

Secondary English and Literacy

A Guide for Teachers

Avril Haworth, Christopher Turner
and Margaret Whiteley



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This book is dedicated to all the trainee teachers of English we have worked with. We wish to recognize their contributions to the development of the thinking reflected in this book.

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Preface

One of the first principles of writing is to remember the readership – know who is going to read the text, and write with them in mind. The problem here, however, is that there could well be a diverse readership for this book. What unites you all is that you want to be teachers in secondary schools and colleges specializing in the teaching of English/Literacy.

The writers of the book are well aware that some of you are following a traditional one-year, full-time postgraduate course. However, we also know that some of you will be training to become teachers in a variety of other ways, including school-based, part-time and distance learning routes. You are all very welcome!

The variety of routes is testimony to the UK government's desire to make becoming a teacher as flexible as it can be, to cater for the range of factors that have impeded some people in the past.

That does not mean, however, that the process ought to be less rigorous or demanding. Indeed, one of the principles that has exercised the writers of this book has been a desire to provide potential English/Literacy teachers with an intellectually challenging framework for both the subject and its associated pedagogy. Expect to have to rethink, face new concepts and consider the implications for the classroom. We wish you well, with the book as well as with your training. We are all committed to preparing teachers who are going to be very good indeed; the pupils deserve the very best, and so does our subject. We hope that this volume contributes to the process.

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

Writing a book for multiple readerships is a challenge, and we want to reach a wide and diverse audience. We have tried very hard to make the book accessible and useful to all the likely readers. Given that range and variety, we set out to do the following with the book:

- write a companion text for those doing a one-year, full-time course – support and material in addition to that provided on your course
- provide trainee teachers on school-based and part-time courses with accessible support materials
- create an interactive workbook for those on distance learning courses.

With those aims in mind, you will notice that:

- the chapters cover the Attainment Targets for English
- the book addresses the key elements of the subject domain
- there are tasks, and pauses for thought – all designed to enable you to reflect on issues, to support the development of your pedagogic practices and to give you space to be challenged and respond
- In the appendices, we provide sample medium- and short-term lesson planning/evaluation pro formas, a language audit and sample lesson plans/evaluations.

In other words, the book can be read in a number of different ways, last of which is from front cover to back cover! That will work, of course, but our intention is to provide you with a resource that is flexible enough to cope with your individual needs.

But first a word about planning. Here is not the place to discuss in detail issues to do with planning – we assume that whatever kind of course you are doing will deal with that in generic terms or within the subject domain.

However, we do make some assumptions about planning that need to be specified. We hope you will find them useful in your discussions about planning with school/college mentors and university tutors.

Throughout the book, you will come across examples of lesson plans, many of which are based on real lesson plans created by trainee teachers as part of their training. So that you can see the main features of our view of planning, we also provide you with a blank template. Please feel free to

adapt and amend it. No one yet has produced the perfect, all-purpose lesson plan that suits everyone. And thank goodness for that. Planning is something that has important idiosyncratic aspects to it, because we usually do it for ourselves and the plans will, to a greater or lesser extent, express something of our professional individuality. However, there are some essential features, namely:

- clear learning objectives ('By the end of this lesson, pupils will know/understand/be able to ...')
- clear teaching objectives and strategies
- a sequence of lesson activities, including what teacher will do and what pupils will do
- use of variety – in pace, activity, learning styles, teaching styles, resources
- a rationale for the sequence that connects with understandings of the ways pupils learn
- consideration of resources, materials and technology
- planned assessment and monitoring opportunities
- a chance for pupils to reflect on their learning ('What have you learnt today? How do I know that?')
- a record of homework set
- 'memo to self' opportunities ('Remember to see Jayne's exercise book next lesson.' 'Start next lesson from No. 5 in this lesson plan – ran out of time for 6 and 7!' 'Make sure Kylie and Jason do not sit together in future!')
- a more considered and reflective lesson evaluation. (How effective was the learning and the teaching? What implications for the next lesson are there from this lesson? What changes to the next lesson plan will you make as a result of assessment and monitoring feedback in this lesson?)

We hope you find those comments helpful, and that they contribute to the development of your style of planning, for you and your pupils.

So, please feel free to dip in as appropriate, or be directed to a particular chapter by a mentor, or seek out lesson planning exemplars across a number of chapters, or tangle with the intellectual rationale for a view of literature, or whatever! We hope it caters for your needs.

THE USE OF 'TEXT'

■ We would be the first to admit that whenever there are two or three English/Literacy teachers together, there are always going to be some differences of opinion or emphasis about something! And we would be lying if we said to you that all the writers of this book agree about everything to do with English/Literacy.

