

## Non-fiction toolkit – Explanation

Y1/2	Y3/4	Y5/6
<p><b>Y1/2</b></p> <p><b>Learn</b> and <b>retell</b> simple explanatory texts with a three-part structure in sentences or short paragraphs.</p> <p>These may be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>real experiences</b> or processes <i>why bees are important..., how our hamster escaped...</i></li> <li>– <b>familiar stories</b> <i>Little Red Hen</i></li> <li>– <b>play and invention</b> <i>why bananas are curly</i></li> </ul> <p>The <b>structure</b> should comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>a title</b> which sets up expectations for the reader <i>why we must look after our bees..., why wouldn't Little Red Hen share her bread?</i></li> <li>– <b>an opening</b> that introduces reader to the topic and signals the purpose of the text <i>Bees are important because they can make honey. They also help trees and plants to grow ...</i></li> <li>– <b>an ordered list of events or reasons</b> leading up to the outcome signalled in the title <i>First, she asked all the animals to help plant the seeds but they all said 'No', so she did it herself. Then she asked them to help...</i></li> <li>– <b>a conclusion</b> which follows from the reasons listed in section 2 and links back to the title <i>Because no one would help her... she kept the bread for herself; So without bees, we would have no fruit. Now you know why they are so important.</i></li> </ul> <p>Where appropriate, use <b>generalising words</b>: <i>most, many, some, few...</i></p> <p>Use <b>connectives</b> for:</p>	<p><b>Building on Y1/2 work:</b></p> <p>Explanation texts are sometimes hard to provide because explanations involve manipulating complex ideas. Suitable topics might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>plants and animals</b> <i>What do plants need to grow? Why are foxes coming into our gardens? Why trees don't fall over...</i></li> <li>– <b>health and diet</b> <i>Why are vegetables good for us?</i></li> <li>– staying safe <i>how to treat a cut, what you need for healthy teeth and gums</i></li> <li>– <b>familiar physical processes</b> <i>how does a kettle/a bicycle work</i></li> <li>– <b>simple moral questions</b> <i>why a character in a story should have told the truth</i></li> <li>– <b>Play and invention</b> <i>why rainbows don't wobble in the wind...</i></li> </ul> <p>Extend use of three-part text structure, boxing up the text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>general statement to introduce the topic</b> <i>in the autumn some birds migrate</i></li> <li>– <b>a series of logical steps</b> explaining how or why something occurs <i>because the days get shorter and there is less light...,</i></li> <li>– steps continue until the explanation is complete. End with a <b>summary statement</b> or <b>memorable piece of information</b> <i>As a result, Dinosaurs quickly became extinct along with about 50% of other animal species.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Interest the reader with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a title that captures the text <i>The discovery of bubble gum; Why are dragons extinct?</i></li> <li>– an exclamation <i>Beware – foxes can bite!</i></li> <li>– questions, <i>Did you know that...?</i></li> <li>– tempting turns of phrase: <i>strange as it may seem..., not many people know that..., Interestingly...</i></li> <li>– add extra, interesting bits of information <i>the first balloons were made from animal intestines.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Building on Y3/4 work:</b></p> <p>The framework for explanatory writing introduced in <b>Y3/4</b> should be <b>practised and consolidated in Y5/6</b>, with emphasis on explanatory writing across the curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>science, technology, geography</b> explaining processes in the natural world <i>Why do trees have bark? How are rainbows formed? Why does it get colder when you climb up a mountain?</i></li> <li>– <b>history and literature</b> to explore motives and reasons <i>Why didn't Edmund tell Lucy about meeting the White Witch? (Lion, Witch and Wardrobe)</i></li> <li>– <b>play and invention</b> <i>Why dragons became extinct; How the elephant got its trunk.. .</i></li> </ul> <p>Help readers to understand explanations through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>introductions</b> that link to their experiences <i>No doubt you will have seen a suspension bridge, and it's almost as likely that you've travelled over one</i></li> <li>– <b>giving examples</b>: <i>other mammals, such as flying squirrels and gliding possums, can only glide for short distances.</i></li> <li>– <b>Inventing similes to illustrate points</b> <i>a tree's bark is like our skin..., the cables of a suspension bridge are stretched under tension like a spring..</i></li> <li>– <b>possible use of diagrams, charts, illustrations or models.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Consolidate and extend the explanation text structure</b> from Y3/4 to include:</p> <p>expanding the range of connectives and generalisers, particularly those showing cause and effect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– use of <b>provisional statements</b> with words and phrases like <i>usually..., seem to be..., tend to...</i></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>time and sequence:</b> <i>then, before, when, first, second</i> to sequence information leading towards the conclusion</li> <li>– <b>cause and effect</b> to link reasons/motives and conclusions: <i>so..., so that..., because..., in order to..., that's why...</i></li> </ul> <p>Use <b>complete simple and compound sentences</b> to give information clearly and objectively, with <b>well-chosen adjectives</b> to denote size, colour, behaviour...</p> <p>Use <b>prepositions</b> to show position and direction: <i>behind, above, towards.</i></p> <p>Write in the <b>present tense</b> and usually 3rd person to give text an <b>impersonal and objective voice</b>.</p> <p>Use correct sentence punctuation.</p>	<p>Explore options for organising and reorganising sentence order which lead most effectively to the conclusion.</p> <p>Collect and use a <b>range of connectives and generalisers</b> to link sentences and add interest for readers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– for <b>cause and effect</b> <i>this means that..., as a result..., owing to..., in order to, leading to..., where..., when..., therefore..., consequently...</i></li> <li>– to <b>add information</b> <i>as well as..., furthermore..., additionally..., moreover..., Not only...</i></li> <li>– to <b>compare</b> <i>like the..., similarly.., as with..., equally..., in contrast to..</i></li> <li>– for <b>emphasis:</b> <i>most of all..., most importantly..., In fact..., without doubt..</i></li> <li>– to <b>generalise</b> <i>all..., many..., the majority..., typically..., Like most..., always..., often..., sometimes.., usually...</i></li> <li>– to <b>conclude</b> <i>finally.., so..., thus..., in conclusion..., to sum up..., which explains why...</i></li> </ul> <p>Use <b>technical language</b>, explaining what it means where necessary.</p> <p>Use <b>descriptive language</b> to illustrate key points and help the reader build a picture of what is being explained.</p> <p>Use mostly <b>present tense, 3rd person in formal style</b> for an unknown audience.</p> <p>Use <b>correct punctuation</b> for sentences, clauses, questions, exclamations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>opinions as well as facts</b> <i>Some people still believe that... It used to be thought that...</i></li> <li>– <b>technical vocabulary to add precision</b> <i>spine, compression, glucose</i></li> <li>– <b>references to sources of evidence</b> to add authority <i>Most people now believe..., However, last year, a new variety was discovered...</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Vary sentence structure, length and type:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>complex sentences</b> to combine information effectively: <i>The Outer bark keeps a tree from losing too much water, which could happen easily in a plant so large...</i></li> <li>– <b>sentences with lists of three:</b> <i>Pulleys are used on boats to hoist sails, in garages to lift engines and in cranes for shifting heavy weights</i></li> <li>– <b>active and passive voices:</b> <i>suspension bridges have cables strung between tall towers from which a deck is hung (or suspended)</i></li> <li>– <b>conditional and hypothetical</b> (if...then) sentences <i>If trees lose (were to lose) their bark, they would die because...; If Fleming hadn't accidentally noticed the mould, we might not have penicillin today.</i></li> </ul>
---	--	--