

Chepstow School

Skills

Literacy Support for Parents

2025-2026



The Literacy Landscape of Wales

PISA 2022 results revealed Wales experienced one of the largest declines in reading scores among OECD countries, erasing progress made since 2012. Scores fell by about 20 points, equivalent to nearly a year of lost learning.

Welsh Government data (June 2025) shows **some recovery in 2023/24**, with improvements in English and Welsh reading attainment compared to 2022/23, particularly in younger year groups. However, gaps remain regarding reading for pleasure and basic literacy skills.

Recent reports confirm that around 20% of children in Wales are functionally illiterate when entering secondary school

Around 12% of adults in Wales still lack basic literacy skills, consistent with previous figures, but the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2024) shows a rise in adults with very poor literacy skills across the UK, raising concerns about lifelong learning and employability.

What is needed?

More emphasis on reading for pleasure, parental engagement to support the development of literacy and consistent literacy strategies across the curriculum.

What does 'literacy' look like at Chepstow School?

At Chepstow School, we have high expectations of our learner's literacy skills and encourage them to take ownership of their literacy. Learner's are expected to meet our expectations by proof reading their own work, staff support learner's outlining clearly what our expectations of writing are and when staff offer feedback, they can use the literacy marking symbols to identify literacy errors.

Have you met our expectations?

- Capital letter at the start of every sentence and for proper nouns.
- Every sentence ends with either a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
- Commas have been used accurately.
- Apostrophes are used accurately for possession and omission: I'm; it's/its; don't etc.
- Every sentence makes grammatical sense.
- Homophones are accurate: their/there/they're etc.
- Most subject specific spellings are accurate.
- Paragraphs follow the TIPTOP rule: Time, Place, Topic, Person.
- Presentation of the work is neat with the title and date underlined. Are you proud of this work?

Take ownership of your literacy skills.

Expectations for writing:

- Capital letters
- Full stops
- Question marks
- Exclamation marks
- Commas
- Apostrophes
- Every sentence makes sense
- TIPTOP paragraphing
- Accurate homophones
- Accurate spellings
- Presentation is neat
- Title and date are underlined

Take ownership of your literacy skills

Literacy Marking

Sp

You have made a spelling error

//

You need to start a new paragraph

○

Incorrect use of a capital letter

V

You need to improve your vocabulary

P

You have made a punctuation error

Exp

Expression: This part of your sentence does not make sense (underlined)

What does 'literacy' look like at Chepstow School?

At Chepstow School, we have high expectations of our learner's literacy skills and encourage them to actively read. Learner's are expected to have a reading book in their bag at all times, as part of their general equipment. Books can be loaned from our library or from home. Staff discuss, promote and share reading materials especially during form time. Subject areas also share their 'Top Five Reads'.

Peter Pan

All children, except one, grow up. They soon know that they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew this. One day, when she was two years old, she was playing in a garden, and the sun shone warmly, and a gentle breeze made the petals flutter like butterflies. Wendy was watching them, and suddenly a tiny flower fell into her hair, and lay in her small hand to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather odd, but she did not cry, and her eyes were smiling, and the joy of the simple gift she carried – because Mrs. Darling had been having to the heart and cried out. "Oh, why can't you remain like this forever? And at that moment, Wendy's mother, Mrs. Darling, had a thought. She did not truly mean, simply smiled and offered her mother the flower, unaware that time would soon take her away from such innocent moments.

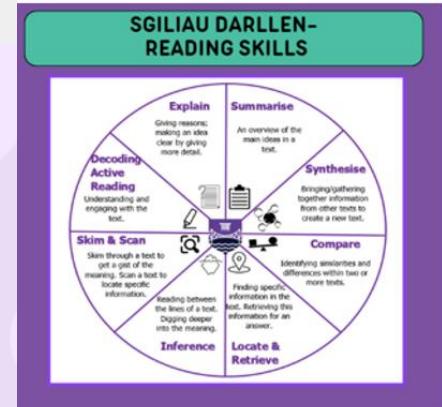
Turn and Talk:
What feelings does this passage evoke?
What might it suggest about childhood and growing up?

DISCUSS:

Why do you think Peter Pan is described as the "one" child who does not grow up? What might this represent?

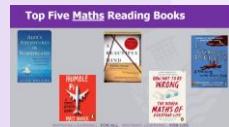
How does Mrs. Darling's reaction to Wendy reflect adult feelings about childhood? Can you relate to her wish?

What does this extract tell us about the theme of innocence and the passage of time in the story?



What does good literacy look like?

- Communicate ideas clearly in writing, speech and digital media
- Use literacy as a lifelong tool for learning and participation in society
- Understand more complex information accurately
- Be able to adapt key literacy skills to context and audience
- Write clearly and purposefully
- Understand meanings and information
- Be able to speak with clarity and listen with intention
- Engage in conversations that respect different viewpoints and build understanding
- Communicate ideas clearly in writing, speech and digital media



Core Spellings

Students complete regular core spelling tests during lessons across all subject areas. These focus key vocabulary that can be transferred across all subject areas.



