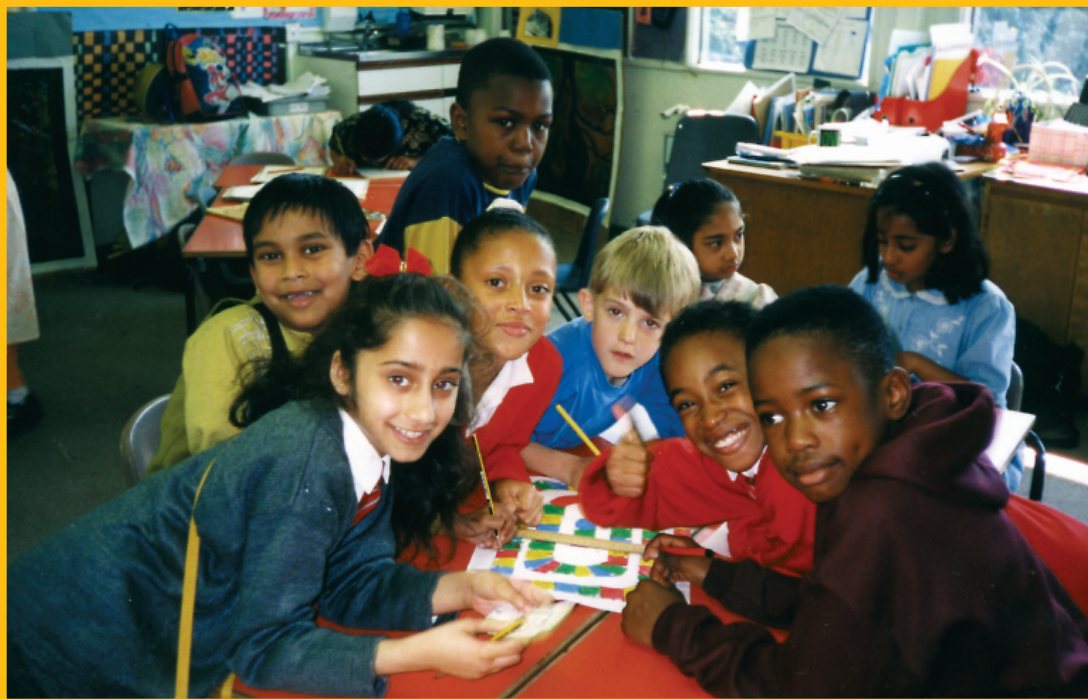


Writing our past



Celebrating and researching the achievements of
people in the past who came to live in Britain

A literacy resource for Key Stage 2

Acknowledgments

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This publication is a contribution to Forward Thinking.

The Forward Thinking initiative provides a variety of opportunities for teachers to work together to plan, implement and evaluate work which responds to the challenges facing us as we seek to meet the educational needs of young people growing up in an increasingly global context.

For information about Tide~ initiatives contact:
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Writing our past

A literacy resource for Key Stage 2

The work described in this book began as part of a community project in partnership with UCE and Birmingham LEA to promote positive achievement in African Caribbean children. It is, however, about promoting the achievement of all our children and enhancing the quality of their educational experience.

We share the national sense of urgency about improving literacy, but are convinced that raising standards depends on not only the content and structure of a literacy hour, but the way reading, writing and language skills are taught across the whole curriculum.

In our experience, children learn best when they are engaged by the content, when they feel that it relates to their own lives, including their home background and their peer group relationships. Most importantly, they need to trust their teachers to respect them and the families of which they are a part.

Our responsibility as teachers is to build on their current understandings - we must know and respect what they bring to the classroom - and have a clear analysis of what we expect them to learn and the stages by which we shall achieve our objectives.

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Using this book

We found a four stage planning cycle a useful model and have structured the contents of this book according to the stages illustrated below.

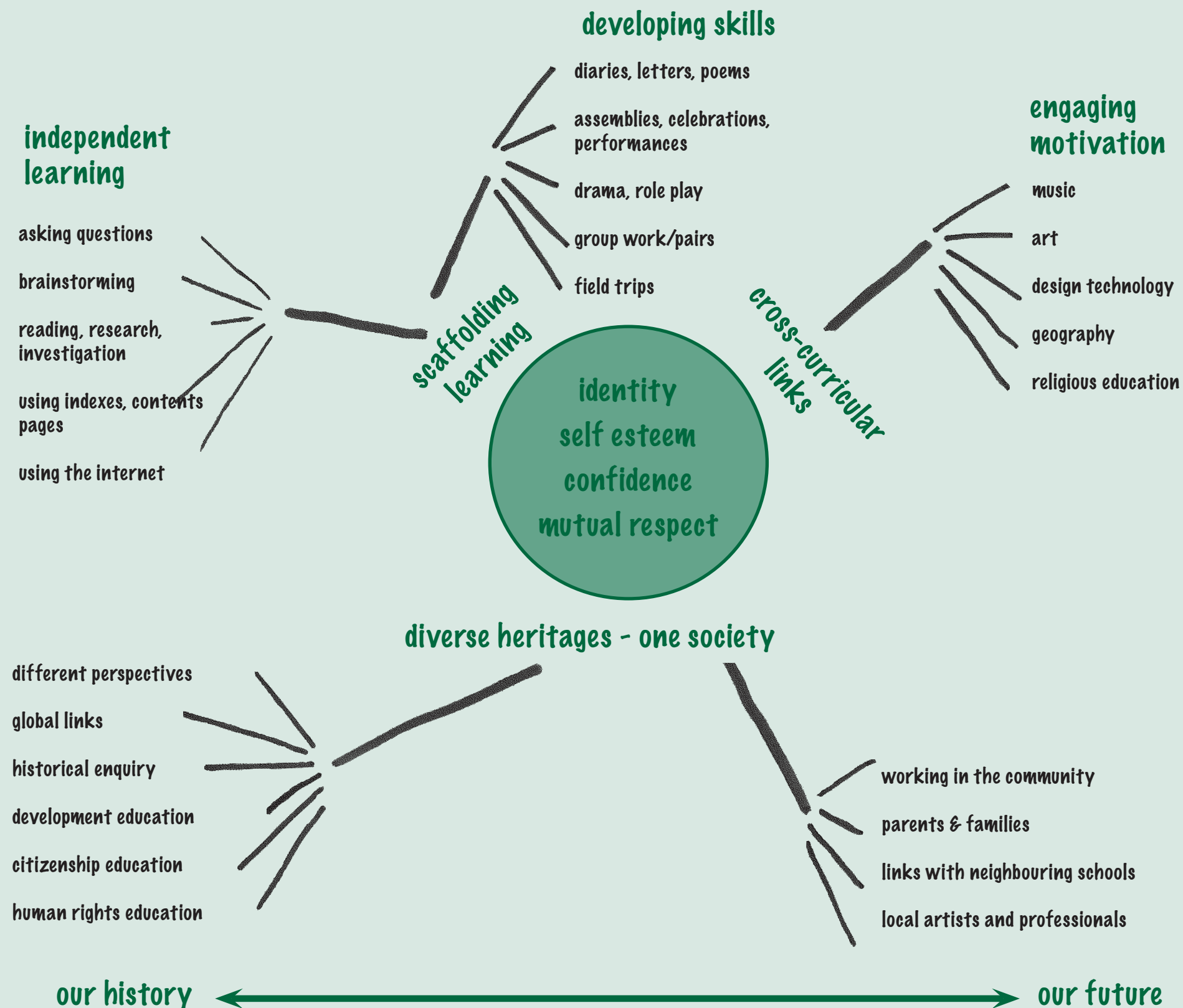
We also found that the diagram of interlocking themes helped to clarify our planning.



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Interlocking themes “...making the world a better place...”



Introduction

The class teachers and others who took part in this project are inspired by the idea of mutual respect between people, from local level in neighbourhoods and classrooms, to global level between peoples and countries.

We also know that mutual respect includes children's self esteem and that this must be based on both recognition of the value and importance of their homes and a belief in their own ability to learn and achieve.

Language and literacy play an important part in school achievement. We therefore linked literacy development with the idea of an inclusive version of our country's history. We wanted our children to celebrate the contribution of individuals from all over the globe who have settled here, and through their achievements helped to make the world a better place.

These three strands, literacy, history and development education, are woven throughout the whole project and are equally important.

Four schools have contributed to this book through the work done by teachers and children.

Two Year 5 class teachers in William Cowper JI School spent the Spring Term of 1997 teaching their children to write "International British Biographies". The following year, they did similar work with their new Year 5 children under the title "Everyone's Pasts".

In 1998, three more schools became interested. In St Francis Roman Catholic JI School, the Year 6 classes wrote biographies as a follow-up to work they had already started on human rights education. Two Year 3 teachers in Aston Tower JI School engaged on an extensive project based on the life of Olaudah Equiano, developing not only a wide range of reading and writing skills but also music and drama, culminating in a multimedia performance. The Year 3/4 class teacher in Long Ley JI School in Wolverhampton also used the project to support and develop a history topic on the Victorians. The children focused on local families and national figures who had come here from other countries during the last century.

