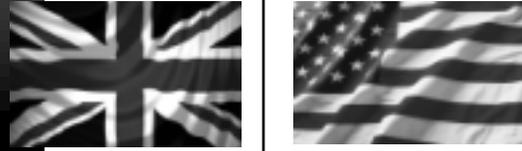


# VCOP

## Igniting the Passion to Write

Mrs Jo Cullen

## The cultural divide!



We all speak English, but ...

Vocabulary Punctuation Grammar Spelling

Apologies for any mistakes!

## Some issues with writing ...

- Low student self esteem
- Generating enthusiasm for the writing process
- Gender gap in achievement
- Dull textbooks
- Too much to focus on
- Giving helpful feedback
- Developing independence

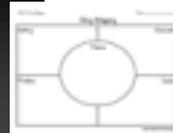


## This approach is NOT ...

- About generating ideas for writing



- About how to plan for writing



## This approach IS about ...

- Making writing fun and student friendly
- Raising students' self esteem
- Raising expectations
- Involving students by allowing them to see how to improve their own work
- Giving effective supports to encourage independence
- Encouraging students to be self critical and set their own targets
- Providing a common language to discuss writing
- Providing a tool that works across all subject areas
- Targeting all ability levels

## Ros Wilson's findings

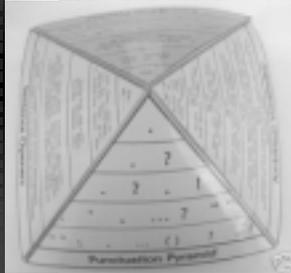


There are 4 key elements that are generic to all levels of development in writing skills:

- > The range of **vocabulary** used
- > The range of **conjunctions** used
- > The range of **openers** used
- > The range of **punctuation** used



Table top pyramid



Writing Mat



## Introducing 'WOW' words

- Quality vocabulary is essential – sets apart great from mediocre
- Children need to be explicitly taught quality language.
- Must be surrounded by a word rich environment.
- Quality must be the expectation.

"The importance of students acquiring a rich and varied vocabulary cannot be overstated. It is widely accepted among researchers that the difference in students' vocabulary levels is a key factor in disparities in academic achievement, but that vocabulary instruction has been neither frequent nor systematic in most schools."

Appendix to the Common Core

### Why do we have to explicitly teach vocabulary?

- Children need to be exposed to quality words in order to learn them
- So where do our children pick up quality language?
  - ◆ TV/film
  - ◆ Social media/video games
  - ◆ Friends
  - ◆ Books – to a degree
  - ◆ Round the dinner table
  - ◆ Teachers – it's all down to you!



Words we give to students



Words we allow them to discover

### So how do you start?

- This will differ according to the age group
- Need to stimulate children's interest, and give them the desire to extend their word use
- Go from the familiar to the unfamiliar

## Superheroes!



**NAME:** Superman

**JOB:** To get rid of criminals and bad people  
To make the world a better place

**SUPERPOWERS:**

- Super Strength – can lift a plane!
- Can fly and hover like a helicopter
- Super sonic speed
- Super breath – can blow gale force winds and freeze things
- Super hearing
- Super vision – including x-ray vision and laser vision



**NAME:** Violet vocabulary

**JOB:** To get rid of boring words  
To make writing exciting using "WOW" words

**BACKGROUND:** Has "Violet vision" that seeks out boring words

**Skills:**

Super eraser to wipe boring words off the page

Super computer brain to find fantastic new "WOW" words

She paints pictures in your head

Makes the reader gasp for breath and pull horrified faces

Leaves the reader begging for more!



**Owen, The Incredible Opener**

**Captain Conjunction**



**Dr. Punctuation**



Read  
Analyze  
Rehearse  
Write

Remember ...

- You need to be able to see what success looks like, in order to achieve it.



The monster was big. It was ugly. It was very strong, and had bad breath. It had big feet and big hands. It had a big spot on its nose that looked ugly.



