

The Skinners' School Literacy Policy

Reviewed by RB, June 2014,2015,2016,2017, 2018

Date for next review June 2019

The promotion of literacy is a whole school initiative aimed at raising student attainment. This policy is in two sections: section 1 deals with written presentation and section two focuses on the core elements of literacy that we believe are relevant to our students.

Section 1 The Core Presentation policy:

Assumption : **All written work is completed so that the reader will have complete understanding.**

- All work should have a date and an appropriate and correct title for the work. These must be underlined.
- All work should be written in the pupil's best hand-writing using a blue or black pen.
- Drawing should be done in pencil. When underlining, a ruler must be used. Other straight lines must always be drawn using a ruler, for example axes for graphs.
- Books should not contain loose sheets of paper and handouts. These should be trimmed if necessary or folded then stuck into the exercise books.
- Any mistakes must be crossed out in pen using a ruler.
- Answers must be in full sentences unless there is a specific instruction not to.
- Individual departments will inform students of their own departmental additions to the policy.

Departments may well have additional requirements that are specific to their subject needs.

Section 2 Literacy

The second part of our Literacy Policy is to be used in conjunction with the presentation policy. It focuses on 5 key areas of literacy that are relevant to our students. These are shown below together with some tips on how to promote them. The emphasis here is on good practice and work methods by the pupils. The aim is to get the pupils to develop a series of good habits which will promote an independent and critical approach to learning and acquiring skills.

1. *Read for understanding and meaning, interpreting complex questions and higher order command terms.*

1. Pre-read any text you intend to use with students to spot any potential vocabulary issues.
2. Break down long sentences to ensure complete understanding.
3. Get the students to underline/highlight key words.
4. Analyse command terms carefully and provide a glossary of the main command terms for your subject.
5. Instruct the pupils to write out what the question is asking the pupil to do.
6. Ask the pupils to write out the series of tasks which must be carried out in order to gain a high grade.
7. Ensure that any reading activity has a clear purpose and outcome (to make notes, researching, selection and organisation of material for an essay/answer questions)

2. *Research, plan and then write extended and complex answers that are relevant, detailed and convincing*

1. Provide guidance on where to find relevant material (text books, articles, websites).
2. Go through essay questions in class and practise essay plans.
3. Make the students familiar with mark schemes and how to use them.
4. Highlight and teach the key features in model A* answers.
5. Use answers which are not A*/A and get the students to mark these. Ask pupils how they could be improved.
6. Issue a checklist of key features and instruct the students to read and critically evaluate the work of their peers.

3. *Interpret, analyse, synthesise and evaluate (Bloom's taxonomy) using complex and subject specific vocabulary and concepts.*

1. Provide subject/topic specific vocabulary.
2. Insist on evidence and justification of points raised.
3. Use open ended questioning techniques to ensure the students justify and give a reasoned judgement or recommendation.
4. Break down longer pieces or more complex pieces of text/answers. Ask pupils to identify the function of each sentence/paragraph, i.e. for knowledge, application, evidence, analysis, reasoned judgement and synthesis.
5. Provide a word wall and use it.

6. Ask pupils to list the main concepts they are using in their work.
7. Highlight in your marking where answers could be more detailed, analytical or evaluative.

4. Engage in high level discussion and be able to express a coherent, justified and supported argument.

1. Structure group work carefully. Provide a focus and clear guidance on feeding back.
2. Set clear guidelines and assessment criteria (what is to be said, by whom, for what purpose and how it will be assessed).
3. Model effective discussion (points, evidence, justification).
4. Challenge the points that are raised so that there has to be justification and supporting evidence.
5. Develop a classroom atmosphere whereby students are encouraged to speculate, ask and answer questions and hypothesise.

5. Draft and re-draft answers following careful and active critical examination of the time and methods used in studying and techniques applied in answering questions.

1. Insist that written answers are read through by the students.
2. Encourage research, revision, careful planning and reflection before writing.
3. Insist on pupils drafting and re-drafting of answers.
4. Make sure students are aware of mark schemes and model previous answers showing where marks have been awarded.
5. Provide time for careful and focused self and paired evaluation and critical examination of work and work methods.