But out of our debates, we have united around the notion of 'text', and, as it is such a fundamental concept in this book, it is worth spending a little time and space to introduce the idea at this early stage, so that references to 'texts' will be understood more clearly in later chapters.

We use the term 'text', first, to mean any occasion when language is used. That seems simple enough! And in essence it is. From the mundane to the earth-shattering, from the private to the public, from the conversational to the academic, from the polemic to the factual – all are texts. And they can exist in a variety of forms – from the permanent to the ephemeral, from the printed to the videoed, from the visual to the auditory.

Texts can also be visual, or largely dependent on sounds for their communication, or any mix from any or all of the available modes. So, the second essential prerequisite for a text is that it communicates – from pre-speech baby babblings to serious journalism, from the bathroom mirror monologue to the lecture hall presentation, from MTV to government information film, from website to billboard.

The scope for investigation and adaptation of texts is enormous, and forms part of the excitement of the subject. As we explore the texts of the past, so at the same time we accommodate the new texts of the present and future; the vogue for 'texting' via mobile telephones is a phenomenon as worthy of our attention as the impact of the printing press on literacy developments – both developments have had profound effects on our ability to create texts for means of communication. And, in passing, note that a new verb has entered the language: to text. The technological innovation has added to the language.

Later in the book there are fuller considerations of this matter, including the issue of quality, and whether it helps to see some texts as more 'valuable' than others. But for the moment, we hope you can grasp the concept with enthusiasm, and we trust that by the end of the course you are on, or by the time you get to the end of this book, or ideally both, that you see the possibilities for your teaching and pupils' learning in such a notion.

ESSENTIAL COMPANION DOCUMENTS

Throughout this volume, mention is made of a number of key documents. We recommend that you have easy access to the following:

- *The National Literacy Strategy* (DfEE, 1998) – the teaching and learning objectives for Reception to Year 6, which usefully contains the rationale for the view of literacy that informs the Strategy and the Framework
- *English: The National Curriculum for English* (DfEE, 1999) – the legal requirements for the teaching of English
- *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Literacy across the Curriculum* (DfEE, 2001a) – the cross-curricular focus, with implications for English/Literacy teaching
- *Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Framework for Teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9* (DfEE, 2001b) – the development of the National Literacy Strategy into secondary education.

The trouble with books is that they are not flexible enough to cope with changes as they happen – those amendments can only be made when a new edition is printed. So things will move on ahead of changes to this book, and you would do well to keep as up to date as possible with developments in the world of English/Literacy teaching and learning. Nevertheless, we offer the above titles as currently essential companion pieces to this volume.

One way to keep up to speed with changes is to access some websites. Again, the world of the Web is in constant flux, but currently we recommend:

- the Standards website, part of the Department for Education and Skills: <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk>
- the National Literacy Trust: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk>

GLOSSARY

Education is a field of human endeavour that manages to generate as many acronyms and jargon/technical terms as any other, if not more. To that end, we have provided you with a glossary of terms following the end of this preface.

AND FINALLY ...

It would not be a proper preface if we did not acknowledge the help and support we have had in the writing of this book.

We have based the book on our collective experience of working with trainee teachers over many years in a great variety of contexts, and we wish to thank them for contributing in their many ways to the honing of our own practice as teacher educators.

We wish to thank our colleagues at Crewe and Didsbury who have been supportive of, and interested in, this venture. Many of them have contributed unwittingly to the book, by comments and thoughts, references to other books and materials, copies of templates – in lots of different ways.

Finally, we want to thank each other. What we mean is that this has been an enriching experience for all of us, in that we have had to articulate to each other our deeply held beliefs and philosophies about a subject we all hold very dear, both professionally and intellectually. We have also benefited from the exchanges, in that we have a stronger sense of what we agree on, and we all also recognize that there have been developments in our collective as well as individual thinking as a result of the process.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Below is an explanation of terms frequently used in the book, including any shorthand versions and acronyms used.

