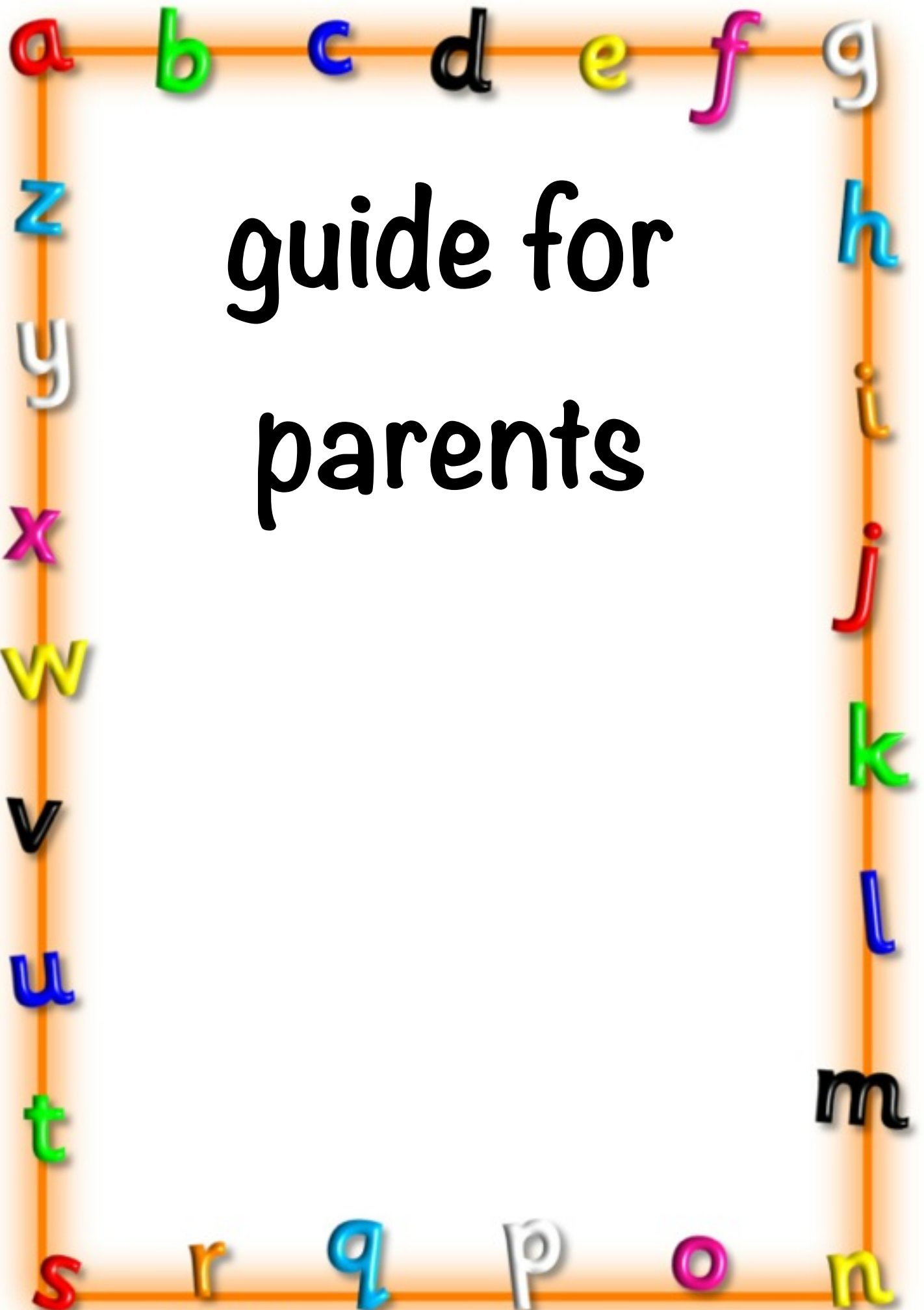
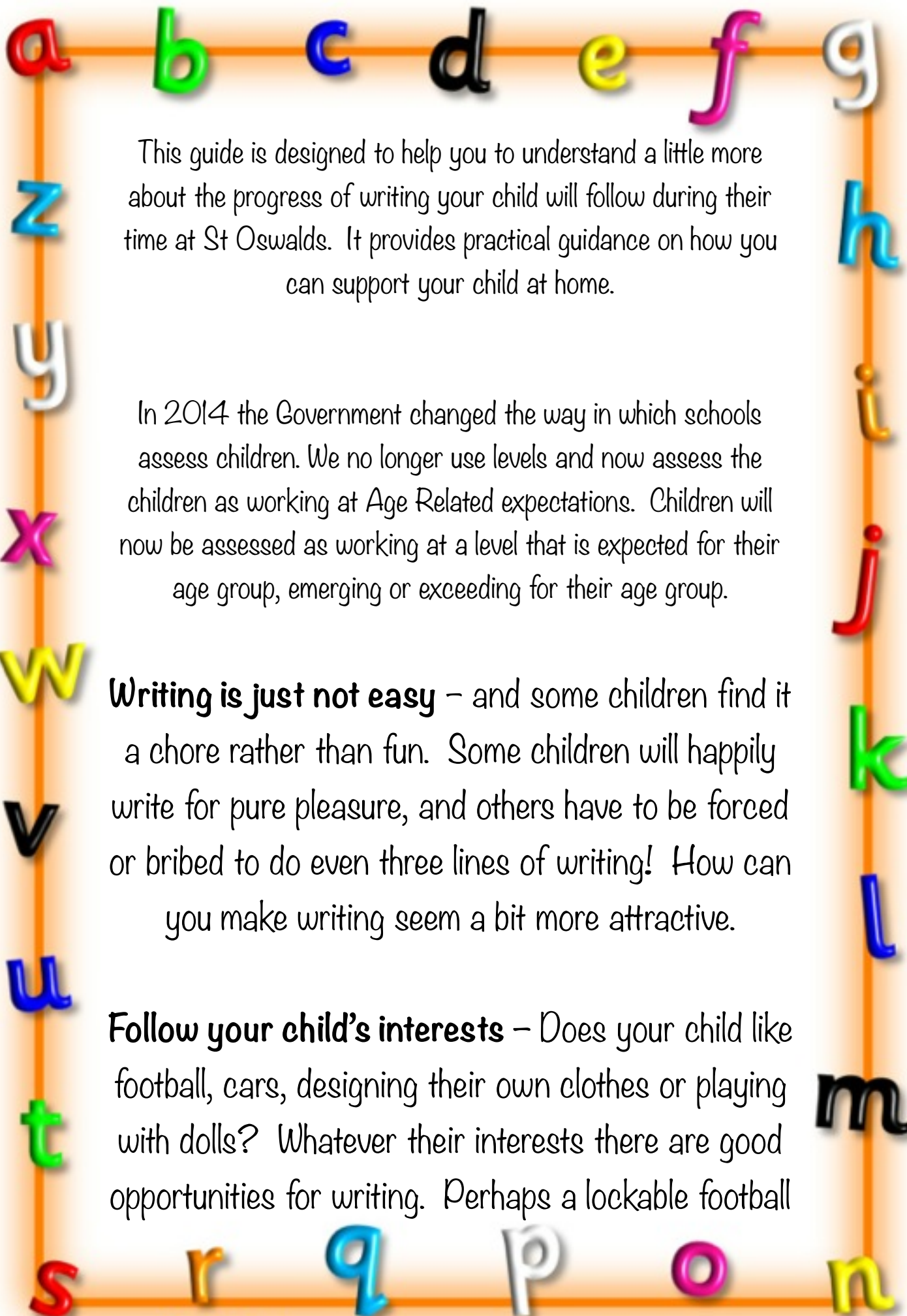