We have all been impressed by the progress our children have made in reading and writing through the use of research/ideas grids and writing frames. We have learned to use these very effectively and have developed particular versions for specific genres which work brilliantly. We are keen to share them with other teachers; we have aimed not only to offer you some of our examples but also to explain how we differentiated their work according to children's age and ability.

The work we have done has also reminded us of the miraculous generosity of spirit, sensitivity to others' feelings, and insights into human relationships of which young children are capable. The experience has renewed our sense of the huge responsibility we bear to the children in our care, and through them, to our own collective future.

We trust that colleagues who use the ideas we have described in this book will be equally impressed by the scope they offer to enhance their children's educational experiences and achievements.

Planning and preparation

Aims and strategies

All the teachers shared the following broad aims. Planning involves relating broad aims to specific achievable objectives, taking account of children's current understanding and level of skill.

Aim

To support children as researchers

Current understanding and previous experience

Children are familiar with a range of resources, but may copy undigested texts.

Strategy

To model, demonstrate and support children in learning how to:

1. set their own research questions;
2. skim read to pick up key points;
3. scan texts for specific information;
4. sequence information into a logical order;
5. record information;
6. get it 'written' first, getting it 'right' later.

Aim

To encourage children as independent writers in a range of genres

Current understanding and previous experience

Children are willing to write and respond to imaginative stimuli, but need help with the revising and redrafting processes. They also need help with the style and characteristics of different genres.

Strategy

To model, demonstrate and support children in learning how to:

1. assemble ideas using research grids;
2. work on drafts using writing frames;
3. use writing frames appropriate to specific genres.

Aim

To engage children with issues of global awareness, development education, human rights and the nature of history

Current understanding and previous experience

Children may pose questions and/or have a range of personal/family experiences. They may bring to school an awareness derived from the media; however, understanding may be limited and disconnected.

Strategy

To find and use resources and plan activities for children which:

1. enable them to make sense of experiences in their own neighbourhood, and relate these to wider issues of human rights at a global level;
2. promote empathy with other people's experiences;
3. promote recognition of the commonality of human experience.



Stories can help children to feel the commonalities of human experience

School-based examples

Writing our past is a way of working, not a single stand alone project. It can support a focus on language/literacy, history, or on human rights and citizenship education.

These examples illustrate the range of priorities identified by different teachers who were planning work from Year 3 to Year 6.

Example Year 6: Biographies

Main focus: Human rights

Previous experience

These children had worked on Martin Luther-King and Malcolm X

They had learned about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, using source material from UN agencies and relating it to their own feelings and experiences.

They needed a focus on literacy related to their personal experience.

Planning priorities were:

- Identifying appropriate resources
- Empowering them as researchers and writers, using research grids and writing frames
- Supporting independent project work on people who settled in Britain and helped to make the world a better place

Example Year 5: Biographies

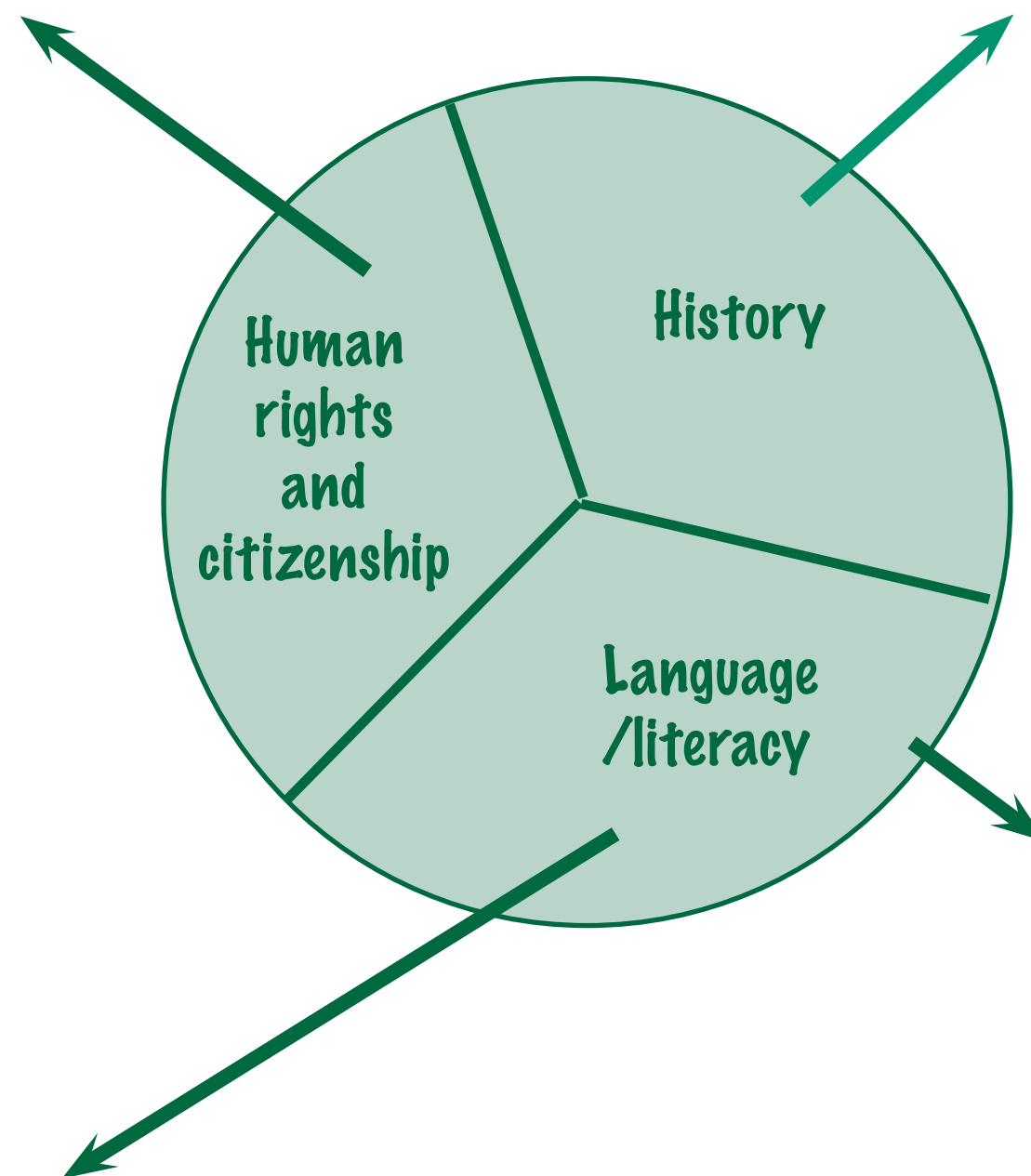
Main focus: Language/literacy

Previous experience

These children enjoyed reading. They needed to learn about different genres, and the school had identified writing as an area to be developed within the curriculum.

Planning priorities were:

- Finding resources to support children's research
- Devising research grids and writing frames for biography and other genres
- Developing a range of stimuli, eg storytelling, hot seating, role play, interviewing
- Engaging parents
- Arranging library visits and visitors to the school



Example Year 4: Victorians

Main focus: History

Previous experience

These children had learned about the remote past and needed to link historical understanding with their own lives

Planning priorities were:

- Relating the Victorian period to their local environment through a visit to the lock museum
- Relating the Victorian period to their own background and family interests [eg Caribbean links, work in nursing/heavy industry]
- Motivating literacy learning through biographies, interviews, diaries, newspaper reports, music
- Finding resources, including recordings of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's music

Example Year 3: Life of Olaudah Equiano

Main focus: Language/literacy

Previous experience

These children loved stories, were confident talkers and strong in drama. They needed support to develop literacy skills.

Planning priorities were:

- Devising a range of different research grids and writing frames
- Devising a range of stimulating activities to motivate reading and writing outcomes
- Arranging visits, visitors, invitations to other schools
- Organising practical details of performances [venue, lights, video etc.]

Teaching and learning Writing frames

How writing frames helped our children

Effective literacy teaching was central to our work because reading and writing are essential tools for learning. We found that ideas grids and writing frames enabled us to raise our children's understanding, knowledge and skills to higher, more sophisticated levels. They enabled us as teachers to give children the precise support they needed on the way to achieving independence.

We found that research or ideas grids and writing frames provided helpful scaffolding to develop writing skills. We used them to teach the processes of research, note taking, drafting and revising in stages: first by modelling or demonstrating, then by doing it together with the children.

We found that providing frames appropriate to a genre [such as biography, poetry, narrative etc] helped the children to internalise its key features and therefore to structure their writing properly and use suitable words and phrases. Younger and less skillful children generally needed more support in using the grids and frames in the early stages.

A research/ideas grid is a proforma for assembling and organising ideas before the first draft. It may take the form of a set of cues or questions helping children to scan texts in books or on screen for particular information.

A writing frame makes the structures and characteristic language of a particular genre explicit.

Here is a sheet to help you to make a research grid for a topic you want to find out about.

- Start by writing down what you already know about it.
- Next, write down some questions you would like to find out about.
- Use your sources to find out the answers and note them down.

I know that

Sources: I got my information from...