How you can help at home:

- Encourage your child to practise their spelling list weekly.
- Use strategies like look-cover-write-check, flashcards, or spelling games.
- Ask them to use new words in sentences to reinforce meaning and context.

INSPIRING LEARNING... FOR ALL INSPIRING LEARNING... FOR LIFE

Whole School Literacy Focus: Reading

This year, our whole-school literacy focus is reading. Reading widely helps students:

- Build vocabulary and comprehension.
- Develop empathy and imagination.
- Improve writing skills and exam performance.

How parents can support reading at home:

- Set aside regular time for reading (15–20 minutes a day).
- Talk about what your child is reading – ask questions and share opinions.
- Visit your local library or explore eBooks and audiobooks together.
- Model reading by sharing what you're reading too!
- Read a text (for example a newspaper article) ask them some R.E.A.D questions about it.

R.E.A.D questions

Retrieve (Find explicit information)

- What are three key facts mentioned in the text?
- List two details about ____.
- Who/What/When/Where is stated in the passage?
- Identify one statistic or figure from the text.

Explore (Explain and clarify ideas)

- How does the text explain ____?
- In what way does ____ affect ____?
- Summarise the main idea of the paragraph in one sentence.
- How does the author show the importance of ____?

Here are some engaging and age-appropriate books to support reading at home:

- *The Hunger Games* – Suzanne Collins
- *Wonder* – R.J. Palacio
- *Noughts and Crosses* – Malorie Blackman
- *The Graveyard Book* – Neil Gaiman
- *Private Peaceful* – Michael Morpurgo
- *The Giver* – Lois Lowry
- *Ghost Boys* – Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* – Rick Riordan
- *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* – John Boyne
- *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* – Holly Jackson

Please see the separate PowerPoint with Top Five reads for each subject.

Here are some reading questions you could use while reading a new text at home:
Retrieve, Explore, Analyse, Deduce.

R.E.A.D Activity – Sustainable Design

TASK: Complete the R.E.A.D questions below

Analyse (Examine language and structure)

- Why has the writer chosen the word/phrase ____?
- What effect does the use of ____ have on the reader?
- How does the structure of the text help convey its message?
- Identify one technique used and explain its impact.

Deduce (Infer and conclude)

- What can you infer about ____ from the text?
- Why do you think the author included ____?
- What might happen next based on the information given?
- To what extent do you agree with the author's viewpoint? Why?

Written Accuracy:

Written accuracy refers to a student's ability to write clearly and correctly, using accurate:

- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

These skills are essential for effective communication and success across all subjects.

How you can support at home:

- Encourage your child to revise spelling lists and grammar rules weekly.
- Discuss common punctuation marks and their uses.
- Help them proofread homework for errors.

Please see separate literacy booklet – pupils can complete these tasks at home to support with their literacy skills.

Below are the writing expectations used across the whole school. You could use them to proofread independent learning tasks and any written task completed outside of lessons.

Have you met our expectations?

- Capital letter at the start of every sentence and for proper nouns.
- Every sentence ends with either a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.
- Commas have been used accurately.
- Apostrophes are used accurately for possession and omission: I'm; it's/its; don't etc.
- Every sentence makes grammatical sense.
- Homophones are accurate: their/there/they're etc.
- Most subject specific spellings are accurate.
- Paragraphs follow the TIPTOP rule: Time, Place, Topic, Person.
- Presentation of the work is neat with the title and date underlined.

Three Main Sentences



1. A simple sentence is built from the minimum of a subject and a main verb. It is an independent clause with one idea 'I love you.' 'He handed in his homework.' 'The kitten had a ball.'
2. A compound sentence generally joins two simple sentences (that would make sense separately) together. You can use words such as 'and', 'or' and 'but' to join the ideas with commas and semi-colons. These are called connectives. 'I love you; you love me.' 'He handed in his homework, but he had forgotten the last page.'
3. A complex sentence communicates more than one idea. One part (the independent clause) is like a simple sentence: it can stand on its own. The other part (the dependent clause) gives more detail about the simple sentence, but it cannot stand alone and needs the independent clause to make sense. 'I love you because you make me happy.' 'He handed in his homework because he wanted to avoid detention.'

How can I improve my sentences?

- ✓ Use improved vocabulary & punctuation

Basic: She was really happy about the news.

Better: She was thrilled by the news!

- ✓ Vary your sentences – use a combination of all 3 sentence types to add interest

Basic: I went to the shop. I bought some bread. I went home.

Better: After stopping by the store for bread, I casually strolled home; enjoying the silent, evening air.

- ✓ Be precise and specific

Basic: The dog ran across the grass.

Better: The cockapoo sprinted across the freshly cut grass, its ears flapping in the wind.

- ✓ Craft your sentences carefully to ensure they are grammatically correct

Basic (and incorrect) : I love to read, my brother prefers video games.