# Writing and handwriting





# guide for parents



This guide is designed to help you to understand a little more about the progress of writing your child will follow during their time at St Oswalds. It provides practical guidance on how you can support your child at home.

In 2014 the Government changed the way in which schools assess children. We no longer use levels and now assess the children as working at Age Related expectations. Children will now be assessed as working at a level that is expected for their age group, emerging or exceeding for their age group.

**Writing is just not easy** – and some children find it a chore rather than fun. Some children will happily write for pure pleasure, and others have to be forced or bribed to do even three lines of writing! How can you make writing seem a bit more attractive.

**Follow your child's interests** – Does your child like football, cars, designing their own clothes or playing with dolls? Whatever their interests there are good opportunities for writing. Perhaps a lockable football

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diary for writing match fixtures and a few private thoughts on each match as played. Use postcards or fancy writing paper for writing a short message to granny – and make sure she writes STRAIGHT back! Provide post-it notes and encourage them to write messages to everyone – even the cat!

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**Talk comes first** – the standard of children's writing at school is not only how they form letters and handwrite. They must be able to express their ideas clearly. Can they put thoughts in order and discuss what they want to say? All of these depend on speaking. So talk to your child, encourage them to express themselves, listen and respond to their ideas.

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**IT ALL HELPS!**

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**GOLDEN RULES**

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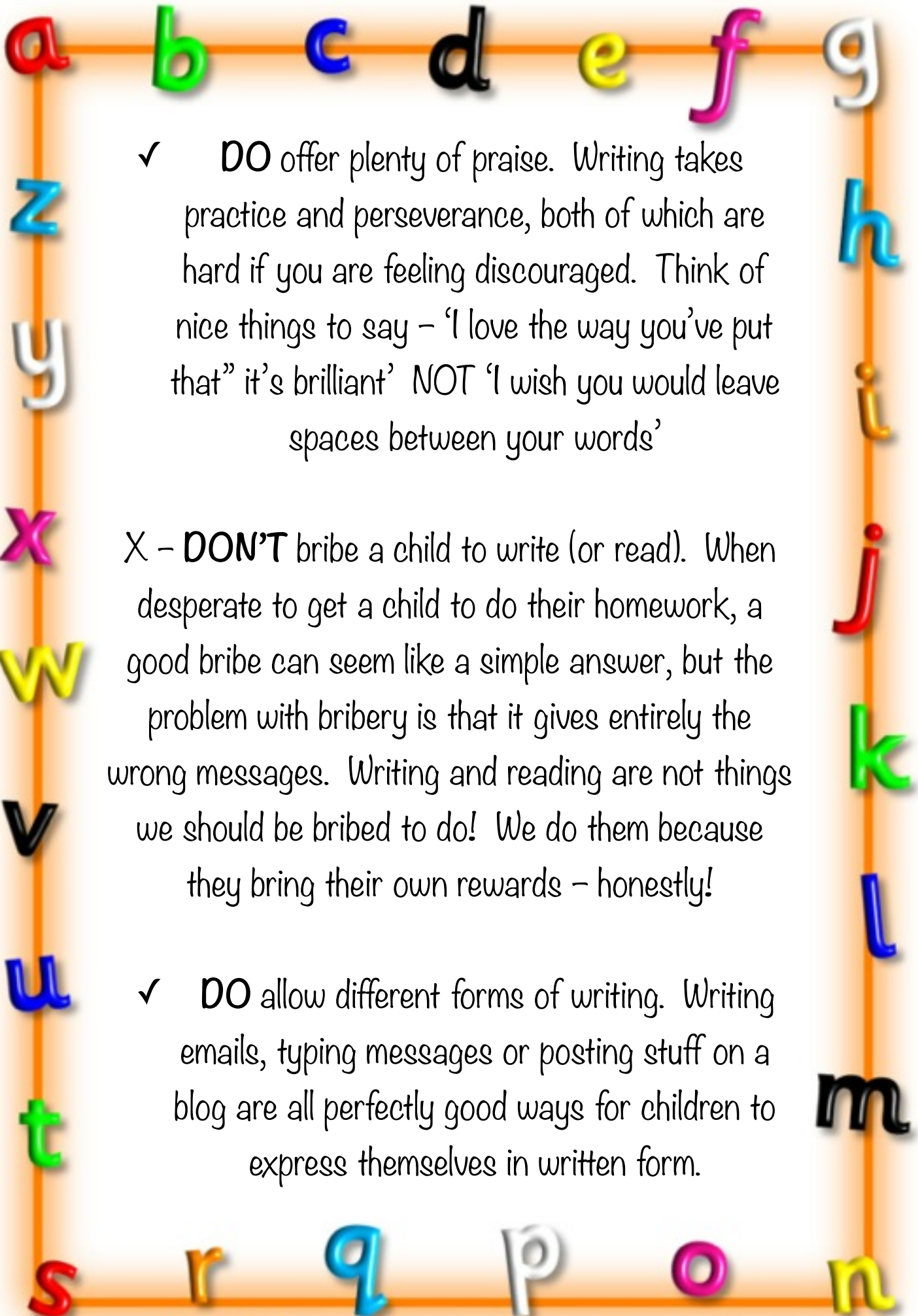
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✓ **DO** offer plenty of praise. Writing takes practice and perseverance, both of which are hard if you are feeling discouraged. Think of nice things to say – ‘I love the way you’ve put that’ it’s brilliant’ NOT ‘I wish you would leave spaces between your words’