Topic research grid [page 30]

Writing a Letter

Address
Number and street
Town
Postcode
Telephone
Date

Dear

We would like to invite you to

Please let us know if you will be able to come.
We look forward to seeing you.
Yours sincerely,

Letter of invitation [page 33]

Genres of writing

- Biographies
- Diaries
- Stories
- Poems
- Reports
- Research
- Instructions
- Notes
- Letters
- Plays
- Comment
- Arguments
- Explanation
- Invitations
- Narratives
- Interview

Skills and learning outcomes

- Independent writing
- Planning
- Drafting
- Revising
- Proof Reading
- Sequencing
- Presentation

"They were able to use appropriate criteria for classifying information"
Year 3 teacher

A selection of photocopiable grids and frames appears on pages 28-33.

"Mine used to jumble everything up. Now they show a sense of recall. They can sequence events and place them in order."

Year 4 teacher

My Diary

Events in my life that have encouraged me to achieve my goals

1898 Today I have written a letter to the newspapers arguing that I consider myself an equal to any white man who ever lived and no one will change my mind in that respect.

1900 Good news the Newspapers have been much fairer than I expected they have said that my music is the best ever for a man of my talents. The American papers have written up lifting things about me. They have invited me to play and conducted my music.

1904 A successful visit to America. They have invited me back I feel comfortable there, but it is so good to be with my family.

Diary written using frame [see page 33]

"The children relied on the writing frames to structure their work, but eventually they internalised the process and no longer needed them."

Year 6 teacher

A Biography of Olaudah Equiano

Olaudah Equiano was born in West Africa. In an age when many people never left their home or country all their lives. Olaudah Equiano was kidnapped at the age of ten to the Caribbean, the USA, Canada and Europe and even the Arctic.

Olaudah Equiano was forced into slavery in Barbados and resold to Virginia, brought to England in 1757 and resold to the West Indies five years later. He was lonely quite often. He had been captured with his sister, but he was separated and never saw his family again.

His master's called him Michael or Jacob or Gustavus Vassa. Eventually his master who was an English man named Mr King promised him his freedom if he could give him £40 pounds. He eventually he got the 40 pounds. His master signed a document to say he was a free man. Olaudah then wrote a book about his life and how he fought for slavery.

His life is very different to ours now. After reading this, people and children are going to be saying and thinking how fortunate we are now.

A Year 6 biographer writing with empathy and relating new knowledge to her own experience.

"The children now have a better understanding of voice and audience."

Year 5 teacher



"I am an inspiration to all black people who want to make music. I have made a difference to people's lives."

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Writing biography

Children from Year 3 to Year 6 learned how to research and make historical narratives and biographies as well as other genres of writing on related themes. Teachers scaffolded their learning by modelling, discussing and sharing each stage of the process. Like so much teaching, the process is recursive; when children have completed a cycle, they are ready to begin again at a higher level of sophistication.

Supporting children through the process.



Writing outcomes

At Long Ley and William Cowper, Year 3, 4, and 5 children wrote short, illustrated biographies which were collected into a class book or included in a display.

Year 3 children at Aston Tower wrote in detail about the life of one person, Olaudah Equiano, focusing on extracting information from a range of sources and representing it in different forms.

At St Francis, Year 6 children wrote biographies which were presented in book form [see page 18]. The children discussed the layout of their books, including features such as maps, pictures and so on, in the light of published examples they looked at. Their final versions incorporated maps, pictures, bibliographies and blurbs. The children loved reading each other's books and were proud to see their work displayed.

A Biography of Francis Barber

Francis was born in 1735 in Jamaica. He was taken from Jamaica and brought to Yorkshire. When he was a little boy he was sent to a grammar school in Yorkshire. Then he became a servant for Dr. Samuel Johnson. In his grammar school he was educated because Samuel Johnson paid £300 pounds. Francis Barber had 4 children and got married to a lady called Elizabeth. The only friends he had were Dr. Samuel Johnson and Captain Balthurst.

Francis Barber had a busy life being a teacher and looking after his children. He died in 1801. Francis made the world a better place by helping the children get a better education. We remember him by getting kidnapped when he was a little boy and by being a teacher.

I got all my information from school and books called Black and British and Black Settlers.

I am proud of my achievements. I have made it possible to make a dream come true with hard work and determination. I have made a difference in people's lives by using herbs and medicines for Cholera and Malaria.

Timeline of Mary Seacole:

- 1805: Mary Jane Grant born, Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1810: Spent a lot of time working in her mother's board house, help poor people and collected herbs to make medicine.
- 1820: Married Edward Seacole.
- 1826: Abolition of the slave trade in Jamaica and British ships.
- 1840: Nurses patients during the cholera epidemic in Kingston.
- 1850: Nurse patient during a yellow fever epidemic.
- 1854: Crimean war applied to help to sick, but the answer was no.
- 1856: Met Florence Nightingale's assistant, but was told no.
- 1857: Went to the Crimea with a relative called Day.
- 1858: She established the British Hotel near Balaklava for the sick.
- 1860: Award the Crimean medal, the French Legion of Honor, Turkish medal.
- 1861: She published 'The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole'.
- 1862: *a best seller*
- 1870: Grand military festival in London for Mary Seacole's benefit.
- 1886: Travelled between London and Kingston. She died.

Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole

LONDON
JAMES BLACKWOOD
PATERNOSTER ROW

Genres

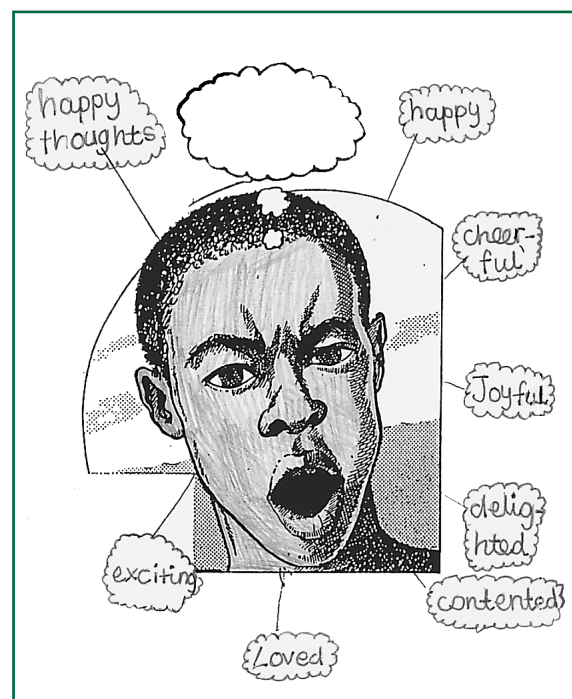
All of the teachers in the project were keen on biography, partly because it provides natural bridges to other genres of writing. Published biographies often include explanatory or descriptive sections, facsimiles of documents, letters, diary extracts, short poems and occasionally dialogue.

We felt it was important to teach children to be aware of the key features of each genre, including purpose, audience, style and structure. We found that grids and writing frames provide ideal scaffolding for this purpose.

The process

- Teachers and children looked at examples of the genre and identified the key features. Sometimes this analysis was best done after a piece of writing had been collaboratively produced.
- The teacher modelled to the whole class how to write in the genre, using the appropriate ideas grid and writing frame. This involved enlarging each section of the grids/frames using a flip chart or blackboard. [A variety of photocopiable grids and frames can be found at the back of this publication.]
- The children had a guided discussion on what needed to go into each section. The teacher filled in the sections using ideas from the class.
- The information in the grid was used to produce the appropriate piece of writing [poem, biography etc] in the frame.
- After modelling, the children then worked collaboratively in pairs to use the writing frames to produce their own work.

What is a genre? "This term refers to different types of writing, each with its own specific characteristics" [National Literacy Framework, 1998, page 80].



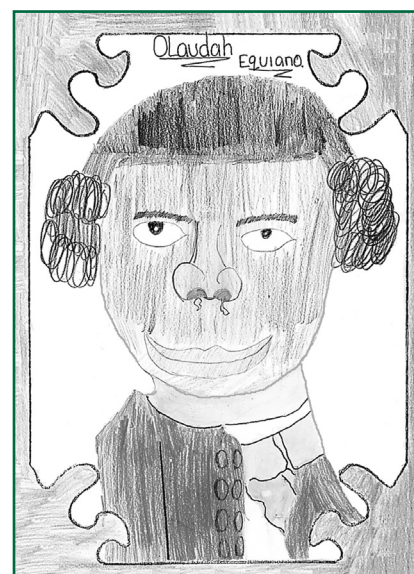
Year 3 brainstorm of Olaudah Equiano's 'happy thoughts'

Hiawatha

On a cool summer morning,
Hiawatha listens to life,
Birds singing,
Animals running,
Rabbits jumping,
The air moving,
and the violin cooling.

Hiawatha is music to make,
music for all our sake,
music for us to love and enjoy.