Violet's Version

The monster was gigantic; it towered over buildings and blocked out the sun. It was repulsive to look at. Its hideous face was scarred, twisted, and covered in sprouting hairs. It was unbelievably strong, able to rip apart a car with its bare hands. Its breath was vile; it sent out a revolting stench every time it opened its cavernous mouth. Its hands and feet were gargantuan; one foot able to crush a tree in a single step. Mounted high on its nose was the most disgusting spot that had ever been seen. It was like a volcano! Every so often, it burst open, sending a river of foul smelling, thick pus down the side of the monster's face.

towering    gigantic    cavernous  
gargantuan    massive  
big  
huge  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

repulsive    hideous    dreadful  
disgusting    revolting  
foul    ugly    vile  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

My Monster  
[ ]  
Created by ...

A nasty smell went up my nose, it was bad. I put my hand over my nose to keep out the bad smell. Then I walked into the room and then the door shut behind me. I was scared and I tried to see what was in the room.

From the back of the room a big voice said, "Boy, why have you come into my room?"

"Who are you?" I said, and I was very scared.

Suddenly, an evil odor invaded my nostrils; it smelt of rotting and decaying flesh. I gagged for breath, thrusting my hand over my mouth and nose desperately trying to keep out the vile stench. I stumbled forward into the room, as if I had been pulled by an invisible force. Without warning, the door slammed shut behind me. I was trapped. Shivers ran up and down my spine as I strained my eyes to see into the gloomy room beyond.

From the dark depths a deep threatening voice boomed, "Human, why do you dare enter my chamber?"

"W-w-what are you?" I stuttered nervously, my whole body quivering with terror.



**Text Analysis : Focus on Vocabulary**



Description of the smell	
Extract 2	Extract 2
fusty	Full odor
Herbide	Stinking and decaying flesh
Rot	Wet, smoky

Verb Choice	
Extract 2	Extract 2
went, got, walked, shot, warned, tried, said, come	leaped, gagged, stumbled, pulled, slammed, tripped, strained, boomed, rattled, splintered

Words/phrases to create tension and suspense (nouns, adjectives, adverbs)	
Extract 2	Extract 2
I was scared I was very scared	Thriving, rotten, despicable, invisible force, without warning, shivers ran up my spine, gloomy, dark depths, deep, threatening, "humor", chamber, dark, nervously, terror

## Practise, Practise, Practise!

- Any work on vocabulary must be reinforced and practised.
- Use every opportunity to say new words
- Constantly pick up 'WOW' words from books
- Challenge the children to incorporate WOW words in their writing
- Collect words and add them to wall displays
- Have a set of thesauruses in the class and constantly use them

clambered    ambled    stamped    tiptoed  
 dawdled    wandered    stumbled  
 skipped    scurried    tripped    tottered  
 waddled    **Don't say 'went'**    slid  
 Think of a more interesting word

shuffled    crawled    dodged    staggered  
 scampered    crept    jumped  
 marched    stomped    galloped    danced  
 climbed    raced    strutted

Scary faces list: scared 	Sad faces list: sad 
frightened	miserable
afraid	gloomy
petrified	sombre
terrified	glum

 shivering	 bloodcurdling	 brooding	 menacing
 horrifying	 frightful	 dark	 creaking



Craggy	Crooked
Crinkly	Furrowed
Aged	Creased
Quartern	Wispy
	Dimpled
Wise	Shriveled
Bushy	Dry
Lined	Friendly
Rough	Piercing

**Up-levelling sentences**

The dog barked.