**X – DON’T** bribe a child to write (or read). When desperate to get a child to do their homework, a good bribe can seem like a simple answer, but the problem with bribery is that it gives entirely the wrong messages. Writing and reading are not things we should be bribed to do! We do them because they bring their own rewards – honestly!

✓ **DO** allow different forms of writing. Writing emails, typing messages or posting stuff on a blog are all perfectly good ways for children to express themselves in written form.

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- X – DON'T get obsessed with spelling  
The main criteria for a healthy piece of writing is  
that
- We can read it
  - It is well expressed
  - It fulfils its purpose – i.e. if it is a thank you letter to granny, it says thank you.

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## Writing at home

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### KEY STAGE 1

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- Encourage writing in play and what they do for example:
  - Lists for shopping, record the results for their favourite sports team

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- Engage with their writing through:
  - saying what you liked in it
  - Asking where their ideas have come from

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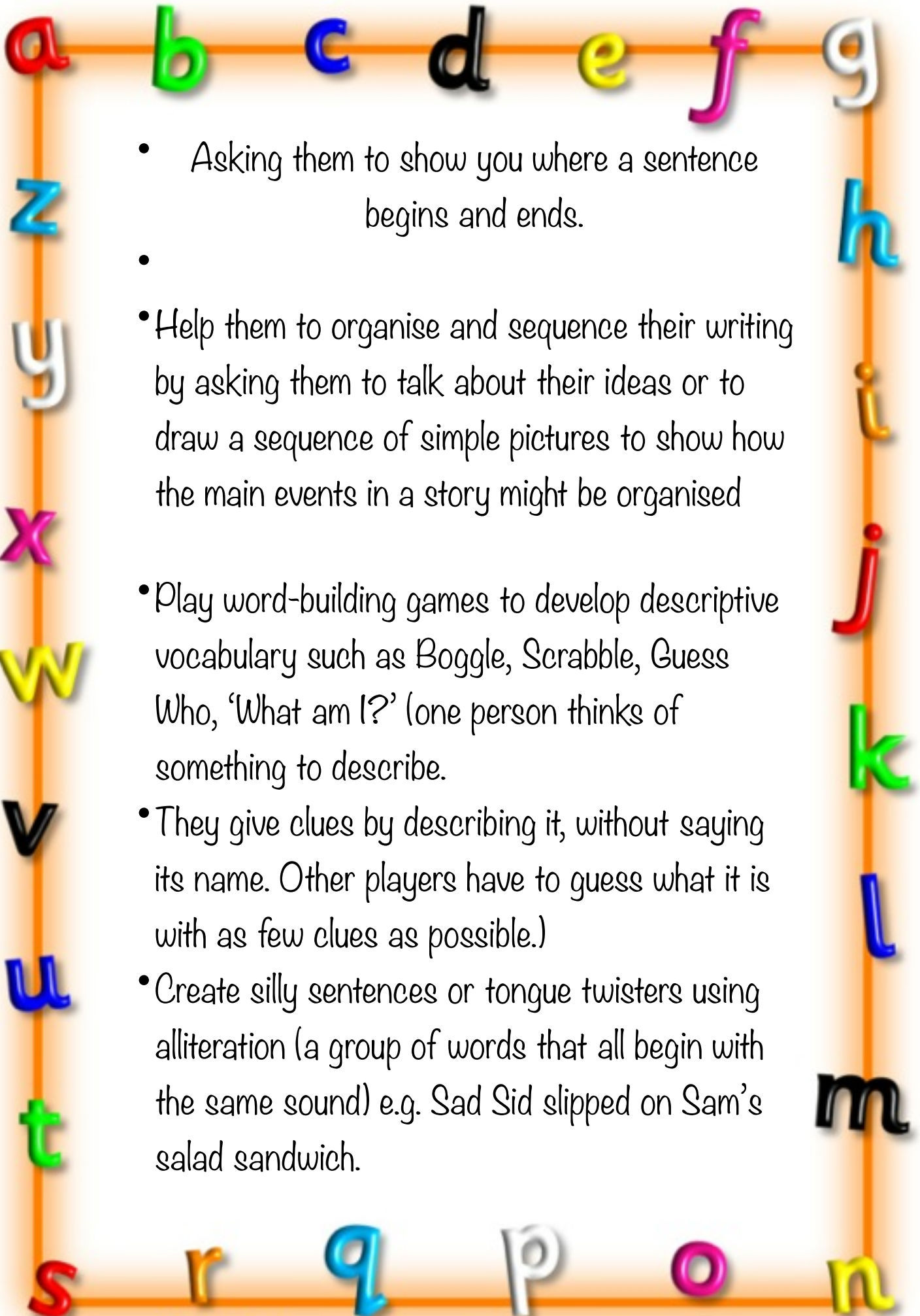
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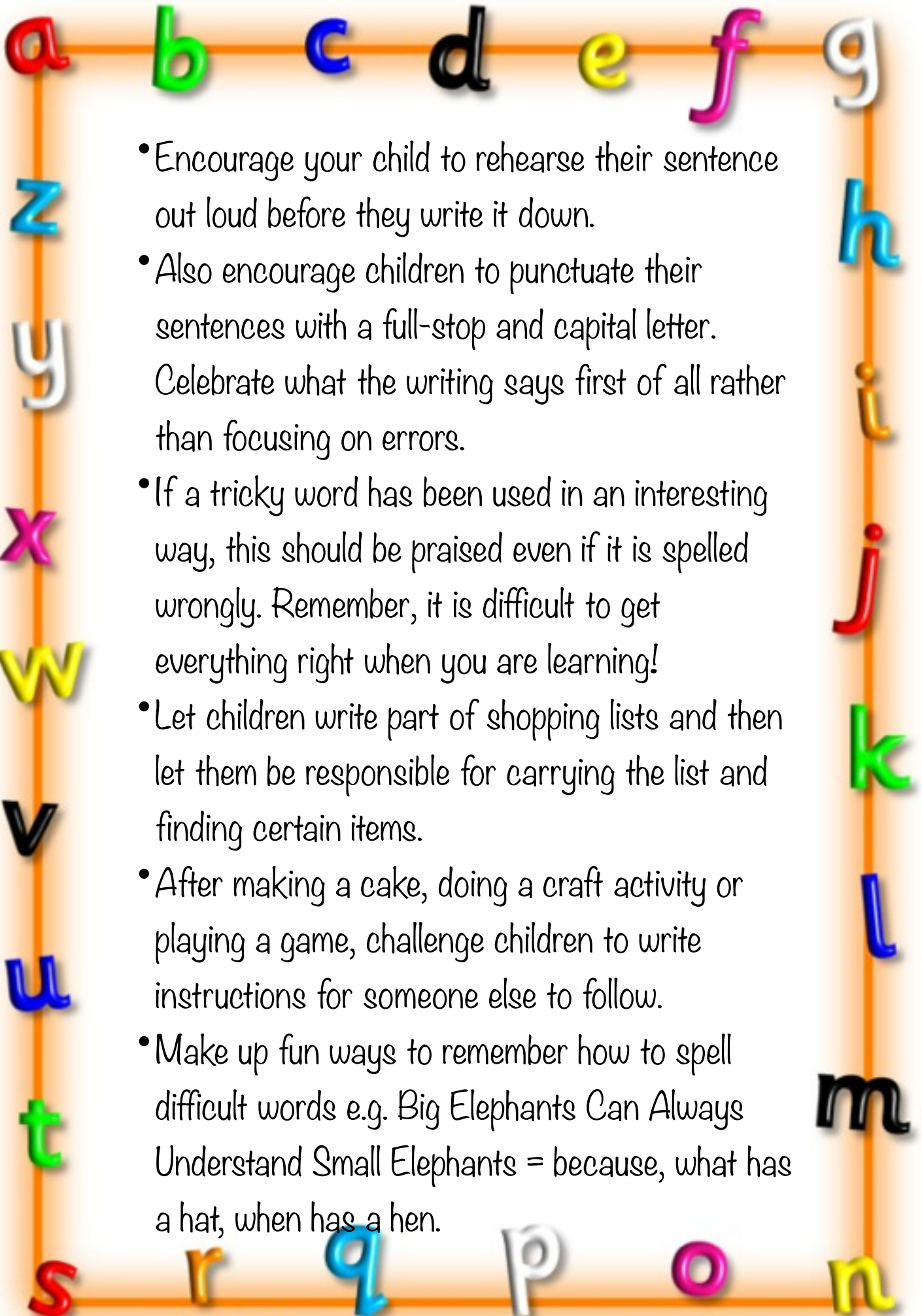
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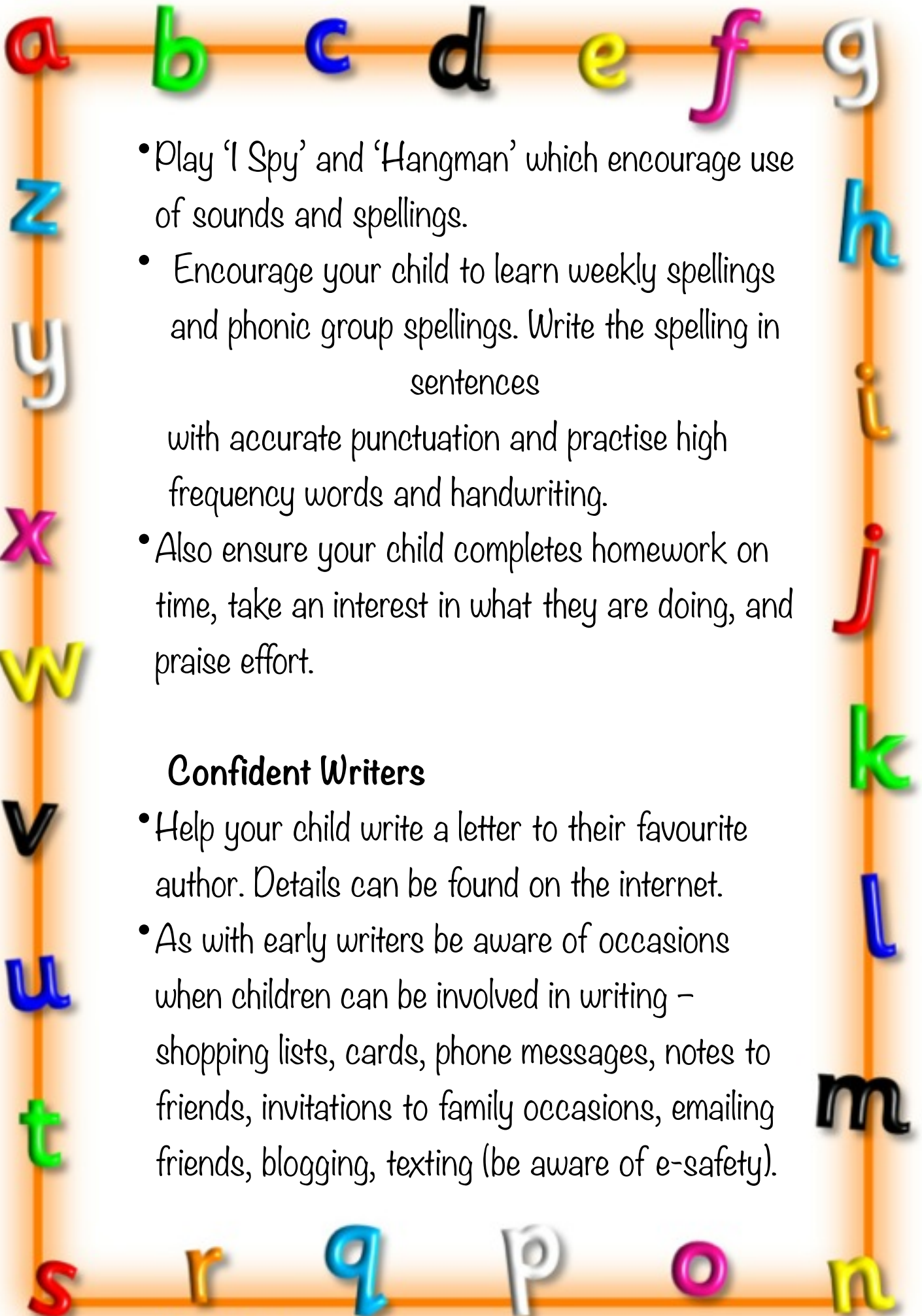
- Asking them to show you where a sentence begins and ends.
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- Help them to organise and sequence their writing by asking them to talk about their ideas or to draw a sequence of simple pictures to show how the main events in a story might be organised
- Play word-building games to develop descriptive vocabulary such as Boggle, Scrabble, Guess Who, 'What am I?' (one person thinks of something to describe.
- They give clues by describing it, without saying its name. Other players have to guess what it is with as few clues as possible.)
- Create silly sentences or tongue twisters using alliteration (a group of words that all begin with the same sound) e.g. Sad Sid slipped on Sam's salad sandwich.