This Year 4 child's poem was written in response to the music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast". [See poetry frame/grid, page 32]



A Year 5 child's picture of Olaudah Equiano

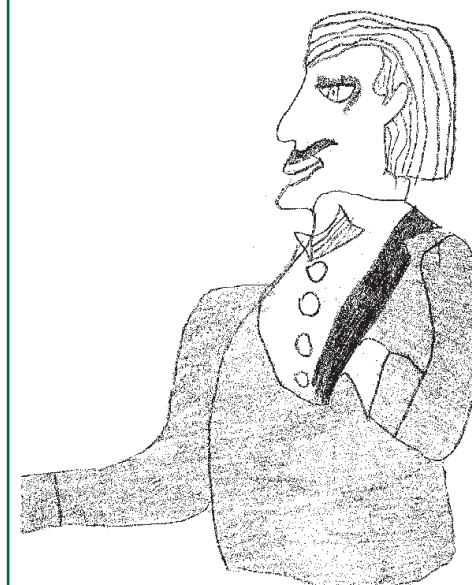
Olaudah's life in Africa

Our village was surrounded by a great wall that protected us from attack. Outside the village was a forest and some farm land. We would leave the village to hunt for food. The land was very beautiful and green - we always had lots to eat.

I had a very happy childhood, little did I know that at the age of 11 my life was about to change.

This Year 3 writer has used and internalised some of the conventions of literary language

Isambard Kingdom Brunel



1806-1859

My Diary

Events in my life that have encouraged me to achieve my goals

1827 disaster = father has spent so much time and money on the tunnel and because the tunnel is not finished all the water can in, luckily my father is alive was injured badly. "I'm in so much pain"

1828 disaster again = This flooding has brought the work to a stand still. To make matters worse I have injured my self again this time its even worse I can not move a muscle and because of the flood it will cost a lot of money to start again.

1829 Disaster third time = I went to the bank I could not get any money because he said "What if you die? then I can't have my money" I went home I thought id never be able to build a bridge I went to business men to ask for help, but they said it would be a waste of time

1828 I was injured in the second flooding, during my recuperation submitted designs for a competition to build a bridge across the avon gorge at Bristol.

1864 Success the Bridge is finally finished Every body is here Even queen victoria is here, I feel really proud of my self.

1836 I began work on the Great Western railway I think I'm becoming a great inventor

Biographical diary of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Year 4

"A teacher who visited and saw what the children had written using writing frames said this was some of the highest quality work she had seen at Year 5"

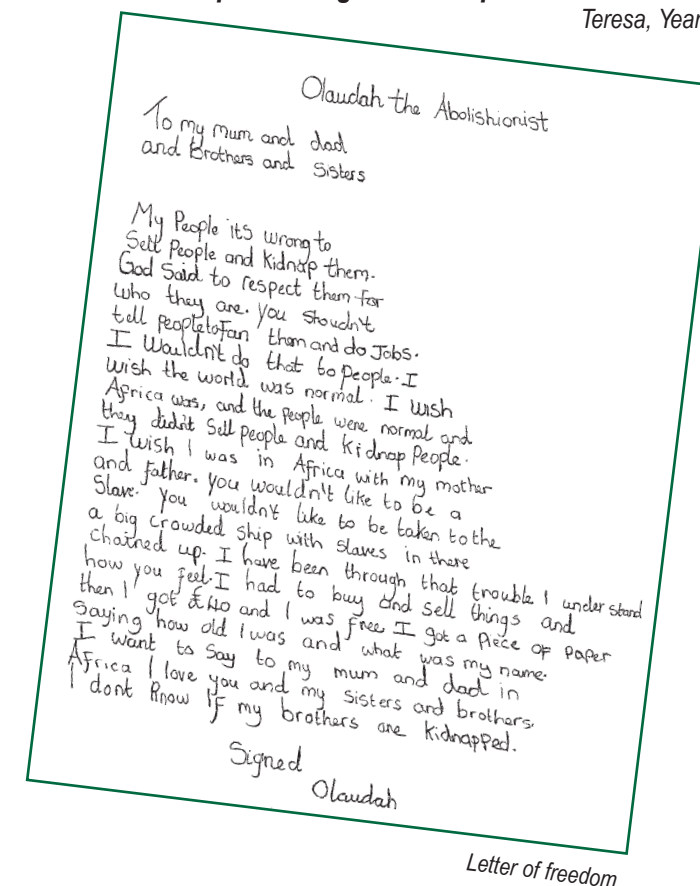
Olaudah captured

I was playing with my sister. I heard nothing. Suddenly I heard a bang. Someone came behind me. My sister was caught first, I ran, ran and ran. Soon I was tired. I don't usually get tired. Me and my sister found ourselves carried through the forest, to a town many miles away. We were sold to different owners. I only once saw my sister after that.

Dramatic narrative composed by Year 3 children for a performance of a play about Olaudah Equiano.

"I liked writing letters about freedom - pretending I was the person."

Teresa, Year 3.



Letter of freedom

Drama and Role play

Drama and role play are central in many learning experiences; we found drama-based activities enhanced learning in several ways by enabling children to:

- empathise with people - a skill which supports historical awareness and commitment to social justice
- make links with their own experience of school, home and community life, strengthening their interest and motivation
- engage in realistic reading and writing tasks with enthusiasm and a heightened awareness of their relevance

The examples on these two pages show how drama supported our children's learning.

Aston Tower Year 3: The Life of Olaudah Equiano

The children had learned a great deal about Equiano and we decided to plan a joint performance for the children to share their work with parents and the rest of the school.

The performance included both mimed episodes and static tableaux of key events in Equiano's life, while individual children read out their own written compositions, including biographical narrative, dramatic dialogue, letters, diary entries, legal documents and poems, to a backdrop of line drawings on transparencies projected onto the back wall.

The performance was repeated for visiting children from nearby William Cowper School. An extended 'professional' version of the production was performed in the local community theatre in front of an audience of children and adults from neighbouring schools, the wider community, school governors and representatives of the LEA.

Our objectives were for the children to:

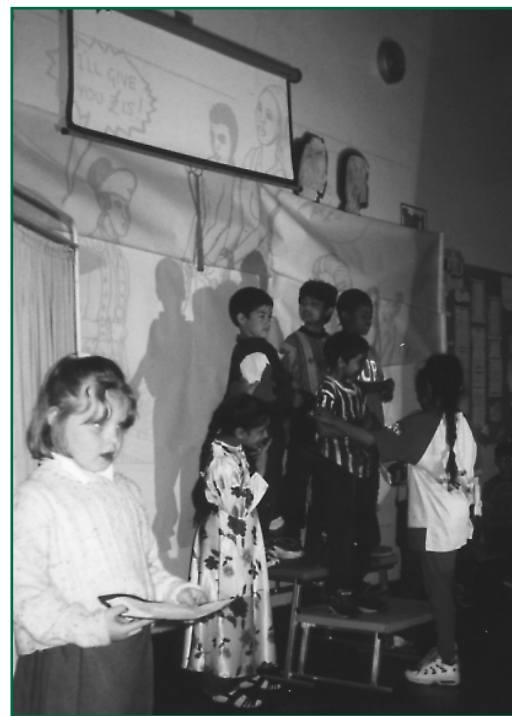
- be able to identify key events in Equiano's life
- write extensively in a range of genres
- communicate ideas and feelings through drama and music
- develop confidence and self esteem through performing to an audience

Organisation

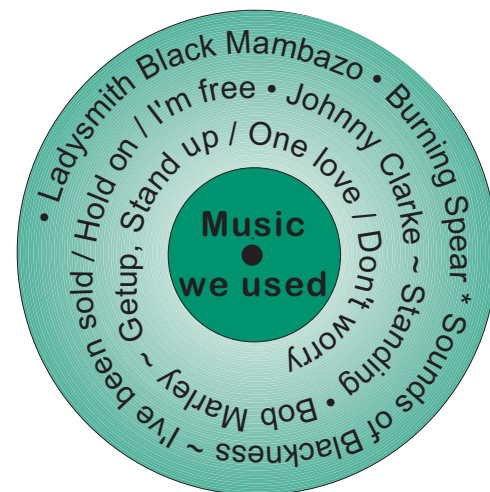
The children worked in groups with specific tasks such as writing an account of Equiano's childhood in Africa, his experiences in America and the Caribbean or his work here as an Abolitionist. They also wrote other pieces such as Freedom Certificates, letters to the press and poems. Other groups of children planned the tableaux and mimes and discussed choices of music and transparencies for the backdrop.

Music

Music was an important part of the performance. Parents helped select and play it. It highlighted emotions in the narrative, and helped create a mood of empathy and sense of commonality across time.



Olaudah Equiano is sold into slavery



William Cowper Year 5 International British Biographies

The children had researched and written biographies of many people who had come to Britain and contributed to our national life. We decided to invite visitors to play the part of some of these people as an exciting way of bringing the past to life.

Our two visitors took turns to 'take the hotseat' and play the roles of Olaudah Equiano, Mary Seacole, William Cuffay and Claudia Jones, answering questions prepared by the children.

Our objectives were for the children to:

- reflect on the information they had researched
- formulate questions for interview
- develop an imaginative empathy with historical figures

Children in the hotseat

Children who are sufficiently knowledgeable and confident can take the hotseat, responding to questions from their classmates. They may even take the hotseat as visitors to a neighbouring school.

Children interview visitor

Resources

You could find visitors for the hotseat in:

- Teacher training colleges
- Drama colleges
- Children's families
- Community arts groups

Where were you born?



"We really enjoyed pretending to meet Claudia Jones"

Year 5 child

What made you famous?



Long Ley Primary School Victorians

The children had researched notable figures from the period, made timelines and written diaries and biographies. A visitor [who was well informed and carefully prepared] played the role of a journalist from The Illustrated London News, whose editor wanted her to write a feature on prominent people to celebrate the Queen's fiftieth birthday.

