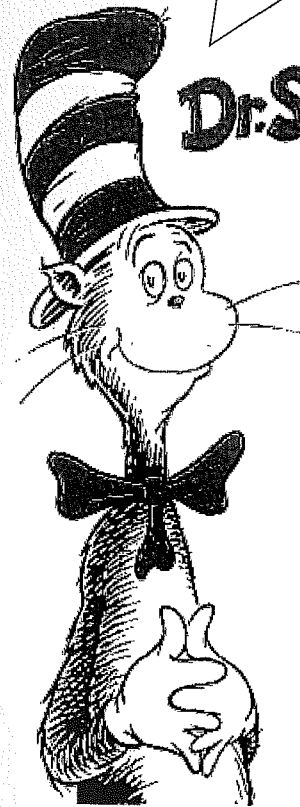
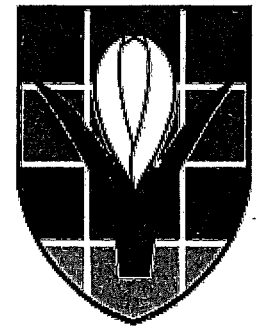


# Literacy

A parent's guide to  
Literacy in Key Stage 3 at SWCHS



**Dr. Seuss**



Saffron Walden  
County High School

## What is Literacy?

Literacy is explicitly defined as the four strands of language - speaking, listening, reading and writing. Developing effective Literacy skills will enable an independent, active learner who is able to access the language around them and use it to their advantage. Research shows that people who develop and improve their Literacy skills are more likely to have higher self-esteem and are more able to take advantage of the opportunities that life may offer them.

The four strands of Literacy are...

### **SPEAKING**

Using talk to clarify and present ideas.  
Using talk to extend thinking.

### **LISTENING**

Using active listening to understand key ideas.

### **READING**

Developing research and independent study skills.  
Reading for meaning.  
Understanding how texts work.

### **WRITING**

Using writing as a tool for thought.  
Structuring and organising writing.  
Developing clear and appropriate written expression.

In primary school, many of your children have been used to seeing 'Literacy' on their timetables; at secondary school, the subjects of 'English' and 'Drama' are the main tools by which Literacy skills will be taught. However, Literacy skills will be developed across the whole curriculum, in every subject your child encounters, for example drafting an evaluation in Science (writing); accessing sources in History (reading) and explaining why a warm up is important in PE (Speaking and Listening). In fact, we believe we are all Literacy teachers and we challenge your child to find a subject where s/he is not using one or more of the skills of Literacy!

## Speaking and Listening

Talk is the main tool by which children learn, whether at primary or secondary school. Speaking and listening are symbiotic. Of course, in everyday life, we speak and listen all the time, but we engineer specific activities within school in order to improve and develop this fundamental life skill.

These activities could take the form of...

- A timetabled specific drama lesson
- Listening to instructions
- Role play
- Hot seating
- Presentations
- Debates
- Discussions
- Group work
- Partner work
- Problem solving
- School productions
- Speaking in assembly
- Taking a role in student voice

Our aim is to develop confident and articulate speakers equipped with the necessary skills to communicate in the wider world. Furthermore, we use talk as a thinking tool in lessons, giving students the opportunity to discuss something with their partner before having to talk to the whole class, so they can trial out and think through their ideas and learn from their peers.

Speaking and Listening is assessed within the English GCSE framework with students achieving a qualification at the end of the course.

## Reading

Being able to read confidently and competently is a key skill which is developed across all subjects at SWCHS. In nearly every lesson, students will be practising their skills at skimming, scanning and close reading. To become a competent reader across the curriculum, students need to know when to apply each skill.

In English, reading is a core part of every lesson...

- Every lesson from Y7-11 will begin with 10 minutes silent reading. Your child will be expected to bring a reading book to each lesson and can either read a book from home or one borrowed from the Learning Centre.
- Students are expected to do 15 minutes per night reading homework for English (extra to set homework).
- Y7 students will also have one lesson a cycle in the Learning Centre that will focus on engaging with their reading material.

Across the school, various research based tasks will be set for homework. To support your child, please be aware of the following obstacles...

- Websites can be inaccurate for a number of reasons. It could be out of date and so they are looking at old information. Encourage your children to check their sources carefully and be discriminate in the way they gather information – Wikipedia lies!
- Another issue with the internet is that reading ages for websites vary. If there are many words and phrases on a particular website that your child cannot understand, the reading age is probably too high for them. [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) has many websites which are aimed at pupils in secondary school. Encourage your child to give them a try first. If there isn't an appropriate BBC site, they will have links to other more suitable sites.