<i>Term as used in the book</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Advanced level qualifications (A levels): AS and A2	Post-16 modular qualifications: Advanced Subsidiary (AS) taken in year one, Advanced level (AS+A2) after two years
Attainment Targets (ATs)	Designated areas of study in the National Curriculum – England. For English, these are Speaking and Listening (En1), Reading (En2) and Writing (En3)
Pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL learners)	Any pupil whose first language is not English. This will include early stage learners and advanced learners, UK and non-UK citizens
Framework for Teaching English: Years 7, 8 and 9 (the Framework)	The English component of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy, based closely on the revised National Curriculum for 2000, and designed to complement the current English Order
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education: a set of subject-based assessments designed for the 14–16 age group in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland
Key Stages 1 to 4 (KS3, KS4)	The National Curriculum is organized into age-related phases covering ages 5–16 as follows: Key Stage 1 ages 5–7, Key Stage 2 ages 7–11, Key Stage 3 ages 11–14 and Key Stage 4 ages 14–16

Key Stage 3 National Strategy (the Strategy/ the KS3Strategy)	A government-led initiative to raise standards by strengthening teaching and learning across all subjects at Key Stage 3. For details of many training materials available in schools visit www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3
The National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE)	NATE is the UK subject teacher association for all aspects of English from pre-school to university. The association aims to support effective teaching and learning, to keep teachers informed about current developments and to provide them with a national voice (quoted from Summer 2002 edition of <i>English in Education</i> , the NATE journal)
National Curriculum: English (NC English, NC for English, English in the NC)	The current statutory English curriculum in schools in England. For details visit www.nc.uk.net
The National Literacy Strategy: framework for teaching (NLS)	A 5–11 primary literacy curriculum designed to raise standards through an objectives-led framework. Implemented in 1997, it influenced planning for the KS3 Framework
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)	Government body that regulates developments in curriculum and assessment in schools, colleges and the workplace
Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs)	End of Key Stage assessments of achievement in English, Mathematics, and Science, taken in England and Wales (KS1 tasks not applicable in Wales)

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: English and Literacy

In this chapter we attempt to define what we mean by the subject 'English'. Oddly enough, we have set ourselves a difficult task; if you think that what constitutes 'English' is obvious, straightforward, uncontested or incontestable, then be prepared for a shock.

What we aim to do is to provide you with an intellectually consistent, academically rigorous and professionally focused view of the subject. We believe that those three crucial aspects – the intellectual, the academic and the professional – are all interconnected, because it is out of the interplay of those elements that *what* we teach and *how* we teach English in secondary schools emerges.

ENGLISH: THE STORY CONTINUES

Now is not the time for another history of English as a subject worthy of study – others have done it very well already; for example, please see Davies (1996) and Marshall (2000). However, the nature of the subject in the years leading up to and following the arrival of the National Curriculum, and the attendant debates and disagreements, requires some account of history, if only to contextualize where we are now and what might happen to our understanding of the subject in the immediate future.

To get some idea of the current state of the subject, one only has to look at the names of the courses on offer in universities in the UK under the overarching title of English. There are courses called 'English Literature'

and 'English Language' which for most of us are instantly recognizable as belonging to English.

At the other end of the scale of instant recognition, however, are courses with titles such as 'Contemporary Cultural Studies', 'Literatures in English', 'Media Studies' and many others that combine seemingly disparate elements of English into one course.

So, there is a rich variety of emphases in the academic world, and debates about 'What is English?' regularly burst into life. The analogy one might use is of an active volcano, mostly dormant, but occasionally terrorizing the locality with surprise eruptions of unpredictable duration.

There are some aspects of recent debates that need to be highlighted, for two main reasons:

- They have not gone away and you need to be ready for the next 'eruption'.
- They have been profoundly influential in defining the current conceptualization of the subject in secondary schools.

In 1989, Professor Brian Cox and his committee wrote the first version of English in the National Curriculum, *English for Ages 5 to 16*. In it, they recognized that English is perceived differently by teachers, and they defined five dominant emphases:

- personal growth
- cross-curricular
- adult needs
- cultural heritage
- cultural analysis (DES, 1989: paras 2.20–2.27).

We still find those definitions useful in a variety of ways:

- They can be helpful when looking at an English Department, to see if any views dominate.
- We can use them to chart our own intellectual development in the subject.
- We can use them to contextualize debates about the nature of the subject.

We can configure those views in a variety of ways. For example:

- Some views look inward to the individual (personal growth), while others look outward to the world of work (adult needs).

- Some see English as an educational requirement (cross-curricular), while others see it as part of a wider heritage (cultural heritage).
- Some views are concerned with enabling pupils to access significant aspects of their cultural history (cultural heritage), while others connect pupils with contemporary cultural manifestations in all their variety (cultural analysis).
- Some are about an initiation into an established set of texts (cultural heritage), while others are about understanding and critiquing the contemporary, the immediate, the influential, the ephemeral (cultural analysis).

(For further views on the above issues, please read Goodwyn, 1999.)

