 weeks allowed the children to dive a lot deeper into their research and produced some excellent outcomes, due to the children's high levels of engagement.

At the end of the unit, children were then given the opportunity to present their persuasive arguments to Mr. Frost.

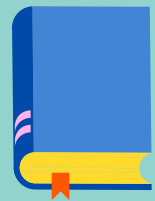
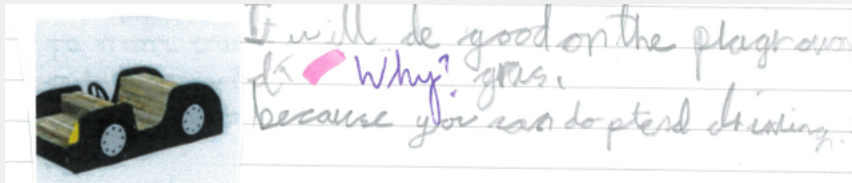
Key objectives for this unit:

- A range of additional detail and justified explanations included.
- Narrative and non-fiction texts include an appropriately signalled opening and ending.
- Expanded noun phrases to add detail.

- Use a wider range of conjunctions, including subordinate clauses surrounded by commas.
- Use modal verbs to indicate a degree of possibility.
- Appropriately use rhetorical questions in writing to help persuade the reader.
- Evaluate and edit the effectiveness of their own and other's writing.

This was a new unit of writing; however, it was taught and planned differently to previous persuasive writing units that I have completed. This time around, I ensured that children were given a lot more ownership and choice in what they chose to write about, rather than providing them with a template bank of 5-10 options of playground equipment.

The first few lessons were structured around children having the chance to conduct their own research into what they wanted themselves, before creating justified reasoning around why it would be a good choice to have in our school. The unit was purposefully planned in this way, to ensure that the creative process of explore, ideate and evaluate was followed.



During the **Explore phase**, children conducted their own research, as well as exploring a range of persuasive advertisements (both digital and print). We discussed how the sellers/advertisers made us want to buy these things, and discussed how we could include that in our own writing. At this point, we moved into the **Create phase** and the children were tasked with developing arguments to support purchase of their top 3 wishlist items. Initially, many of the children found this phase one of the hardest to complete, as there was almost too much choice! We spent time discussing the use of our creative habits, in particular the use of Discipline, to ensure that they made the correct choices that they were passionate about, as opposed to what one of their friends liked.

After the children had planned their key arguments, we continued by learning about particular persuasive devices; rhetorical questions and modal verbs. We looked back at our previous work, and discussed how they were used in advertisements we had seen previously, before applying them in context into our own writing. The children made tables of their examples, which they were then able to use in their own writing.

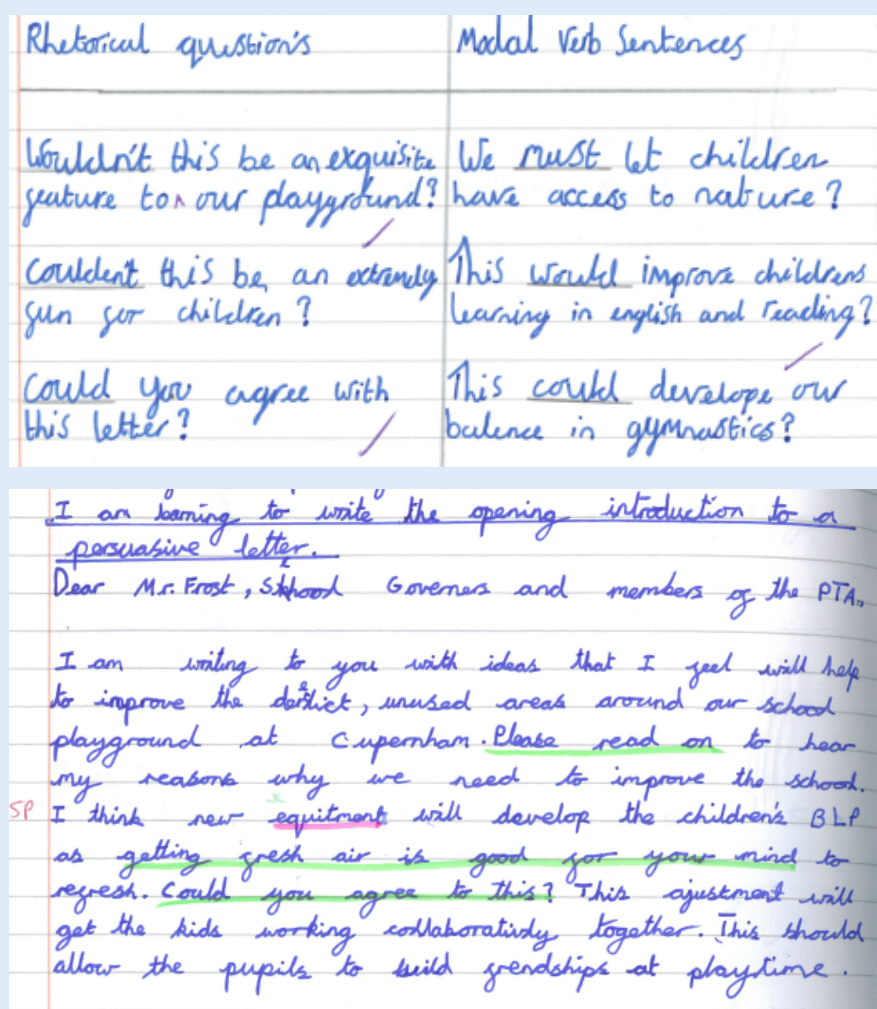
This then led to the final planning stage, before the children drafted their persuasive letters. At the beginning of the unit, children were provided with a 'Writing Toolkit', which is added to throughout the entire journey. These toolkits are unique to each child, as they consistently add their own ideas, thoughts and grammatical devices to them throughout the unit. As well as this, the children wrote bullet point plans in their writing

books to help them with the structure and layout of their letter. The children were taught this structure, to ensure their letters looked professional, but they had freedom in the order of their writing.