I knew Mary as a little girl growing up in Jamaica. She learned about medicine and nursing from her mother.

I was a wounded soldier in the Crimea and Mary Seacole looked after me. She was a very kind nurse.

If you knew any of these people, you may have fascinating inside information for me. Did anyone know Mary Seacole?

I went to a concert in London. It was to raise money for Mary Seacole. The music was lovely.

This is great. When I write my article, our readers will be thrilled.



Writing our past

Board Games

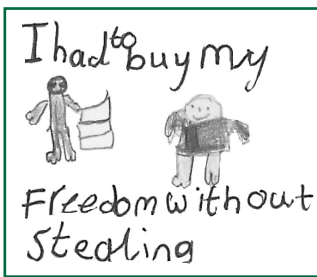
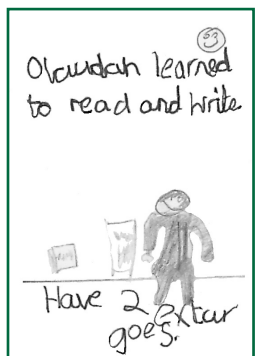
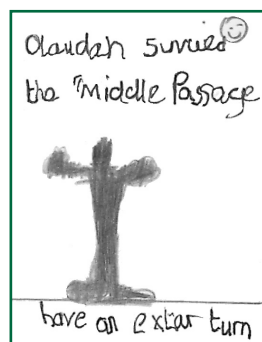
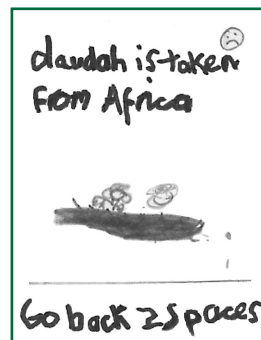
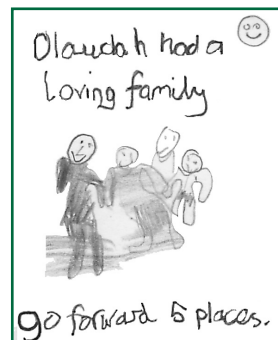
In Aston Tower School, Year 3 children worked in groups to make board games which they lent to Year 5 children in William Cowper School.

We found that working in groups to design and make board games provided excellent opportunities for the children to:

- discuss the main events of Olaudah Equiano's life;
- decide whether these events were positive or negative;
- represent these events on their board game or associated cards;
- decide rules and write instructions for playing the game.

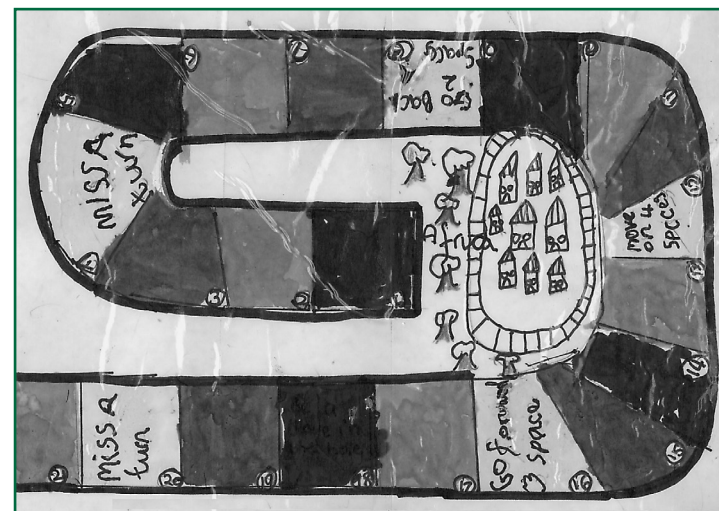
The children were highly motivated because they enjoyed working co-operatively and were keen to play each others' games. There was also an element of healthy competition between groups!

The activity gave us an opportunity to assess children's knowledge, understanding and skills.



These cards, relating key events in Olaudah's life with clear empathy, come from games where falling on a blank square involved taking a card. Note that children are using appropriate historical expressions ['Middle Passage'] and quotes from Equiano himself ['buy my freedom without stealing'].

Hazards and opportunities on the game illustrated below were marked on the board itself.



Writing our past

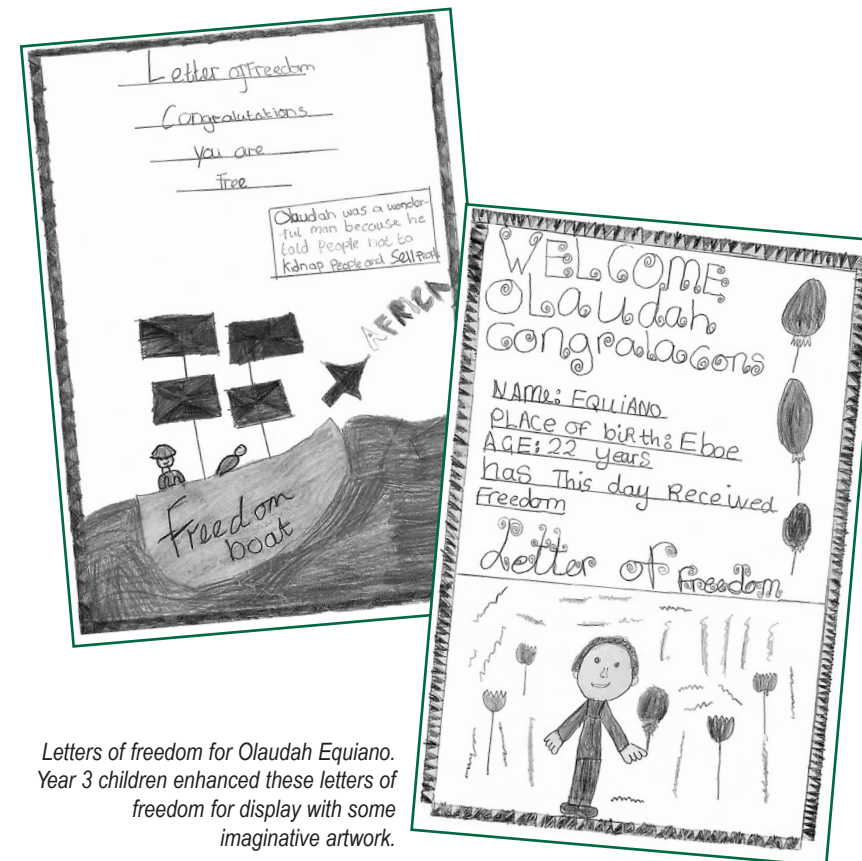
Display

Our schools used displays in a variety of ways:

- as a way of stimulating interest
- as a way of highlighting issues
- as a form of assessment
- as a way of celebrating our achievements

In William Cowper School an interactive/stimulus display was developed, to introduce work on biography, and generate interest. Pictures of five historical figures were displayed, headed by the questions "Who are these people?" and "What do they have in common?" Children in Year 5 were asked to match the pictures to names displayed below, and also to match them to the person's place of birth on a world map. Finally, they were asked to find where they had travelled on the map. Separate parts of the display gave answers, and suggested sources of information.

In Long Ley School a display [below] shared Year 4 children's research about the Hodson family, who had come from Ireland to live in the local area in Victorian times, and to record a visit to the local lock museum - including exhibits from that era.



Letters of freedom for Olaudah Equiano. Year 3 children enhanced these letters of freedom for display with some imaginative artwork.

In Aston Tower School display was used to celebrate Year 3 children's achievements, surrounding an image of Olaudah Equiano with statements of skills acquired during their work:

- we can design certificates;
- we can sequence events;
- we can skim read;
- we can make notes;
- we can structure our writing;
- we can use a dictionary and thesaurus;
- we can retell a story;
- we can write our own story.

Writing our past

Sharing work

One aspect of the schools' work was that it allowed children to develop skills in sharing ideas and opinions.

Sharing work with others - including other children - showed that our writing and research had been valued by a bigger community.

Parents and other adults were important partners in learning about our past:

- they helped give us a link with our family and cultural histories and the many different communities within our schools
- they often provided a stimulus or area of expertise which it was difficult for the school to provide
- they were able to look with fresh eyes on work we are doing.

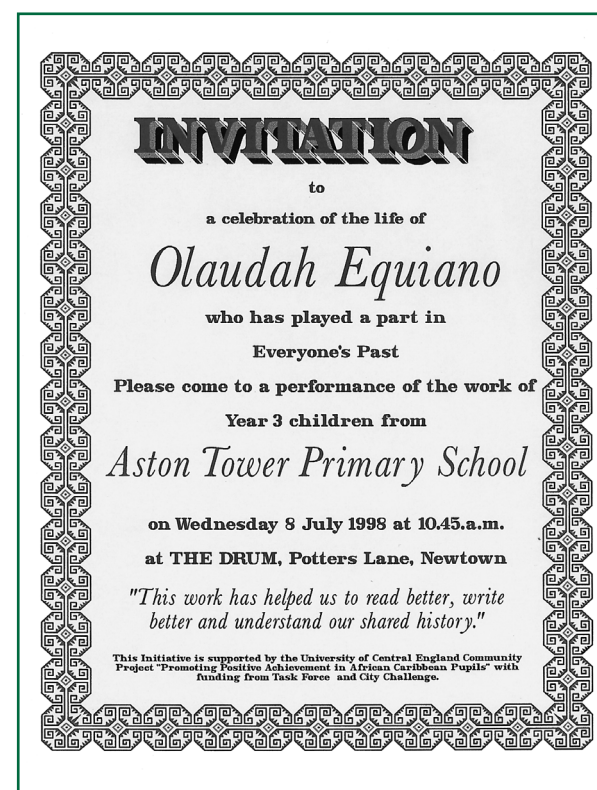
Children were used to talking to their parents and hearing their ideas - this is a significant part of their learning. Parents involved in this work also often learned a lot through their children.

