

By making use of the resources discussed in this section:

- Writing can take place collaboratively at the screen so that the product of a brainstorm can be turned into a descriptive passage or a list can be rearranged into a poem
- Children gain experience of language as they read and re-read text aloud on screen, in their efforts to make sense of what they are working on, while collaborating on a piece of text
- Storage in files and directories means that real opportunities are created for writers to save, retrieve and edit their work
- Word processing makes a child work closely with letters and words, phrases and sentences in a way that does not often happen with pencil and paper.

Collaboration in writing by using an adult as scribe

By organising yourself or another adult to act as scribe (or secretary) at the computer while the pupils individually or in groups dictate, pupils can concentrate on the composition of the text rather than the mechanics of either handwriting or using a word processor.

Young children will need more support with the language, but the adult always needs to check that he/she is not interfering with the content. From time to time asking the question, 'Is that what you want to write?' helps to give the children ownership.

They need to feel that it is their work and that the adult is merely typing it in. They will become aware of many ICT skills from watching at close quarters, but also will realise that a piece of work that has been written once is not necessarily finished.

It is useful, for your own purposes, to print a copy every few minutes and later annotate the progression you notice in the piece of work in order to offer insights into the stages a piece of writing can go through from planning to presentation.

Hint

It is important to allow the children to feel in control and make all the decisions about alterations being made to the text such as additions, deletions, style and layout, as they read it on the screen.