- Encourage your child to rehearse their sentence out loud before they write it down.
- Also encourage children to punctuate their sentences with a full-stop and capital letter. Celebrate what the writing says first of all rather than focusing on errors.
- If a tricky word has been used in an interesting way, this should be praised even if it is spelled wrongly. Remember, it is difficult to get everything right when you are learning!
- Let children write part of shopping lists and then let them be responsible for carrying the list and finding certain items.
- After making a cake, doing a craft activity or playing a game, challenge children to write instructions for someone else to follow.
- Make up fun ways to remember how to spell difficult words e.g. Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants = because, what has a hat, when has a hen.

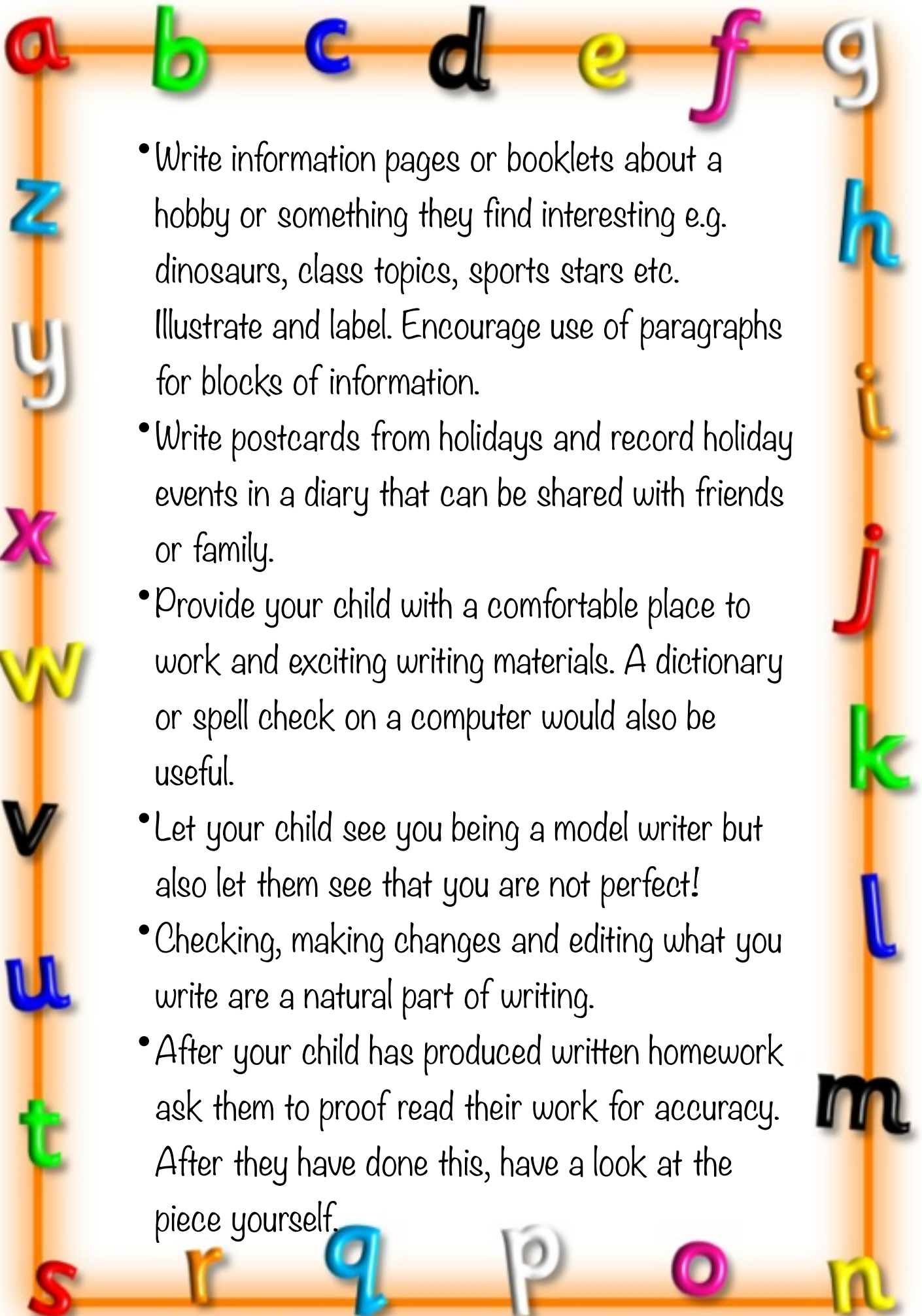




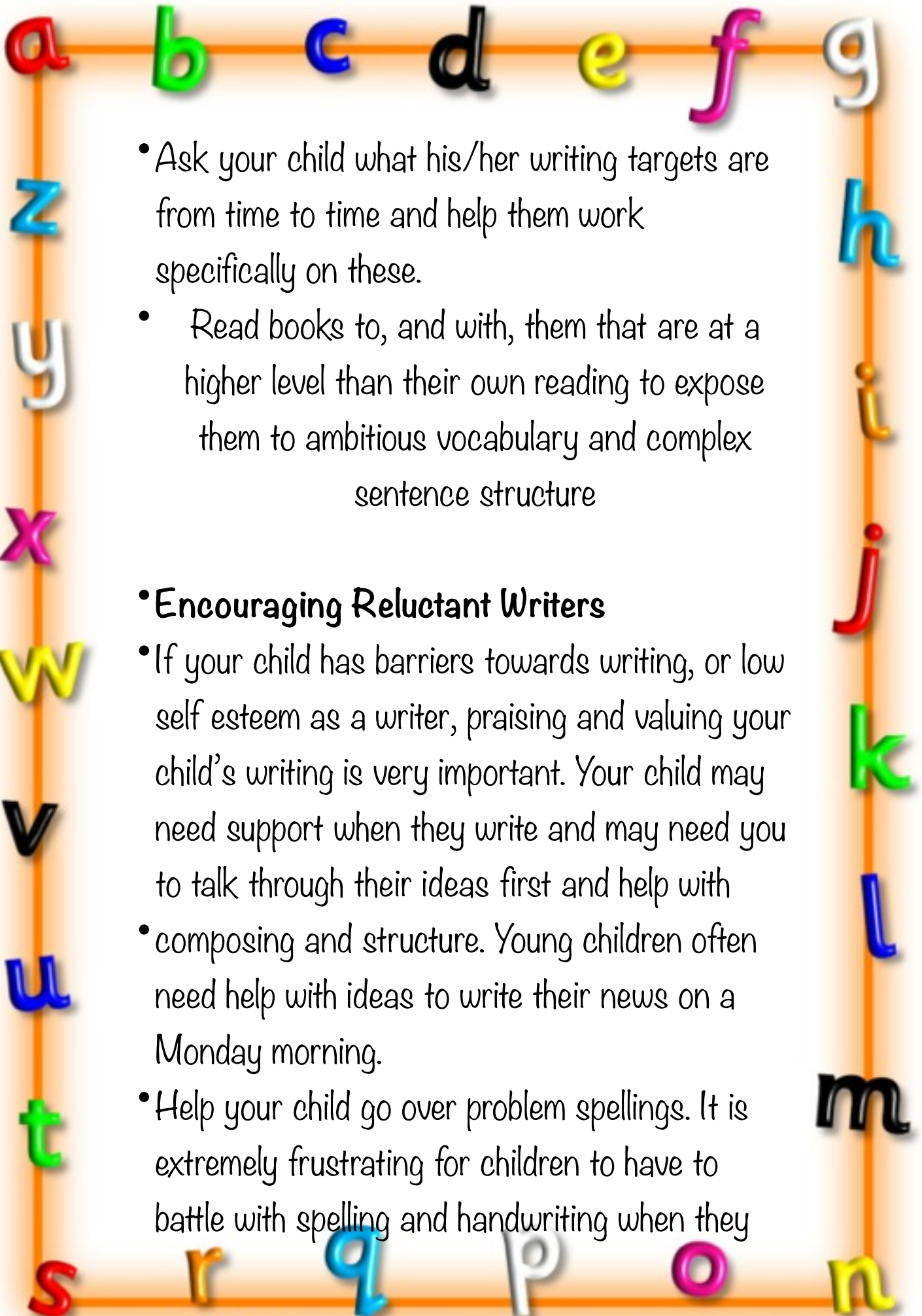
- Play 'I Spy' and 'Hangman' which encourage use of sounds and spellings.
- Encourage your child to learn weekly spellings and phonic group spellings. Write the spelling in sentences with accurate punctuation and practise high frequency words and handwriting.
- Also ensure your child completes homework on time, take an interest in what they are doing, and praise effort.