Parents as partners :

- Attending assemblies and productions
- Helping us with a production eg music, video, lighting etc.
- Sharing family history - special expertise
- Supporting children's research or work eg library/museum visits, reading and writing together
- Visiting class to answer questions eg about grandparents etc.
- Parents learning alongside children and teachers.

"A lot of our parents did the research with the children without being asked. Once they knew what it was about, they were interested."

Year 5 teacher



Invitation to parents, neighbouring schools, and the wider community, for Aston Tower children's performance at the local community theatre.

In St Francis School, parents, children, teachers, governors and visitors all enjoyed reading and talking about the children's finished biographies.



Writing our past



Children at Long Ley School talking to the 'journalist from the Illustrated London News'

Visitors to schools

- Children can share their work with other schools through visits, performances and letters
- An external stimulus can help make the project feel 'special' [eg one person came in as a 'reporter', interviewing children about the people they had researched]
- Story tellers can be inspiring visitors to start a project off
- Actors can bring 'hotseating' to life
- Research specialists can help support children's own investigations
- School governors can share work as contributors or as an audience

"I enjoyed hearing about Olaudah Equiano and I have now got a lot of information about him."

"Oh what a great performance you did. I clapped so hard my hands are still sore."

"Please tell all the people who took part how much I enjoyed this play. I was gripped from beginning to end."

- extracts from St Barnabas children's letters to Aston Tower children, following their performance.

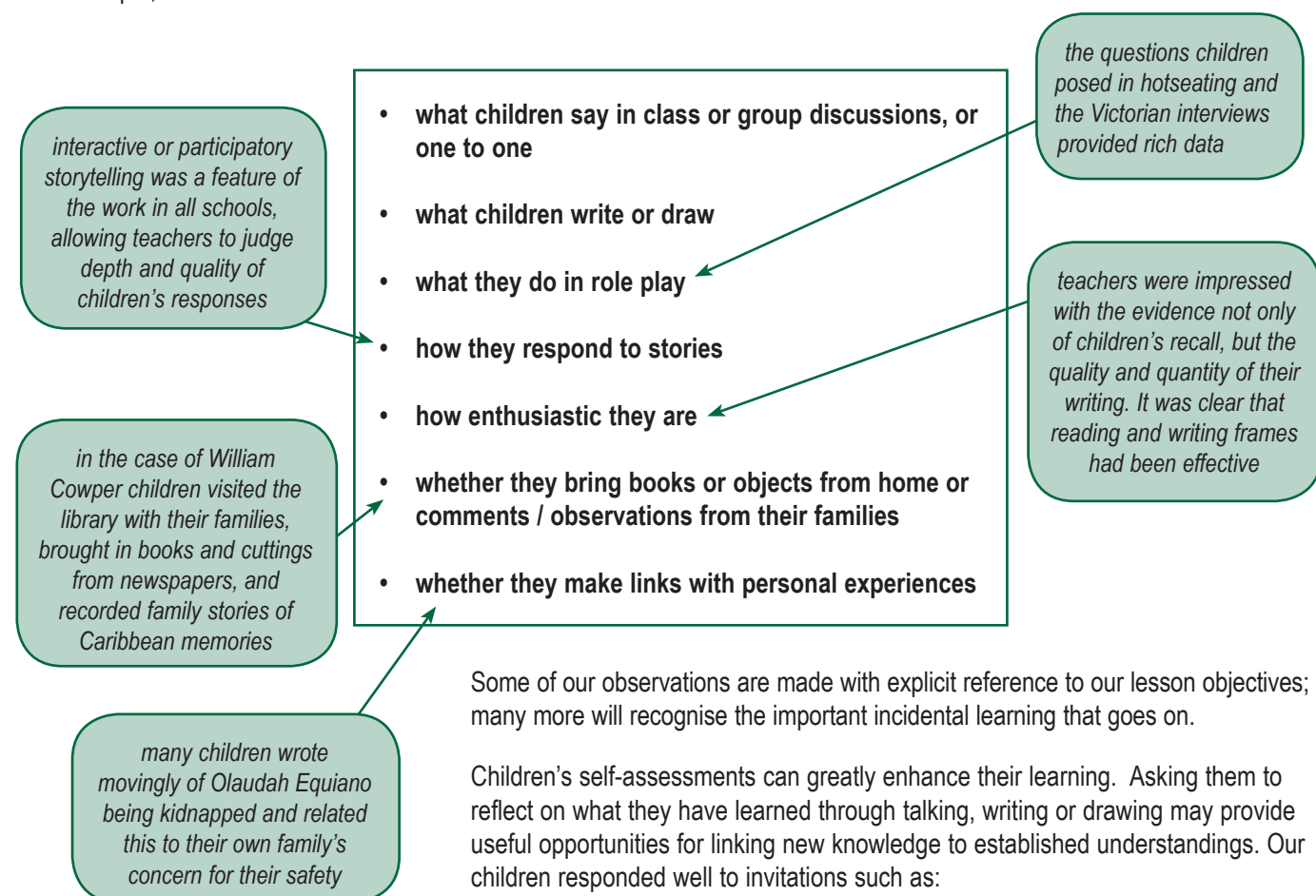


Children at Aston Tower celebrating Equiano's freedom, in a special performance for William Cowper children.

Assessing

As teachers we assess children's learning all the time, whether or not we record our judgements. We instinctively tailor our teaching to match what we know of children's prior learning and experiences. When this sensitive and sophisticated knowledge is analysed, it is clear that our assessments are based on a vast range of observations. Many of these can be usefully formalised in order to record some of this information.

For example, assessments are based on:



Some of our observations are made with explicit reference to our lesson objectives; many more will recognise the important incidental learning that goes on.

Children's self-assessments can greatly enhance their learning. Asking them to reflect on what they have learned through talking, writing or drawing may provide useful opportunities for linking new knowledge to established understandings. Our children responded well to invitations such as:

- what have you enjoyed about this work?
- what has this work helped you to learn?
- how has your writing improved?
- explain what you have selected for the class display
- make a list of questions to prepare for hotseating / interviews
- plan a board game
- plan your personal / group contribution to our assembly
- draw a chosen historical person at two different times in their life and brainstorm their feelings
- make a poster to show what you have learned from this work

All of these ways of recording evidence of learning provide formative information enabling us to differentiate the work we plan for our children. Some of this evidence will be recorded summatively to indicate what children have achieved at a particular stage.

Evaluating

Evaluation, like assessment, is carried out informally all the time, but focuses on all the factors which contribute to the quality of learning, rather than on the learning itself. It is formative, so that the judgements we make influence our decisions about planning and teaching. It is also summative, so that we can draw up a balance sheet of strengths and areas for improvement at the end of the term's work.

We asked ourselves and our children about:

- the quality and effectiveness of our resources
- the value of visitors [see below]
- the role of music in the classroom
- the variety of teaching approaches and learning activities
- the importance of displays

How well did we:

- relate the content to children's understanding and experiences?
- differentiate tasks to match children's abilities?
- set group and/or individual targets for children?
- make progress towards our aims?
- meet our learning objectives for children?

How effectively did we:

- motivate children?
- involve parents [see below]
- collaborate with colleagues in planning and teaching?
- assess children's learning? [see right]
- use assessments to inform planning?

Example: Assessing and evaluating Year 3 drama work at Aston Tower

[See page 14]

We assessed the children's learning and understanding in terms of the objectives through:

- observing their contribution to group planning,
- analysing their written compositions, the quality of the performance and what the children said about it.

All these elements together with the tremendous response from each audience contributed to our evaluation of the whole process.

The value of visitors

- 1 The storyteller's input was jointly planned. She inspired the children. Follow up activities were well planned.
- 2 The visitors who played Olaudah Equiano and Mary Seacole were not well enough prepared. The children were disappointed, although they enjoyed the experience overall.
- 3 The children loved the visiting artist who worked with them on silhouettes of Olaudah's life in Africa.

Parental involvement

- 1 One child and her parents from St Kitts were highly motivated to research the Chartist, William Cuffay, whose father came from the island.
- 2 A boy whose father was keen on Queen helped him to research Freddie Mercury, who was born into a Parsee family in Zanzibar.
- 3 Parents were very interested in displays of the children's work.
- 4 Parents were impressed with the children's performance.