At the moment, English – as defined by National Curriculum requirements, examination syllabuses at GCSE and post-16, and recent initiatives in Literacy Education – requires learners to engage with all aspects of the five models of English:

- Personal growth – we can see that English involves not only the intellect, but also feelings. In addition, because of the nature of the texts in English, we have to deal with ‘issues’ in ways that develop our learners as people as well as students of English.
- Cross-curricular – cross-curricular literacy is back on the agenda, as teachers become more aware of the distinctive literacy demands of their subject, as well as seeing how the teaching and learning of literacy are inextricably intertwined with teaching and learning in their subject.
- Adult needs – we would all subscribe to the view that our learners need to be able to cope with the literacy demands of the workplace, as well as the wider issues of becoming informed and involved citizens who can communicate and be aware of how communications affect and influence. Such views are implemented in the curriculum through the focus on Key Skills at GCSE and A level.
- Cultural heritage – Shakespeare is still an author who has to be studied in secondary schools; indeed, that requirement has statutory status in Key Stages 3 and 4. In addition, GCSE and A level syllabuses draw in part on understandings of the literary heritage for their choices of examination texts.

- Cultural analysis – the study of an aspect of the Media is a compulsory element in the GCSE examination, and A level syllabuses require learners to engage with recent and current literary critical theories.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Despite the views expressed above, it would be wrong to give the impression that peace and harmony have broken out. There are still echoes of previous reverberations, historical reminders of debates still unresolved. And you need to be aware of them, in order to understand the present as well as preparing you for what is to come.

We believe there are *four* major areas of continuing debate and disagreement:

1. Cultural heritage v. cultural analysis.
2. Standard English v. varieties of English (or 'Englishes').
3. Standards generally (the 'complaints tradition').
4. English *or* Literacy versus English *and* Literacy.

■ CULTURAL HERITAGE V. CULTURAL ANALYSIS

This debate is not going to go away, so we need to tackle it forcefully. We believe that it is not a case of either/or, but rather both. Yes, it is difficult to define the literary heritage – the so-called 'literary canon' – and, yes, it does keep changing and, yes, it is dominated by dead white males.

But there are some texts from the past, acknowledged as possessing some qualities, that our learners ought to experience. At the same time as we make 'great literature' accessible to our learners, we can also deconstruct the notion of the canon and examine its assumptions; for example, the texts exist to enable us to explore not only the male First World War poets, but also the writings of women at war and on the home front, and to ask the question: why have the male poets achieved canonical status, while the women's writing has not (yet)?

In terms of cultural analysis, there is so much richness in the range and variety of texts our learners experience constantly that it would be intellectually dishonest not to acknowledge the impact of advertising, tabloid newspapers, MTV, soap operas, pop music, the fashion industry – to name but a few – on the lives of our learners.

It is not a question of whether Shakespeare is better than *EastEnders*; let us study both, see the differences and similarities, and understand the

contemporary appeal of both. Then we can consider how Shakespeare might have dealt with some of the issues raised in *EastEnders*, and then devise a soap opera version of *Romeo and Juliet*.

■ STANDARD ENGLISH V. VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

In strictly linguistic terms, standard English is a variety of English that has acquired a particular social and cultural status, as it is the English spoken and written in formal and educated contexts. However, there are some who believe that standard English is the best kind of English, thus implying that other kinds of English are inferior and less desirable.

Such a view is intellectually untenable. In addition, acting upon that view can have deleterious effects on our learners, especially those who bring other varieties of English to our classrooms. We need to remember that such pupils, for many of whom standard English is an unknown quantity, bring the English of their geographical area or country of origin, or the English of their social class or cultural heritage, or the dominant forms of English in their families, to our classrooms. We need to understand the connections between language and identity, however defined. We need to deal sensitively with non-standard and dialect forms as we take on the responsibility and curriculum requirement to teach our learners to use Standard English as appropriate.

Ideally, we want our learners to have a range of Englishes that they can draw on as appropriate; we want our learners to code-switch, appreciate the richness of the registers of contemporary English and to appreciate how language defines them as individuals with culture, history and uniqueness.

In addition, we want our learners to understand that all varieties of English can be described, and that we can investigate the rules that govern usage, while at the same time adding to many learners' repertoires the benefits of being able to use standard English.

■ STANDARDS GENERALLY (THE 'COMPLAINTS TRADITION')

Let us start with an incontrovertible statement: since the dawning of English as a language in its own right, standards of usage have never been good enough for somebody. The so-called 'complaints tradition' continues to have its baleful influence on debates about standards. We guarantee that within a few weeks of searching in newspapers, listening to or watching the news, or conversations 'around the water cooler', you will come across someone complaining about the language children use these days, or standards of spelling, or use of slang, or people's accents, or