



Help at home

FREE

Smart Parents' Guide
to improving Literacy skills

My Smart Guide to Literacy

Top tips to develop your
child's reading and
writing skills at home



SmartLearning

As adults, we know that good English is a critical life skill and as parents we want to be able to support our children at home – but how?

At Smart Learning, we have been making resources to support busy teachers, children and parents for 16 years and have written this leaflet for parents and guardians keen to find out how to best support their child(ren) as they move to Years 5 and 6.

The Government expects all children to leave primary school with a sound grasp of essential English skills. During the week commencing **9 May 2016**, children in Year 6 will sit tests in **Maths, Reading and Grammar, punctuation and spelling test** (informally known as the SPAG test). These tests will reflect the new National Curriculum 2014, and some experts think they are going to be harder than ever before with a **completely new marking scheme** to match the rising expectations of the new curriculum.

These tests are set and marked externally (not by your child's school), and the results are used to measure the school's performance (for example, through reporting to Ofsted and published league tables). Your child's marks will be used in conjunction with teacher assessment to give a broader picture of their attainment.

It is good practice for secondary schools to receive both SATs marks and teacher assessment outcomes in mathematics, reading, and writing.

The grammar, punctuation and spelling test has two parts: a **grammar and punctuation paper** needing short answers, lasting 45 minutes, and an **aural spelling test of 20 words**, lasting around 15 minutes. KS2

The Reading test will be one paper with questions based on three passages of text.

Your child will have one hour, including reading time, to complete the test.

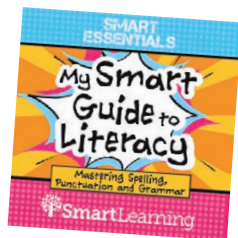
Your child will be given scaled scores. **You will be given your child's raw score (the actual number of marks they get), alongside their scaled score and whether they have reached the national average.** The score needed to reach the national average is unlikely to be announced before the completion of the tests. Your child's teacher will be able to explain more about these scores nearer the time.

So how can you make practising Literacy skills at home fun?

LOOK OUT!

We have a new, colourful pocket-sized book 'My Smart Guide to Literacy' Mastering Spelling Punctuation and Grammar packed with hints, tips and strategies on improving reading and writing. It is split into eight units:

- Spelling
- Word classes
- Punctuation
- Handwriting
- Sentences and Grammar
- Independent writing
- Writing well in all your lessons
- Reading



Schools and parents can buy the guide from just £1.99 and we have put together a few suggestions to try out at home based on these key areas of mastering Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar



Spelling

Children in Key Stage 2 at school should be able to spell many words but some may still cause them problems. Look through your child's writing together and find a word that they often spell incorrectly.

TIP

Make up a memory trick (**mnemonic**) together to help them remember words they find hard – **because** – **B**ig **e**lephants **c**an't **a**lways **u**se **s**mall **e**xits.

Word classes

When you're in the car or walking home from school, play Sentence Snake!

TIP

Sentence Snake is a game making the longest sentence possible. The loser is the player who finishes the sentence. It encourages children to focus on connectives 'because', 'but', 'equally', 'such as' a really important word class for making English more flowing.

Punctuation

Choose a book and when you read with your child, look at how the punctuation makes you alter your voice.

TIP

Taking it in turn with your child, read a piece again exaggerating the punctuation.

Handwriting

Amazing handiwork on games consoles and keyboards does not always translate into amazing handwriting.

TIP

Encourage your children to practise a little each day at home by copying out jokes from a joke book, favourite poem, writing a wish list, Christmas list, shopping list – make sure they measure the size of their letters with a ruler, checking ascenders and descenders (those above and below the line) to make sure they are the same size.

Sentences and grammar

Help your child to understand the active and passive voices.

TIP

Ask them to switch the 'voice' of your sentence:
"Dad set the table" to
"The table was set by Dad"

Writing well in all lessons

Help practise different forms of writing.

TIP

Look at different forms of writing, point out a variety of styles, instructions (recipes), news blogs, advertisements.



Reading

We all know that going to the library would help your child access a variety of texts, but how can we manage to develop reading skills such as visualisation and prediction in a busy week at home?

TIP

Hearing your child read every night for at least ten minutes and talking to them about their story (the characters, what might happen), will strengthen their confidence as readers. It will also develop their comprehensive skills.

Independent writing

Children cannot structure a piece of writing unless they can talk about it.

TIP

Pick a story topic: jungle adventure or a mystery and guide your child as they talk through the story:

1. Set the scene - describe the setting
2. Introduce the main character – build up action
3. Move the action through dialogue – introduce a problem
4. Resolution – solve the problem
5. End the story – maybe include a twist.
Link the beginning and end of a story.

These five points can then be translated into five paragraphs of a story, but practising story structure is critical to good writing, and fun!

TRY IT OUT

These are just a few tips and there are many more online, on our website www.smart-learning.co.uk and we've found a few more to help you:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/primary_support/

www.wordsforlife.org.uk/7-11/milestone

and for more information on the new test and a set of sample papers for the new SATs - www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-2016-sample-materials#key-stage-2

01423 206 200

admin@smart-learning.co.uk

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