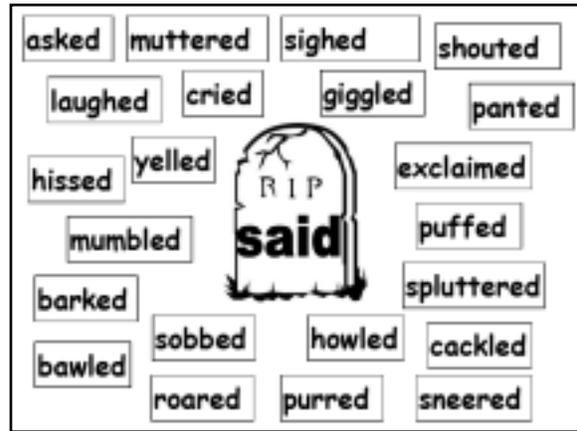
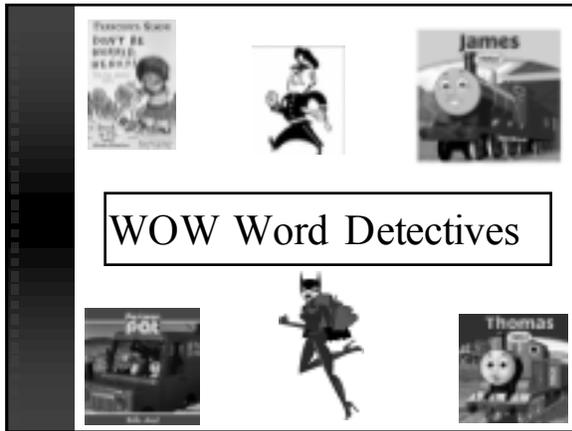
The vicious, menacing, bad tempered dog barked ferociously.

The wood was scary.

The dark, sinister, shadowy wood was terrifying.

**Developing characterization through dialogue**

A teaching sequence



**CC Language Standards**

5. Distinguish shades of meaning between closely related verbs and adjectives

Demonstrate understanding of words with similar, but not identical meanings (synonyms)

“I can’t hold on much longer! I’m going to fall! Help me!”

“Shhh! We’ll be in trouble if anyone hears us.”

Using WOW words appropriately

**A** giggled      **B** sighed

**C** screamed      **D** whispered



### Synonyms for "said"

Angry	Happy	Sad	Shocked	Surprised	General
Roared	giggle	mutter	stammer	exclaimed	called
shouted	laughed	cried	stuttered	begged	called
hissed	giggled	cried	stuttered	demanded	drugged
whispered	laughed	whimpered	whispered	requested	requested
whispered	laughed	whimpered	whimpered	requested	requested
whined	beamed	beamed	stammered	demanded	beamed
trapped	chuckled	hept	whispered	whispered	announced
hissed	laughed	cried	stuttered	demanded	called
groaned	laughed	whimpered	cried		agreed
shouted	chuckled	hept	whispered		lost
whispered	laughed	cried	whispered		added
whispered	giggled	cried	cried		explained
demanded	burst	laughed			announced
hissed	chuckled	whispered			hissed
laughed					thought

#### Using better words for "said"

Get an idea of what to say by looking at the words in the box. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something.



Pat: "I'm going to stop you, Dookerschmidt."



WOW! Look at that!



I-I-I'm a-s-s-scared of the water!



Oh Jerry, that's so fancy!

#### Using better words for "said"

Get an idea of what to say by looking at the words in the box. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something. Use the words in the box to write a story about a character who says something.



I LOVE playdough!



If it's when are you Spongobob?



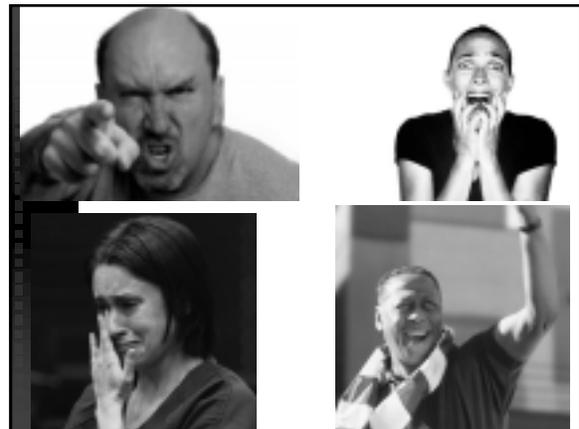
Hi Hi Hi. I've got you now Phantob.



