

**Process Writing Project Scheme:  
Producing Non-Fiction: News Articles and Internet Blogs**

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<b>Class/Year</b> Year 10	<b>Topic or title</b> Producing Non-Fiction: News Articles and Internet Blogs

**Prewriting activities**

Students were reminded of the non-fiction writing section on the GCSE English Language paper and the different styles of writing they could be required to write. The aims of process writing were explained. In this introductory lesson students undertook a mini-project by writing an opening paragraph for an article on 'how to make the most of your money', which they peer assessed and improved over the course of the lesson, reading out second drafts at the end in celebration. This led to the homework task where students were asked to research a news or magazine article about a particular topic they were interested in.

At the next lesson students all brought in articles which they showed to a partner, feeding back to the rest of the class. Each pair made suggestions on what made their articles successful. Responses included 'memorable phrases and headlines', 'humour' and 'lots of facts and statistics'. I then showed the class an exemplar of a real-life blog about cycling in the local community from a local newspaper's website. Students again explored different aspects of the blog, its audience and purpose, and made suggestions as to what made it successful.

The project task was then introduced:

*Write a blog for your local newspaper's website about a cause that you are passionate about. You should aim to persuade your audience – teenage readers – why you think your cause will benefit your local community.*

I gave them some examples of topics, such as the state of the local football club, the importance of recycling, and facilities for young people. Asking them to draw on their own experiences and interests according to process writing principles helped to engage the class and they came up with ideas with little difficulty. Students then made bullet points or spider diagrams to plan for their first drafts.

**Comments on students' first drafts and revisions**

In the following lesson, students worked on a first draft for 30 minutes. They then peer assessed their work and fed back areas that were successful and areas for improvement. Second drafts were completed for homework.

In the next lesson a second wave of peer assessment took place, with similar suggestions for improvement and other comments. Third and final drafts were then typed up for display. Typing up the final draft led to some students making minor typing errors in otherwise accurate pieces so I may reconsider the way this is structured next time. Overall, students showed a clear improvement during the drafting and revision phase, particularly after the first, sometimes perfunctory draft.

**Here is a selection of extracts from student work, spelling, punctuation and grammar errors included:**

**Student A's plan included the following:**

Problems – people throwing recyclable waste in general waste bins.

Suggest solutions and encourage

1<sup>st</sup> paragraph - why it's a problem, introduction

2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph - statistics and opinions

Advantages and disadvantages maybe 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs

A few rhetorical Qs in there

Is our future looking green?

Recycling, tired of sorting through your rubbish because you put recycling in the waste bin?

**Student A's opening paragraph of the first draft:**

We here all the time that we should recycle, but do we, no! studies show that over 60% of people in the Northwest don't go through there rubbish and sort recyclable from non-recyclable , and the rest of the UK isn't doing much better. All this rubbish goes straight to landfill, most of which shouldn't.

**Student A's second draft made a few minor adjustments and corrections:**

For years now we have been told to recycle, but do we, no! A study at the university of manchester shows that a staggering 60% percent of citizens in the North-West do not sort there rubbish into recyclable and non-recyclable. These thousands of tonnes of extra rubbish goes straight to landfill, most of which shouldn't.

**Student A's final draft produced this more polished version:**

For years now, we have been told to recycle, but do we... no! A recent study by the University of Manchester shows that a shocking 60% of citizens in the North-West do not sort their recyclable from non-recyclable waste. These thousands of tonnes of rubbish go straight to landfill, half of which shouldn't!

**Student B's first draft opening paragraph:**

Blackburn Rovers is a club which has dropped drastically in the rankings in recent years. About five years ago, they were enjoying the glory of places in Europe; and now struggling to win games in the championship. The results have been poor, causing the fans an upset, destroying the morale. The signings they have made have been unnecessary and have not impacted on the games this season.

**Student B's final draft developed further:**

Blackburn Rovers is a football club that has dropped drastically in the rankings in recent years. In 2006-7, they were inviting European talents like Bayer Leverkusen to Ewood Park; and now are unfortunately struggling to win games in the Championship! The results have generally been poor, causing the frustrated fans an upset, destroying what's left of their morale. The signings that the club have

made have been unnecessary and have not impacted enough on the games and results this season.

**Student C's first draft final paragraph produced this:**

As you can see it is a worldwide problem that will grow day by day if not acted on. 1 in 2 players feel that get abused by fans.

I think the solutions for this will be stricter laws, more publicity and advertisements to end this plague once and for all

**Student C's final draft developed this much further:**

The question needs to be taken seriously, both by FIFA and UEFA, along with the national FA's. Whether it is done by harsh punishment, as suggested by Rio Ferdinand, along with others, or heavily improved education for those involved in the game needs to be worked out. For me, it will take a combination of both. The strongest punishments for players is being suspended for football matches, not fines for these professional footballers. For so many football fans, you can only have your fingers crossed that racism is kicked out of football and done quickly!

**There were headlines in several blogs that used interesting wordplay:**

'The Truth About Youth', 'Face Time', 'It's Criminal!', 'Into Touch', 'BUSy Roads' and 'Tee Time'

**Criteria for success and any other assessment issues**

Students came up with suggestions for success criteria, including: 'headlines', 'persuasive language', 'facts', 'opinions' and 'showing passion'. I summarised their own success criteria which they were able to refer to during the writing process:

- use persuasive language
- include both facts and opinions
- show passion about the topic

Peer assessment was a very useful exercise. It enabled students to see the differing styles of others and they began to make perceptive, generally useful suggestions. Writing tended to be accurate in terms of spelling and punctuation but expression and technique did improve over the drafting process.

**Celebration of students' writing**

All students took part in the celebration process by reading out their final drafts. The class responded well to each other's work and was asked to assess each piece for 'What Work Well' using a grid to fill in. This also kept them engaged with the celebration activity and led to some productive comments, from identifying techniques such as 'good use of rhetorical questions' and 'used lots of opinions' to more useful comments such as 'fluent writing', 'passionate about the topic' and 'well balanced'. Students were keen to grade each piece out of 10, which many did, though I did not take feedback on this. I did, however, ask them to vote anonymously for the most successful piece of writing, with a range of different pieces selected. All felt that their writing had improved over the course of the

project.

The project was successful in that it enabled students to take more care with their writing and demonstrated how thoughtful planning, drafting and peer and self assessment enabled them to develop the quality of it. Giving students the opportunity to write a piece of non-fiction about a topic *that interested them* was successful, and students overcame any issues with form and style after exploring different exemplars. There was also a clear sense of engagement with the project as a whole and students were enthusiastic about exploring the process involved in developing their writing as well as sharing their work with others.

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