Better: I love to read but my brother prefers video games

Ambitious Vocabulary Suggestions

Adjectives

- Meticulous** – showing great attention to detail
- Resilient** – able to recover quickly from difficulties
- Formidable** – inspiring fear or respect through being impressively large or powerful
- Tenacious** – holding firmly; persistent
- Inevitable** – certain to happen; unavoidable
- Vivid** – producing strong, clear images in the mind
- Intricate** – very detailed and complicated
- Reluctant** – unwilling or hesitant
- Conspicuous** – easily seen or noticed
- Exuberant** – full of energy, excitement, and cheerfulness

Verbs

- Illuminate** – to light up or make something clear
- Devour** – to eat eagerly or consume quickly
- Fabricate** – to invent or make up (often something false)
- Captivate** – to attract and hold attention
- Exclaim** – to speak suddenly and passionately
- Ascend** – to move upward or rise
- Vanquish** – to defeat completely
- Emerge** – to come into view or become apparent
- Transform** – to change completely in form or appearance
- Persist** – to continue firmly despite difficulty

Adverbs

- Relentlessly** – in a way that is persistent and determined
- Meticulously** – with great attention to detail
- Exquisitely** – in an extremely beautiful or delicate manner
- Profoundly** – to a great depth or intensely
- Unwaveringly** – in a steady and resolute way

Can you make a simple sentence?

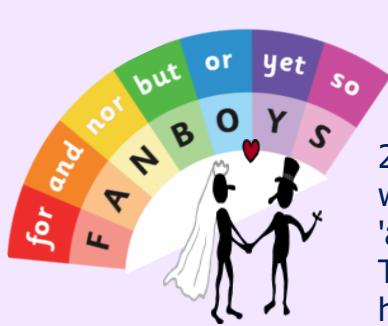


1. A simple sentence is built from the minimum of a subject and a main verb. It is an independent clause with one idea 'I love you.' 'He handed in his homework.' 'The kitten had a ball'.

Fill in the missing word(s) or add correct punctuation to make each sentence a complete simple sentence.

1. The cat ___ on the mat.
2. I ___ my homework before dinner.
3. She ___ to the ark yesterday.
4. We ___ pizza for lunch.
5. The sun ___ bright in the sky
6. He ___ a book every night.
7. They ___ football after school
8. My dog ___ very fast.
9. Please ___ the door.
10. I like apples ___ oranges.

Can you make a compound sentence?



2. A compound sentence generally joins two simple sentences (that would make sense separately) together. You can use words such as 'and', 'or' and 'but' to join the ideas with commas and semi-colons. These are called connectives. 'I love you; you love me.' He handed in his homework, but he had forgotten the last page.'

Instructions: Fill in the missing word(s) or punctuation to make each sentence a correct compound sentence. Use coordinating connectives like **for, and, nor, but, or, yet so**.

1. I wanted to go to the park, ___ it started to rain.
2. She likes apples, ___ she doesn't like oranges.
3. We can watch a movie, ___ we can play a board game.
4. He studied hard, ___ he passed the test.
5. I called you, ___ you didn't answer.

Can you make a complex sentence?



3. A complex sentence communicates more than one idea. One part (the independent clause) is like a simple sentence: it can stand on its own. The other part (the dependent clause) gives more detail about the simple sentence, but it cannot stand alone and needs the independent clause to make sense. 'I love you because you make me happy.' 'He handed in his homework because he wanted to avoid detention'.

Fill in the missing word(s) or punctuation to complete each complex sentence. Use subordinating conjunctions like **because, although, since, when, if, even though, while, after, before, unless**.

1. I stayed inside ___ it was raining heavily.
2. She finished her homework ___ she could watch TV.
3. ___ he was tired, he kept working on the project.
4. We will go to the park ___ the sun comes out.
5. I couldn't answer the question ___ I didn't understand it.

Answers for the sentence activity

Each answer should create a **simple sentence** (one independent clause with a subject and verb).

Example answers:

1. The cat **sat** on the mat.
2. The sun **shines** bright in the sky.
3. I like apples **and** oranges.

Complex sentences

1. I stayed inside **because** it was raining heavily.
2. She finished her homework **before** she could watch TV.
3. **Although** he was tired, he kept working on the project.
4. We will go to the park **when** the sun comes out.
5. I couldn't answer the question **because** I didn't understand it.

Compound sentences

1. I wanted to go to the park, **but** it started to rain.
2. She likes apples, **but** she doesn't like oranges.
3. We can watch a movie, **or** we can play a board game.
4. He studied hard, **so** he passed the test.
5. I called you, **but** you didn't answer.

Useful websites to support sentence structure & vocabulary

[How to write a sentence - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Sentence structure and types - 3rd level English - BBC Bitesize](#)

[How to understand unfamiliar vocabulary for KS3](#)

[English students - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Vocabulary - Oxford Owl for Home](#)

[Grammar and vocabulary | LearnEnglish Kids](#)

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- [Vocabulary - Oxford Owl for Home](#)
- [Grammar and vocabulary | LearnEnglish Kids](#)

Below are links to online spelling, punctuation and grammar resources that can be used to support, compliment or test learners SPaG at home.

[Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books](#)

[The gruelling grammar quiz - BBC Bitesize](#)

[Free literacy teaching resources | National Literacy Trust](#)