Uhh, I don't feel well. My head hurts.

### Adverbs to use following speech

Angry	Happy	Sad	Nervous	General
Disgracefully	Rejoice	Sadly	Strenuously	Suddenly
Angely	joyfully	Unhappily	Anxiously	Eventually
Warily	Cheerfully	Tormentfully	Tentatively	Rapidly
Sharply	Brightly	Warily	Starkly	Quickly
Warily	Warily	Warily	Warily	Warily
Coldly	Coldly	Gloomily	Silly	Perfectly
Foily				Calmly
Flowily				Instantly
Ferocious				
Impatiently				
Hardly				
Melancholy				
Warily				
Warily				
Warily				



#### Happy / Excited



- heart pounding in chest
- eyes sparkling
- face as wide as a grin
- teeth showing
- laughing out loud
- eyes squinted
- head tilted back
- arms raised
- feet stomping
- face flushed pink
- hands shaking uncontrollably

#### Angry



- gritted teeth
- narrowed eyes
- jutting finger
- furrowed brow
- blinking / staring
- red face
- clenched fist
- spittle flying
- downcast eyes

#### Happy / Excited



- heart pounding
- face glowing like the sun
- teeth showing
- eyes squinted
- arms raised
- feet stomping
- face flushed pink
- hands shaking uncontrollably

#### Sad / Crying



- face contorted
- eyes closed with tears
- mouth/lips trembling
- shoulder shaking
- red-rimmed eyes
- head quivering
- eyes shaking
- face distorted
- shoulder hunched
- face puffy and red



**Using the WWA rule (Wow Word Adverb Action)**  
to improve speech

"What was that?" said Harry → no give no intonation of the speaker's feelings

"What was that?" gasped Harry nervously, his heart pumping in his chest.

Wow word      Adverb      Action

"Right, here's what we've got to do," said Hermione

"Right, here's what we've got to do," whispered Hermione urgently, looking sternly at Ron and Harry.

Action      Wow word      Adverb

## Your turn ...

**"Come here, David," said Mrs. Cullen.**

**Apply the WWA rule (Wow Word, Adverb, Action) to this sentence.**

1. Make Mrs. Cullen very angry
2. Make her excited and happy

**"Come here, David!" commanded Mrs. Cullen angrily, her face contorting with rage.**

**"Come here, David," beamed Mrs. Cullen happily, her eyes shining with excitement.**

music      scenery      lighting



sound effects      Tone of voice

facial expressions      body language      words

## Rehearse it like a movie



Act it out, bring it alive, play 'freeze-frame'

## Taking it one step further ...

Adding 'Voice'

OOO  
OOO

### Examples of 'voice'

#### Talking directly to the reader.

My name is Perry Jackson. Am I a troubled kid? Yeah, you could say that. I could start at any point in my short, miserable life to prove it, but things really started going bad last May when our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade class took a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at Ancient Greek and Roman stuff. I know – it sounds like torture. I hoped the trip would be okay. At least, I hoped that for once I wouldn't get into trouble. Boy, was I wrong.

I know, I know. It was rude, but Grover was freakin' me out.

When I was young, I nicknamed him 'Smelly Gab'. I'm sorry, but it's the truth.

I'd love to tell you I had some deep revelation as my way down, that I laughed in the face of death etc. The truth? My only thought was: Aaaaagggghhh!

Well, what would you do in that situation? I really had no choice.

#### Asking rhetorical questions

How could I have been so stupid?

Did I really see that? Was I going mad?

Surely I was imagining it!

#### Making comments / asides about the action or other characters.

Clarise forced me back into the girls' bathroom (which to be honest, could have done with some air-freshener) and slammed my head in to the cubicle door.

I had to save Grover, he was my best friend (even though I was having trouble accepting he was half goat and smelt like a wet barnyard).

Annabeth looked at me as if I was the dumbest person on earth – boy, she can be a pain at times.