International British Biographies

Our top 12

Name	Dates	Field of Achievement	Place where they or their parents came from	What they didSources of information in Britain	
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor	1875-1912	Music	Father from Sierra Leone, mother from England	Composer and conductor of orchestral music	<i>Black and British</i> , Bygott, <i>Black settlers in Britain</i> , File and Power, <i>The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
William Cuffay	1788-1870	Politics	Family from St Kitts, William was born in England	Helped lead the Chartists' campaign for reforms, and was deported to Australia for his beliefs	<i>Black and British</i> , Bygott, <i>Black settlers in Britain</i> , File and Power, <i>The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi Internet: www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/CHcuffay.htm
Olaudah Equiano	1745-97	Human rights, literature	West Africa	Campaigned against slavery, travelled widely, and wrote a famous autobiography.	<i>Black and British</i> , Bygott, <i>Black settlers in Britain</i> , File and Power, <i>The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi, <i>The life of Olaudah Equiano</i> , Longman, 1989 [abridged], Connections Discovery Centre, Exeter. Internet: www.atomic.age.com/equiano/ and www.ely.anglican.org/parishes/chesandr/plaque.html [this shows you the epitaph for his daughter, Anna Marie, and includes a good photo of her memorial]
George Frederick Handel	1685-1759	Music	Germany	Composed his best known music for the English court	Internet: www.classicalmus.com/composers/handel.html www.intr.net/bleissal/handel/
Apache Indian	contemporary	Music, media	India/West Midlands	Wrote and performed popular dance music, presented documentaries	Internet: www.apache-indian.co.uk/

Claudia Jones	1915-64	Journalism, culture and political activism	Parents from Trinidad and USA	Edited West Indian Gazette and helped found the Notting Hill Carnival	<i>Black and British</i> , Bygott, <i>Black settlers in Britain</i> , File and Power. Internet: www.netsrq.com/~dbois/ NB We conducted an internet search on Claudia Jones' name, and found it turned up no useful material, but a lot of matter which was unhelpful and inappropriate for young people.
Guglielmo Marconi	1874-1937	Science	Father from Italy, mother from Ireland	Inventor of the radio, 1896-7	Information widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias Internet: www.marconiusa.org/marconi
Karl Marx	1818-1883	Politics	Germany	Writer of The Communist Manifesto	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias Internet: www.countryconnection.com/communism/marxbio http://csf.colorado.edu/psn/marx
Dadabhai Naoroji	1825-1917	Politics, Science, Mathematics	India	Britain's first Black MP, and a university professor.	<i>Roots of the future</i> , CRE, <i>Homebeats The History of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram, <i>Dadabhai Naoroji</i> , Zerbanoo Gifford, Mantra Books, 1992. Internet: http://theory.tifr.res.in/bombay/persons/dadabhai-naoroji.html www.blacknet.co.uk/history
Anna Pavlova	1881-1931	Dance	Russia	Ballet dancer	Information widely available, including <i>Roots of the future</i> , CRE. Internet: www.aha.ru/~vladmo/great.html
Mary Seacole	1805-81	Health / writing	Jamaica [Came to UK, 1856]	Nurse during the Crimean War	<i>Black and British</i> , Bygott, <i>Mary Seacole</i> , Collicott, Sylvia. Ginn & co., 1991, <i>Mary Seacole, nursing heroine</i> , Minority Group Support Service assembly pack, Coventry, 1986, <i>Black settlers in Britain</i> , File and Power, <i>The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi, <i>The wonderful adventures of Mrs Seacole</i> , Felling Walls, 1984. Internet: www.netsrq.com/~dbois
Walter Daniel Tull	1888-1918	Sport	Father from Barbados, mother from Kent	One of the first Black British professional footballers	<i>Roots of the future</i> , CRE, <i>Essay in Race and Class</i> , Vol 38, No 2. Institute of Race Relations, 1996, <i>Homebeats The History of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi.

Additional suggestions for biographies

One of the reasons for producing this resource was that much of the information on inspirational people from diverse cultures comes from the United States of America. We wanted to make these materials more directly relevant to the lives of children living in Britain. Some of the American examples, and several other figures, are included in the list below. Those who lived and worked only in the USA are marked with an asterisk.

Name	Dates	Field of achievement	Where they or their parents came from	Information
Ira Aldridge	1807-67	Theatre	USA	<i>Black and British</i> , Essay in Race and Class Vol 40, No 1, Institute of Race Relations, 1998. <i>Black settlers in Britain, The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
John Archer	1863-1932	Politics	Father from Barbados, mother from Ireland.	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi Internet: www.blacknet.co.uk/history
Francis Barber	1735-1801	Education	Jamaica	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
Sir Mancherjee Bhowagree	b.1885	Politics	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram Internet: www.blacknet.co.uk/history
Billy Boston	1934 - present	Sport	Tiger Bay, Cardiff, Wales	<i>Heart and Soul, the character of Welsh rugby</i> . Ed. Richards et al, University of Wales Press, 1998. <i>The Billy Boston Story</i> . Winstanley, J. Wigan Observer, 1963.
Isambard Kingdom Brunel	1806-59	Engineering	Parents from France	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Kamal Churchie	d. 1953	Welfare / charity	Sri Lanka	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram
Ottobah Cugoano	c1757-1772	Writer, human rights campaigner	Ghana / Grenada	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
William Davidson	1786-1820	Politics [one of the "Cato Street Conspirators"]	Jamaica	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
Jayaben Desai	Contemporary	Trades Unions	India / Tanzania	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram
T.S. Eliot	1888-1965	Literature, including children's poetry	USA	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Sigmund Freud	1856-1939	Science	Austria [Czech born]	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Ukawsaw Gronniosaw	1710-1770?	Writer	Nigeria	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
Hans Holbein	1497-1543	Painting	Germany	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Alexander Arnold Constantine Issigonis	1906-88	Engineering - designed the Mini and the Morris Minor	Turkey	www.birmingham.gov.uk/html/touristinfo/heritage/issi.html
Abdul Karim	Nineteenth century	Queen Victoria's teacher and secretary	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram

Name	Dates	Field of achievement	Where they or their parents came from	Information
Noor Inayat Khan	1914-1944	Secret agent	Family from India, but she was born in Moscow, and lived in London and Paris.	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram. <i>Noor-un-nisa Inayat Khan</i> Jean Overton Fuller. East-West Publications, 1981.
Brian Lara	Contemporary	Sport - cricket	Trinidad	<i>Essay in Race & Class</i> , Vol 36, No 4. Institute of Race Relations, 1995. General information widely available eg newspapers, media
Ernest Marke	1902-present	Writer / adventurer	Sierra Leone	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi <i>In troubled waters</i> , [autobiography], Karia, 1986.
Sake Deen Mahomed	1759-1851	Health	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram
Krishna Menon	1924-1974	Politics	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram
Florence Nightingale	1820-1910	Health - nursing	Born in Italy	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Ben Okri	Contemporary	Literature	Nigeria	
Rosa Parks *	Born 1913	Human rights	USA	Internet: www.netsrq.com/~dbois/
Sylvia Plath	1932-1963	Literature, including children's stories	USA	Internet: www.informatil.uni-leipzig.de/~beckmann/plath.html
Mary Prince	1788-1828?	Writer / human rights	Bermuda	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi <i>The history of Mary Prince</i> , Pandora, 1987.
Shapurji Saklatvala	Died 1936	Politics	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram Internet: www.blacknet.co.uk/history
Ignatius Sancho	1729 - 1780	Writer and poet	Born on a slave ship	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
Haile Selassie	1892-1975	Politics	Ethiopia	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
George Bernard Shaw	1856-1950	Literature	Ireland	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias
Duleep Singh	1838-93	Politics	India	<i>The history of the Asian community in Britain</i> , Visram Internet: www.highlanderweb.co.uk/blckprnc.htm
Harriet Tubman *	1820-1913	Human rights USA		Internet: www.acusd.edu/~jdesmet/tubman.html Information on Harriet Tubman can also be accessed via www.yahoo.com . When the homepage appears, select history, then U_S_History, Slavery, and Abolitionism Internet sites for teachers on Harriet Tubman include: www.sdcoe.K12.ca.us/score/tub/tubsg2.htm [an independent activity] www.artsedge.kennedy_center.org/student/harriet.html [a lot of information, plus an integrated study unit] www2.lhric.org/pocantico/tubman [children's timeline]
Phillis Wheatley	c.1753-1785	Poet	North America [came to London 1772]	<i>The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain</i> , Adi
Oscar Wilde	1854-1900	Literature	Ireland	Widely available eg Encarta, encyclopaedias

Information Sources Resources

The following invaluable resources are packed with short biographical case studies:

Black and British

Bygott, David W. Oxford University Press, 1992.

Black settlers in Britain, 1555-1958

File, Nigel and Power, Chris. Heinemann, 1981.

The history of the African and Caribbean communities in Britain

Adj, Hakim. Wayland, 1995.

The history of the Asian community in Britain

Visram, Rozina. Wayland, 1995.

African Roots in Britain

Alleyne, Mekada J. Kemet-Nubia, 1989.

Also very useful for research are:

Homebeats. Struggles for Racial Justice

[CD-Rom]. Institute of Race Relations, 1998.

Roots of the future, ethnic diversity in the making of Britain

Commission for Racial Equality, 1996.

Among the resources which are useful for guidance, background and extension are:

Multicultural teaching [Journal]. Trentham Books.