## Reading for pleasure

Within English, students have a reading lesson every two weeks. In their first reading lesson in Year 7, they will take part in a reading interview with either their teacher or the librarian where we will discuss what genre of books your child likes to read; how often they read and any obstacles to them enjoying reading. Then throughout the course of the year they will be given personalised specific reading targets and rewarded if they work hard to achieve them by being invited to the prestigious Reading Academy Awards!

### What can I do to help?

- The most important thing a parent can do to support their child's reading is to help them find books that are appropriate in terms of reading age and content, and that motivate their child to enjoy reading. Making use of the local library can help here. Reading aloud can help children enjoy stories they might struggle to read themselves. Some useful websites:  
[www.channel4learning.com/sites/bookbox](http://www.channel4learning.com/sites/bookbox)  
[www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)
- Encourage your child to visit the Learning Centre. The librarian at SWCHS, Mrs Smith, is extremely keen to spend time with students helping them to choose the right book for them. All students have access to the library before and after school, as well as break and lunchtimes. There is more information about the Learning Centre on the school website: [www.swchs.net](http://www.swchs.net)
- Once they get here, encourage them to join the Carnegie Reading Group which runs from April to June every year. Take a look at the website now to see the reviews written by this year's group members. [www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk](http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk)

## Writing

Being able to write accurately and convincingly for different purposes and audiences is a fundamental life skill. At SWCHS, all teachers have a responsibility to help your child improve his or her writing. There is an expectation that your child will proofread key pieces of work using the SPACE checklist (see next page). Teachers will use the same system to mark for Literacy to encourage consistency in your child's writing across all subjects.

### What can I do to help?

- Encourage your child to use the Literacy pages at the back of their organisers (some of which are photocopied on the following few pages for ease of reference).
- Familiarise yourself with the SPACE system - if your child is reluctant to proofread their work you could go through this checklist with them.
- Encourage good book presentation - both classwork and homework should be written in blue or black ink, ideally using either a handwriting or a fountain pen. All work should have a title, date and c/w or h/w in the margin and underlined with a ruler. If possible, their books should be covered with clear plastic.
- Encourage your child to work on difficult areas such as homophones and spellings – there are pages in the planner to help with this, including some useful strategies to help remember tricky words.

Here are some useful spelling and writing sites that may help:

[www.shambles.net/pages/learning/englishp/eslgames](http://www.shambles.net/pages/learning/englishp/eslgames)  
[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise)  
[www.channel4learning.com/waywithwords](http://www.channel4learning.com/waywithwords)  
[www.harcourtschool.com/activity/word\\_builder/level6](http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/word_builder/level6)  
[www.eastoftheweb.com/games/Eight1.html](http://www.eastoftheweb.com/games/Eight1.html)

## Where can students go to get help with Literacy work?

If your child is struggling with any aspect of their work, the first person they should talk to is their class teacher, who will know the child, as well as all the details about the particular piece of work s/he is struggling with.

Most year 7 classes will also have a Learning Support Assistant with them for most lessons. These adults have also been in the lesson so will know what the work entails, and students often find them more approachable.