When my heart finally started beating again, James and I began searching for a way out. Nervously, I rushed everywhere for a means of escape from that evil tunnel. Once I decided there was no way out, my heart threatened to stop. A wave of sweat washed down my neck. I began thinking of all the terrible outcomes if we didn't find a way out: what if we starved? What if a wolf ate us, or some other vile creature? What if the place collapsed and we were forever stranded in the stinking hills? Didn't I mention it smelt like a wet dog in that horrid place? A little too late if you ask me. James told me he knew the way out. At that time, I felt a mixture of relief and anger.

## CC Writing Standards

3. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events, or show the responses of characters to situations.

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

## CC Language Standards

5. Consult reference materials (dictionaries and thesauruses) to find and clarify precise meanings of words
6. Acquire and use words and phrases that signal precise actions, emotions or states of being (e.g. quizzed, whined, stammered).

## P = Punctuation



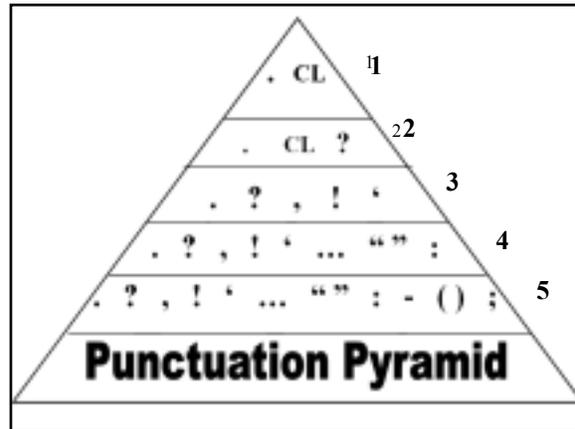
**NAME:** Dr. Punctuation

**JOB:** To carry out surgery on sick sentences



**SUPERPOWERS:**

- Dr Punctuation has the power to STOP and START sentences, using periods and CAPITAL LETTERS.
- He can make the reader shout and scream with exclamation points !
- He has the power to make characters speak using quotes " " "
- He can make you pause for breath with a comma, ask a question with a question mark ?
- He has the power to split sentences with a semi-colon and he can write you a list using a colon :
- He can even leave you begging for more with an ellipsis ...
- In fact, Dr Punctuation's superpowers make everyone's writing make sense. You cannot succeed without him!
- You must use his superpowers, or lose your reader forever!



No Harry heard Riddle screaming leave the bird leave the bird the boy is behind you you can still smell him kill him the blinded serpent swayed confused still deadly blood pouring from its ruined eyes help me help me harry screamed wildly someone anyone but who could help him now kill the boy leave the bird the boy is behind you sniff smell him ordered Riddle the basilisks mouth was stretche d wide wide enough to swallow harry whole lined with fangs long as his sword thin glittering venomous it lunged blindly harry dodged and it hit the chamber wall and lunged again and its forked tongue lashed harry's side he raised the sword in both hands

"No!" Harry heard Riddle screaming. "Leave the bird! Leave the bird! The boy is behind you! You can still smell him! Kill him!"

The blinded serpent swayed, confused, still deadly; blood pouring from its ruined eyes.

"Help me! Help me!" Harry screamed wildly. "Someone ... anyone?" But who could help him now?

"Kill the boy! Leave the bird - the boy is behind you. Sniff! Smell him!" ordered Riddle.

The basilisk's mouth was stretched wide, wide enough to swallow Harry whole. It was lined with fangs as long as his sword; thin, glittering, venomous ...

It lunged blindly. Harry dodged and the basilisk hit the chamber wall and lunged again. Its forked tongue lashed Harry's side. He raised the sword in both hands ...