Details on internet: www.trentham-books.co.uk, or phone 01782 745567 / 844699.

Princess Jazz and the angels

Anderson, Rachel. Mammoth, 1994.

Story about Jazz, born in Glasgow, but curious about her ancestry in India.

Reclaiming our pasts. Equality and diversity in the primary history curriculum.

Claire, Hilary. Trentham Books, 1996.

Includes guidance and an excellent list of source materials.

Speaking about the past. Oral History for 5 - 7 Year Olds

Hazareesingh, Sandip et al. Trentham Books / Save the Children, 1994.

Talking time. A guide to oral history for schools.

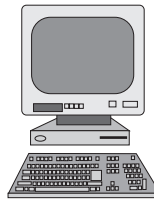
Tower Hamlets Humanities Education Centre.

The wheel of Surya. Gavin, Jamila. Methuen, 1992.

Story about a girl who leaves the Punjab after independence and Partition, and comes to live in England. Runner-up for the Guardian Fiction Award.

Whose world is the world? IRR, 1986.

Poster set of 12 large colour posters on black history from pre-Columbus to the present day.



Internet

The internet is a vast library packed full of information, much of it excellent, some of it dubious, and parts of it best avoided by young people.

Our experience has been that conducting a general search on a biographical subject's name can be frustrating, sometimes wasteful, and always time-consuming.

Bookmarking general history or biography sites such as those listed below is worth doing. One common research problem we had was that a site we accessed or bookmarked one day was out of use when next we visited, as the internet is in a process of continual change and development. The sites we have listed do, however, seem to have a degree of permanence to them.

Search engines such as Yahoo! also provide an index of subjects. By double-clicking on these with a mouse, a further index opens up, and so on. It is then possible to refine a search quite accurately, without pulling in a lot of irrelevant information, although our experience has been that a lot of useful sites may also be missed if you go through this process.

Example: There is a huge shared site on African American history on Yahoo.com - to access it, go to www.yahoo.com. Then select Arts, followed by Humanities, then History, then U_S_History, and finally African_American.

Good general sites for starting to search for historical/biographical information include:

BBC Education - history on the web: www.bbc.co.uk/education/histfile

Biography dictionary: www.s9.com/biography/

Blacknet: www.blacknet.co.uk/history

The Black Studies Centre [Canada]:

www.black-studies.org/links.htm

Spartacus: www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk

Women's history: www.netsrq.com/~dbois/

Other useful sites include:

Britkids [interactive materials on young people and racism in Britain]: www.britkid.org

Chinese community in Birmingham:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/cgi-bin/AT-Assistsearch.cgi

Development Education Centre [Birmingham]:

www.tidec.org.uk

Homebeats [youth project on race and racism in Britain]:

www.homebeats.co.uk/

Contact list for further information or resources

Birmingham Central Library

[Includes Black Studies and Local History Collections]

Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3HQ

Tel. 0121 303 4511

Commission for Racial Equality

[National]

10/12 Allington Street
London
SW1

Tel. 0171 828 7022

[Birmingham]

Alpha Tower,
Suffolk Street,
Birmingham
B1

Tel. 0121 632 4544

Connections Discovery Centre

[For posters of the famous Equiano portrait - at the museum - and a supporting information pack]

Royal Albert Memorial Museum
Queen Street
Exeter
EX4 3RX

Tel. 01392 265360

Development Education Association

[Networks over 300 organisations throughout Britain, including 50 local Development Education Centres]

29-31 Cowper Street
London
EC2A 4AP

Tel. 0171 490 8108

Fax. 0171 490 8123

e-mail: devedassoc@gn.apc.org

Development Education Centre [Birmingham]

Gillett Centre
998, Bristol Road
Birmingham
B29 6LE

Tel. 0121 472 3255

Fax. 0121 415 2322

e-mail: ben@www.tidec.org.uk

Institute of Race Relations

2 - 6 Leeke Street
King's Cross Road
London
WC1X 9HS

Tel. 0171 837 0041

Fax. 0171 278 0623

[Homebeats project : 0171 833 2010]

Minority Group Support Service

Prior Deram Walk
Canley
Coventry
West Midlands
CV4 8FT

Tel. 01203 717800

Fax. 01203 717900

Multicultural Centre for Education

Spencer Centre
Lewis Road
Northampton
NN5 7BJ

Tel. 01604 587442

New Beacon Books

76, Strand Green Road
London
N4

Tel. 0171 272 4889

Resource Centre for Multicultural Education

Forest Lodge Education Centre
Charnor Road
Leicester
LE3 6LH

Tel. 0116 231 3399

Fax. 0116 231 1804

Runnymede Trust

133, Aldersgate Street,
London,
EC1A 4JA

Tel. 0171 600 9666

Grids and Frames

On the following five pages are eight grids and frames for supporting children's research and writing skills. The schools involved in Writing Our Past have all used these tools as a major part of their work. We recommend photocopying these materials at double their printed size. For a general overview of the use of these grids and frames, see Pages 8 and 9.

Grid 1: Writing biography

This grid was used for structuring key points, once information sources had been selected. It can then be used with Frame 2, to produce a biographical narrative.

Frame 2: Writing biography

This frame was very useful in creating biographical narratives, following note-taking based on a grid such as Grid 1. It helped scaffold quality work from children, even when they previously lacked confidence in their written work [See examples on page 10 and subsequent pages].

Grid 3: Topic research grid

Once children had become used to forming their own questions for research, we introduced this grid as a way of helping them structure their inquiries.

Frame 4: Topic research frame

Children used this frame to record information they had researched in their own words. Year 6 children then used the completed frames to help them write a longer report. It also helped children focus on their sources of information, to structure their work in a logical way, and to understand the particular type of language used in reports.

Frame 5: Sequencing frame

The children were presented with this writing frame in order to sequence the events of their work. The grid is specifically divided into three parts so that they can gain an understanding of paragraphing: introductions, middles, endings.
The writing frame can be used in conjunction with a series of pictures, to stimulate discussion: the children were able to either draw or cut out pictures to match their writing. This helped them to understand the importance of detail, and to move away from a simple narrative and bland description. It can be used for note-taking / brainstorming ideas, and later with pictures to develop / extend their writing by generating more ideas. It can also be used for the production of a final copy, via the stages of redrafting and proof reading.

Frame/grid 6: Poetry frame and grid

[See page 12]. This was used for supporting the creation of poems on specific themes, through the stages of brainstorming, drafting, redrafting, proofing and the production of a final copy, drawing attention to features that a poet might want to include in their work.

Frame 7: Diary frame

This was a structure used to record key points in a subject's life [see page 12 and following for examples of children's work using this frame]. This will need to be photocopied twice, to allow for six key events.

Frame 8: Letter of invitation

Our children also wrote letters for other purposes [eg "letters of freedom", Olaudah Equiano writing to his family about the evils of slavery].



Grid 1: Here is a grid for starting research on writing a biography.

Write the name of the person
Start by using the questions in the boxes:

Where and when was he or she born?

Who were his or her family?

What was special about his or her childhood?

Did he or she get married?

Did he or she have children?

Who were his or her friends?

Did he or she have a busy life?

Did he or she help to make the world a better place?

When did he or she die?

What do we most remember this person for?

Sources - where did you get your information from?

Frame 2: Here is a writing frame to help you to write your biography, using the notes in your research grid.



Title: A Biography of was born

She/he lived with

When she/he was a child

When she/he grew up

Later

She/he had a busy life

She/he helped to make the world a better place by

She/he died

We most remember her/him for

Source - I got my information from

Grid 3: Here is a sheet to help you to research a topic you want to find out about.



- Start by writing down what you already know about it.
- Next write down some questions you would like to find out about.
- Use your sources to find out the answers and note them down.

I know that
Question I found out
Question I found out
Question I found out
Question I found out
Sources - I got my information from

Frame 4: Here is a writing frame to help you to write a report.



Title:

Before starting this research, I already knew

I have learned some new information from

I found out that

I also discovered that

It was interesting to learn that

The most interesting thing I learned was that

Source - I got my information from

Frame 5: Write your story in the top boxes and draw pictures in the bottom boxes.



Your name Date

Title of story

Scene 1 - Writing	Scene 2 - Writing	Scene 3 - Writing
Scene 1 - Drawing	Scene 2 - Drawing	Scene 3 - Drawing

Frame/Grid 6: Here is a frame to help you to write a poem.

Write a title

Brainstorm words and phrases

Highlight the words you like best. Use arrows to link rhymes

Write a first draft of your poem

Read your first draft. If the meaning is not clear make changes to improve it.

Write a second draft of your poem

Check the layout. Are the lines as you want them? Check spelling and punctuation.

Write your final version

Choose the best title.



Frame 7

My Diary

Events in my life that have almost stopped me from achieving my goals

Year:.....

Year:.....

Year:.....

My Diary

Events in my life that have encouraged me to achieve my goals

Year:.....

Year:.....

Year:.....

Frame 8: Here is a frame to help you to write a letter.

Tide

Address

Number and street

Town

Postcode

Telephone

Date

Dear,

We would like to invite you to

Details of event, time, place, refreshments, cost

Please let us know if you will be able to come.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely,

.....