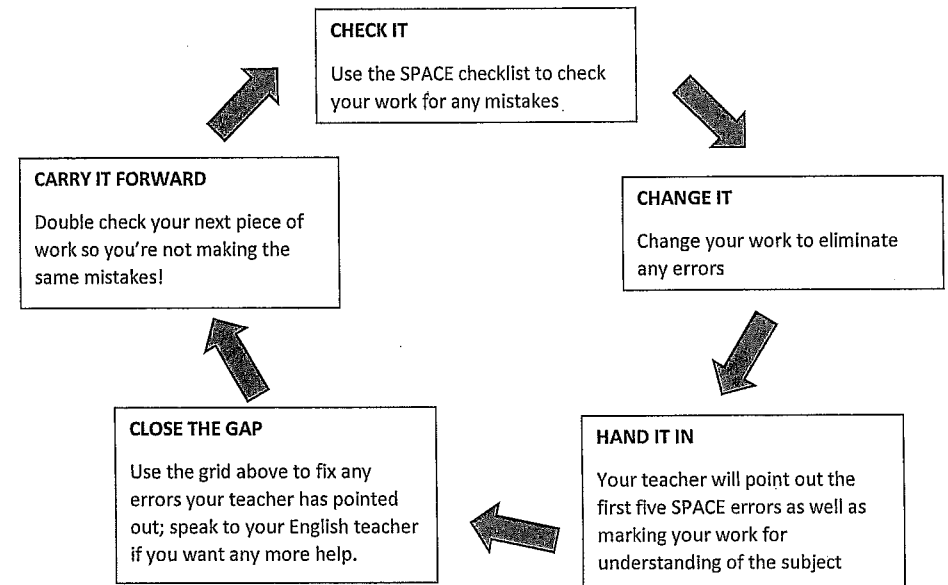
### THE LEARNING CENTRE

At SWCHS, we run an after-school homework club from 3.20pm to 4.30pm every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and on Friday until 4pm. Year 7s have to be signed up to the scheme by parents and must stay for the whole hour. The Learning Centre provides all the possible resources that our students might need for their homework i.e. pencils, paper, card, rulers, calculators and so on as well as computer access. There are also staff on duty to guide students to the information they might need and to help them with any queries about their homework. Students of all ages and abilities can come and get help and advice on their homework assignments. Students may read, research, seek help and make use of a range of useful materials and equipment. The Learning Centre is open before school from 8am every day should students need access to computers, printers, books, DVDs, magazines and newspapers.

### SPACE to improve your work

CODE	HELP
Spellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planner page - 100 Most Often Misspelt Words</li> <li>• Planner page - Homophones (sound the same but different meanings)</li> <li>• Planner page - Spelling strategies</li> <li>• Keyword lists – in books / on wall / on board</li> </ul>
Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planner page - Essay Planning</li> <li>• Use a new paragraph when you're making a new point</li> </ul>
Apostrophes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planner pages - Literacy Skills</li> <li>• Use an apostrophe where a letter is missing (e.g. can't, he's)</li> <li>• Use an apostrophe to indicate belonging (e.g. John's cat)</li> </ul>
Capitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a capital letter at the start of a sentence</li> <li>• Proper nouns need capital letters (e.g. names, places, months)</li> <li>• Always use a capital 'I' for referring to yourself</li> </ul>
Edit for meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read through your work and check it makes sense</li> <li>• Check there are no words missing, and that you've used words correctly</li> <li>• Have you answered the question?</li> </ul>

### How to use SPACE



## 100 Most Often Misspelt Words

1	again	26	different	51	many	76	their
2	all right	27	dropped	52	money	77	then
3	always	28	every	53	morning	78	there
4	an	29	February	54	mother	79	they
5	and	30	first	55	name	80	they're
6	animals	31	for	56	named	81	things
7	another	32	friend	57	now	82	thought
8	around	33	friends	58	off	83	threw
9	asked	34	frightened	59	once	84	through
10	babies	35	from	60	our	85	to
11	bear	36	getting	61	people	86	together
12	beautiful	37	going	62	pretty	87	too
13	because	38	happened	63	received	88	tried
14	before	39	heard	64	running	89	two
15	believe	40	here	65	said	90	until
16	bought	41	him	66	school	91	very
17	came	42	interesting	67	some	92	wanted
18	caught	43	it's	68	something	93	went
19	children	44	its	69	sometimes	94	were
20	clothes	45	jumped	70	started	95	when
21	coming	46	know	71	stopped	96	where
22	course	47	let's	72	surprise	97	with
23	cousin	48	like	73	swimming	98	woman
24	decided	49	little	74	than	99	would
25	didn't	50	looked	75	that's	100	you're

## Homophones

Homophones – words that sounds the same, but have different meanings and spellings (from the Greek 'homo' = same, and 'phor' = sound).

### there

- over there,
- place

### they're

- they're cold
- 'they are' shortened to one word

### their

- their coats, posse-
- belonging to them

### where

- where are you?
- place

### wear

- what should I wear?
- clothing

### were

- we were young
- past tense of are

### here

- over here
- place

### hear

- I can hear you
- linked to 'ear'

### to

- I went to the zoo
- I want to go now

### too

- over the top, excessive
- I am too tired, I ate too much

### two

- the number
- 2 people, 2 apples

### no

- no, I did not do that
- opposite to yes

### know

- I know that is the answer
- to understand/have knowledge

### new

- do you like my new shoes?
- bought recently

### knew

- I knew what would happen
- past tense of 'know'

### your

- your car is very dirty
- belonging to you, possession

### you're

- you're a lovely person
- you are shortened to one word

### write

- I write in my book
- to put something down in words

### right

- you are right
- correct

There are a lot more homophones than just these, but these are the ones that people often get wrong. In your writing, check very carefully to make sure you are using the correct homophone.