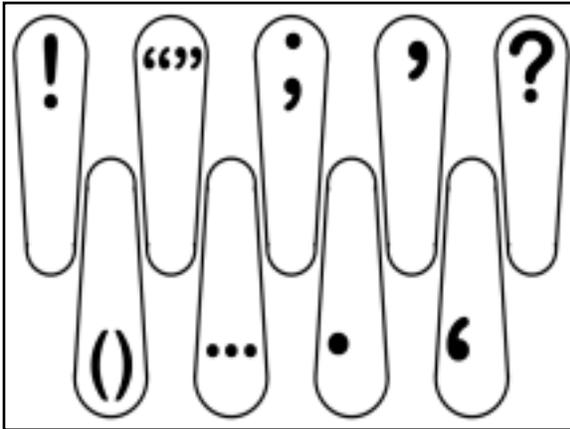
 Punctuation makes writing make sense.

 Punctuation tells us **HOW** to read.

 Punctuation adds excitement and tension.

 Punctuation allows characters to speak.

• period	I am in two halves. I show when someone is speaking.
, comma	I am used to show strong feelings. I come at the end of exclamations and imperatives sentences.
? question mark	I am used to introduce a list. I am also important for writing down the facts.
! exclamation mark	I am a stop sign. I am used at the end of declared the end of sentences.
... ellipsis	I am used in the middle of a sentence, before a comparison. I also separate items in a list.
' apostrophe	There are two parts to me. I give a word extra information in a sentence.
and question mark	I appear in the middle of sentences. I can separate two parts of a sentence.
( ) parenthesis	I add suspense to writing. I create tension and leave the reader begging for more.
! semi-colon	I am used to show a question has been asked. I come at the end of an interrogative sentence.
: colon	I am used in constructions. I am also used to show possession.

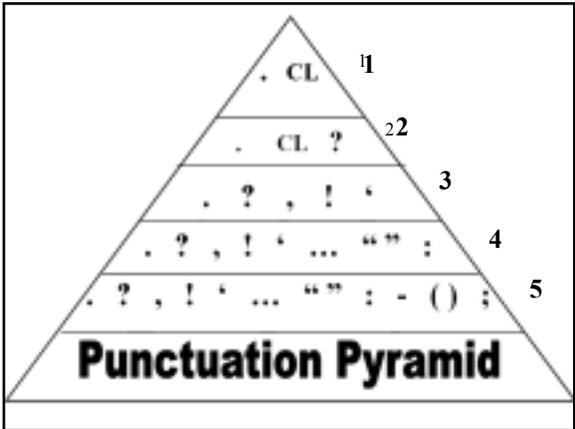


Punctuation Analysis / Record Chart / Target setting

Title/Date					
Target					
Question mark					
Comma					
Exclamation mark					
Semicolon					
Double quote					
Single quote					
Ellipsis					
Period					
Hyphen					
Colon					
Level					
Target for next piece of work					

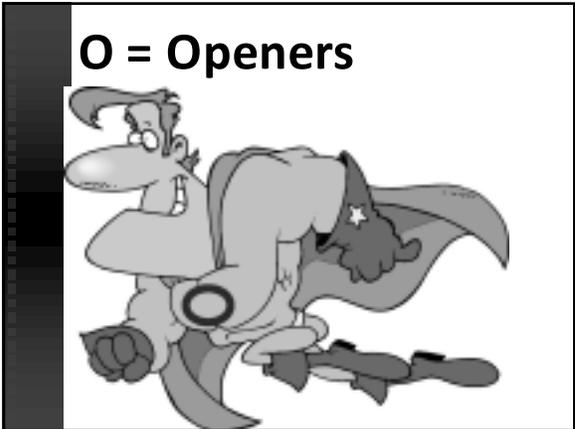
VCOF Record Chart

Title/Date	0 / 0 / 0	1 / 1 / 1	2 / 2 / 2	3 / 3 / 3
Target				
Question mark				
Comma				
Exclamation mark				
Semicolon				
Double quote				
Single quote				
Ellipsis				
Period				
Hyphen				
Colon				
Level				
Target for next piece of work				



**CC Language Standards**

2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.







Practice changing sentence structure with openers.