### **Confident Writers**

- Help your child write a letter to their favourite author. Details can be found on the internet.
- As with early writers be aware of occasions when children can be involved in writing – shopping lists, cards, phone messages, notes to friends, invitations to family occasions, emailing friends, blogging, texting (be aware of e-safety).



- Write information pages or booklets about a hobby or something they find interesting e.g. dinosaurs, class topics, sports stars etc. Illustrate and label. Encourage use of paragraphs for blocks of information.
- Write postcards from holidays and record holiday events in a diary that can be shared with friends or family.
- Provide your child with a comfortable place to work and exciting writing materials. A dictionary or spell check on a computer would also be useful.
- Let your child see you being a model writer but also let them see that you are not perfect!
- Checking, making changes and editing what you write are a natural part of writing.
- After your child has produced written homework ask them to proof read their work for accuracy. After they have done this, have a look at the piece yourself.



- Ask your child what his/her writing targets are from time to time and help them work specifically on these.
- Read books to, and with, them that are at a higher level than their own reading to expose them to ambitious vocabulary and complex sentence structure

### • Encouraging Reluctant Writers

- If your child has barriers towards writing, or low self esteem as a writer, praising and valuing your child's writing is very important. Your child may need support when they write and may need you to talk through their ideas first and help with
- composing and structure. Young children often need help with ideas to write their news on a Monday morning.
- Help your child go over problem spellings. It is extremely frustrating for children to have to battle with spelling and handwriting when they



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want to get their ideas down on paper. Knowing high frequency spellings will aid the flow of writing and enable the use of a vocabulary rich language. (Consider being trapped into writing 'big' when you really wanted to write 'enormous'). Encourage children to sound out and have a go at more tricky words or give them the spellings.

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Remember that writing does not have to be lengthy or boring!

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Writing for real purposes is more meaningful and rewarding for children and creates a fun and interesting way for children to develop their writing skills.

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## BASIC WRITING SKILLS

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**YEAR 1 – using ‘and’.** This sentence uses the word ‘and’ to extend the sentence so more information/detail can be given

**EXAMPLE** – The boy played with his toy car and had lots of fun.

### YEAR 1 – questions

This sentence includes a question mark to indicate a question

**EXAMPLE** – Where are you going?

**PLUS** – application of phonics, using finger spaces, capital letters and full stops, exclamation marks within writing

### YEAR 2 – using adjectives

This sentence has **two adjectives** which are placed **before** the **first noun** in the sentence

**EXAMPLE** – It was an **old, creepy** house with a garden

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The man wore an **oversized, dirty rain** jacket.

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## YEAR 2 – BUT or BECAUSE

This is a sentence that includes **BUT** or **BECAUSE**.

It extends the sentence so more information/detail  
can be given.

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EXAMPLE – I wanted to but the sweets because I  
was hungry.

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PLUS – applying the correct spelling pattern,  
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## Developing good handwriting techniques

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Why is it important that my child has a good  
pencil/pen grip?

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Children are taught to develop a fluent and consistent style of handwriting. We ensure that children have regular opportunities to practise holding their pencil/pen correctly and to develop letter formation (year 1) and joins between letters (year 2), in order that they can develop their own individual fluent style of handwriting.

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The way a child grips the pencil/pen will affect the quality, speed and flow of their handwriting and it is very important that every child is able to write nearly and legibly.

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**What is the correct technique for holding a pencil/pen correctly?**

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If you have difficulty reading your child's handwriting, the following steps can be taught to

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ensure the 3 finger grip is used for holding a pen or pencil correctly:

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- The pen or pencil should be held with the middle finger resting underneath the pencil and the first finger and thumb on top – this is called a ‘tripod grip’ (see picture below)

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- The pen or pencil should be held about one to three centimetres from the writing tip, so that there is control over its movement.

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- The grip should be relaxed, without pressing too hard on the page

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- Ideally, your child should be sitting upright, not hunched over paper. It is also helpful to angle the piece of paper to the right or left, depending on which hand your child is using.