Can you see how these 3 words are linked by meaning and spelling?

## Literacy Skills = Language

Whatever you are writing, be it an essay, your CV or even a novel, you need to know about the components that make up language.

- Noun** A noun is used to identify a person, place, object or idea. Common nouns refer to any of these but proper nouns refer to particular persons, places, objects or ideas.  
*Our Example: Common nouns horse, city, railway Proper nouns Red Rum, Manchester, East Coast Line*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Pronoun** A pronoun (he, she, it, they, etc.) is used in place of one or more nouns.  
*Our Example: When they visited London, Amy and John were taken on a guided tour by their uncle.*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Adjective** An adjective modifies a noun or pronoun. It describes size, colour, how many, what kind, etc.  
*Our Example: The ancient tugboat blew its shrill whistle as it hauled the huge liner out of the narrow harbour.*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Verb** A verb expresses an action, state or occurrence. The tense of the verb indicates the time of the action, state or occurrence.  
*Our Example: John wrote an essay. (PAST) I walk to school every day. (PRESENT) I will see you tomorrow. (FUTURE)*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Adverb** An adverb modifies or qualifies a verb, another adverb or an adjective, and expresses how, when, where or how much.  
*Our Example: The woman walked slowly along the pavement. (Modifies the verb 'walked'.) James was extremely upset. (Modifies the adjective 'upset'.) Sarah knew she had acted too hastily. (Modifies the adverb 'hastily'.)*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Preposition** A preposition (in, at, beside, over, etc.), expresses a relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word or phrase.  
*Our Example: Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon in 1969.*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Conjunction** Conjunctions join together words or phrases.  
*Our Example: John missed the bus because he was late. Dan worked hard on his homework and achieved high grades.*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_
- Interjection** An interjection is used to express feeling and emotion, pain, command, admiration, etc. It is usually followed by an exclamation mark.  
*Our Example: Be careful! Ouch! What a wonderful deal!*  
 Your Example: \_\_\_\_\_

## Spelling Strategies

### Pictures

H +  = hear

**Other versions of the word:**  
definite, finite, finish

### Over-articulation

(sounding silent letters)  
raspberry  
autumn

### Word Origins

knife - knif      satis - enough  
bicycle - two circles

### Invent Mnemonics

Accommodation =



Cosy Cottages



Magnificent Mansions

Necessary =  
1 collar, 2 socks

**Study  
Cover  
Write  
Check**



**Use a Dictionary**

### Words within word

business - bus in ess  
separate - there's a ra  
in separate

**Critical Self-checking**  
**Does it look right?**

### Syllables

ad - ver - tise - ment

**Roots  
Prefixes  
Suffixes**

dis + satisfy  
dis + satisfi + ed  
fit + s  
fit + ment  
fit + ness  
fit + (t)ing  
fit + (t)ed

**Letter  
Pattern  
Links - ight**

light      bright  
sight      fight  
might      height

### Analogous Words

where } all  
there } linked  
here } to place

## Literacy Skills – Punctuation

When you write, it is punctuation that helps you to make the meaning clear.

- **Full Stop: [ . ]** Place a full stop at the end of a sentence that is not a direct question or exclamation.  
*Our Example:* David walked to the bus stop.  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Comma: [ , ]** Insert a comma to indicate a natural pause in a sentence and to separate three or more items in a list or series.  
*Our Example:* No, I am not going to the park. The shopkeeper placed sweets, pop, greetings cards and magazines on display.  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Semicolon: [ ; ]** Use a semicolon to connect independent clauses in a compound sentence.  
*Our Example:* Mary came home late from work; the house was in darkness.  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Colon: [ : ]** Place a colon before a list of items, and preceding an explanation or example. Several have been used on this page.  
*Our Example:* I am a keen follower of several sports: soccer, rugby and cricket.  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Quotation Marks: [ " " ]** Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation.  
*Our Example:* "Keep as quiet as you can," breathed Jim, "and we might see the otter."  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Apostrophe: [ ' ]** Apostrophes are used where letters have been omitted, or to indicate possession.  
*Our Example:* I'll (I shall) come over to your house. Erica isn't (is not) here yet. Peter's (possessive) school bag is still on the bus and Rob's (Rob is) looking for it.  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_
- **Parentheses: [ ( ) ]** Use parentheses (brackets) to enclose material which adds explanation to a sentence.  
*Our Example:* Three colours are always used for traffic lights: red (stop), amber (caution) and green (go).  
*Your Example:* \_\_\_\_\_