**I ran up to the door and knocked on it.**

- **Running** up to the door, I knocked urgently on it.
- **Racing** up the steps, I hammered loudly on the door.
- **Angrily**, I leapt up the steps and thumped my fist repeatedly against the door.
- **Furious**, my blood pounding, I stomped up the steps and beat on the door.
- **Although** the house was dark, I climbed the steps and knocked firmly on the door.

**I opened the curtains and looked out the window.**

- **Leaping** out of bed, I yanked back the curtains and gazed at the scene outside.
- **Excited** at what the day would bring, I pulled back the curtains and smiled out at the glorious morning.
- **Hesitantly**, I stretched out my trembling hands to gingerly open the curtains. Who, or what, had made that terrifying noise?
- **Miserable**, I stumbled to the window and grasped the curtains. Slowly, inch by inch, I let the daylight in.

**C =  
Conjunctions**

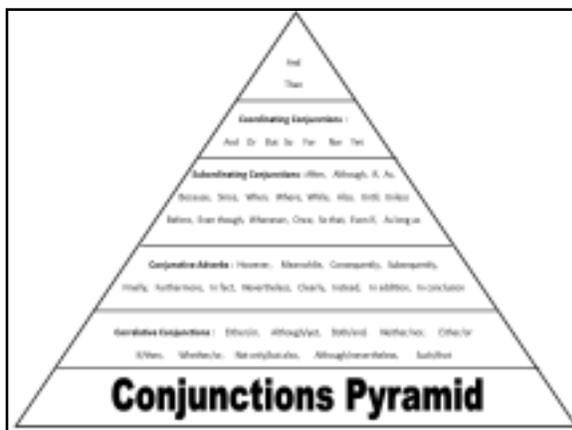


**Hero:** Captain Conjunction

**Job:** To join together parts of sentences

**Superpowers:**

- He is a joiner, connecting parts of sentences, using words like glue.
- Sometimes his words work alone (coordinating conjunctions) e.g. I love eating spaghetti *but* Tony thinks it's disgusting.
- Sometimes he needs them out to pairs to work together (correlative conjunctions) e.g. *Both* Jack *and* his sister got soaked in the thunderstorm. *Either* you work now, *or* you do it at home.
- He uses them to join a dependent clause to an independent clause e.g. *Although* it was poisonous, Sarah picked up the snake.
- He changes short, choppy sentences into longer, flowing sentences. E.g. 'I was terrified. I saw a spider.' becomes 'I was terrified because I saw a spider.'



## CC Writing Standards

- 1 Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, consequently, therefore, specifically)
- 2 Link ideas within and across categories of information using words and phrases (e.g. in contrast, especially)
- 3 Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events



## What is the outcome?

- Children find writing more enjoyable
- Children gain confidence in their own ability
- Children become genuinely engaged in the writing process and can see how to improve their own work
- Teachers have a clear structure to teach with
- Writing results improve dramatically

*It works best if it is a consistent approach across the whole school*

## Where do you go from here?

- Set up display area in classroom – preferably at front of the class
- Introduce the children to VCOP and the pyramids. (I would start with vocabulary, then punctuation).
- Encourage the children to contribute to your wall display by collecting examples of WOW words, openers etc.
- Start highlighting VCOP things in their writing, in class books – constantly reinforce the concepts being taught
- Use VCOP activities at the beginning of the day, when they line up, waiting for specials
- Have a WOW word of the day – see if the children can use it, either verbally or in writing
- Use DOL time to up-level a sentence / apply the WWAA rule
- Play lots of games and make it fun – children love dictionary and thesaurus races. All classes need a set of thesauruses
- Analyze pieces of writing for VCOP features
- Give the children a 'word bank book' or folder to collect VCOP examples

## My contact details ...

If you want to email me, I will send copies of the pyramids and other useful documents.

[jocullen1969@gmail.com](mailto:jocullen1969@gmail.com)

I can also do whole school training and teach demonstration lessons.