Once the final letters were complete, the children then presented their arguments to Mr. Frost and anxiously awaited to find out which of them were persuasive enough to have their equipment chosen for the playground!

This allowed children to **evaluate** the effectiveness of their persuasive arguments, and we spent time afterwards unpicking and discussing how their arguments/justifications could have been improved further or why they were so successful.

“During this unit, pupils learnt what it means to be persuasive, as well as how to be.”



I was mindful of not crushing the children's dreams, but still wanted to give them the choice and freedom to write their own choices. I spent time with these children, unpicking their choices and posing the question of whether they thought they were realistic/affordable/Mr. Frost approved.

I am learning to plan a persuasive piece of writing.

Dear Mr Frost, Governors + PTA,

I am writing to you because ... I'm giving you ideas.
Please read on and hear my reasons why...
We should add these.




Pirate Ship



^{think}
I think we should have a pirate ship
because ... most people love pirate ships that
^{you can climb}
(Climbing crates)

^{think}
I think we should have climbing crates
because ... climbing crates were good in
Year R.

explained that if they could justify it, then I could be persuaded to let them include it in their writing!

ensured that their arguments and justifications were personal and well thought through. They also embraced and applied the notion of being persuasive a lot more than I've seen previously, as they really wanted to learn how best to get their argument across. This also led to increased levels of engagement, with even our most reluctant writers actively choosing to write and asking for help on how to structure their arguments. I found this unit also resulted in particular success

I   really  like climbing because Its fun to play wip

I   dont like much kick in the yir because sic exist^{LOW} ~~is~~ b wil^{LOW} + ur

Supporting evidence of impact

Below is a sample of children's work throughout the unit. This includes snippets of their final letters, as well as the work leading up to this point.

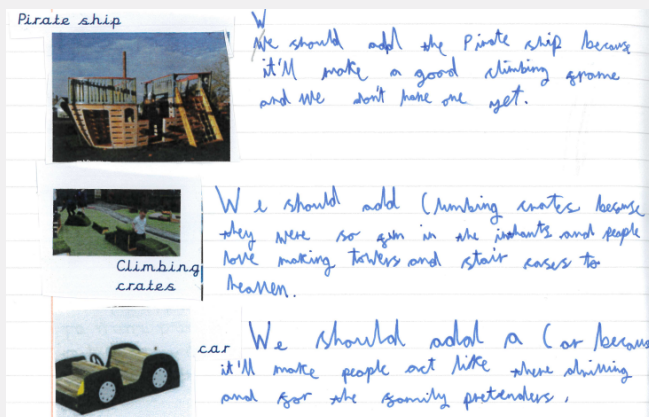
Child A – "I really enjoyed this unit of writing, and am really proud of all the persuasive devices I managed to use in my letter. I feel like when I read it to Mr. Frost, he really listened to what I had to say and understand my reasons."

Child B – "We learnt how to use rhetorical questions and modal verbs within our persuasive writing. Both of these help us to address the reader, and make it feel as though it is more personal. It also helps the reader to think deeply about what we're asking for."

Child C – "This writing was lots of fun, because we got to choose what we wrote about rather than being told. I found it a lot easier to plan and come up with ideas and enjoyed it more than usual."

Child D – "I really enjoyed researching all of the different playground equipment. Being given lots of choices and ideas was difficult at first, as I could

I am writing to you with ideas that I feel will help to improve the derelict, unused spaces and areas around our school playground at Cliphurst.
I think adding some more spectacular features would make children collaborate with one and other. This would also make break and lunch times more calm and relaxing for members of staff. And children should hopefully make it way more fun! I might also stop so many arguments



not choose! We had help and debates about what we wanted and why, and that helped us to decide because we were thinking deeply."



FINAL REFLECTIONS:

I feel as though this writing unit lent itself to teaching creatively really well, as it allowed children the freedom and opportunity to write for their own purpose. All children in my class were able to access the learning, and were thoroughly engaged throughout.

Exploration: Allowing children the opportunity to have an extended exploration phase led

to higher engagement and more successful outcomes. Ordinarily, I'd have kept this to a minimum and provided children with a bank of ideas and asked them to choose from these.

However, teaching them how to complete detailed research themselves, as well as taking small groups out to try the resources themselves at the Infants led to higher quality outcomes.

Discipline: Whilst the children were given the choice and freedom to write about what they wanted, it was still important to teach them how to be disciplined.

They needed to ensure that their persuasive arguments were concise and well thought out, as well as their equipment choices being realistic, and in some cases, legal!

CONTACT US:

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<https://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/Our-impactful-research/Research-in-Humanities-and-Social-Sciences/Research-projects/creativity-collaborative/>