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- The hand should be holding the pencil at an angle of about 60 degrees

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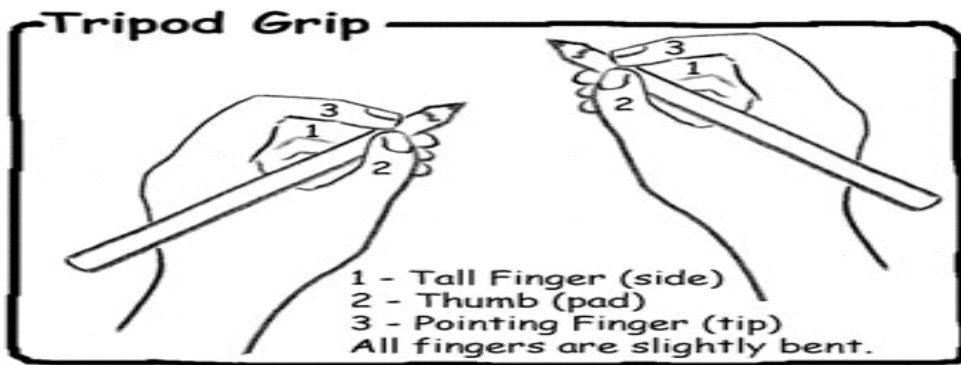
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- The 'non writing' hand should be used to hold the

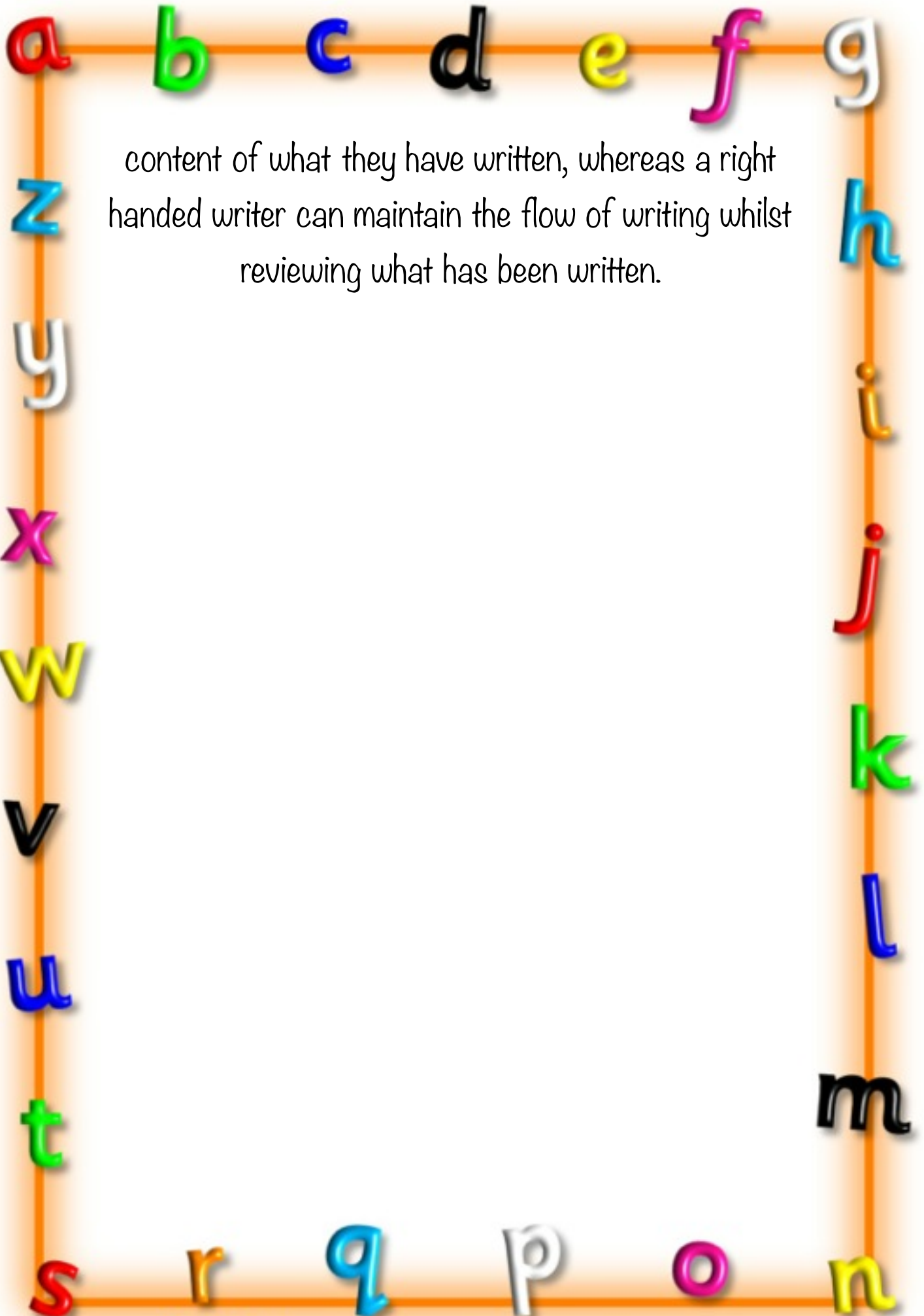


paper still, so the writing arm is free to move.

Please note that these steps are only a suggested guide. If your child has already established their own neat style of handwriting using their preferred pen grip, there is no need for them to make any changes.

### What if my child is left handed?

If your child is left handed they may require a little extra support to develop the techniques needed to compensate for the fact that they must push rather than pull it (like a right handed person) Also, if the hand covers what has been written the left-handed writer will have to stop more frequently to review the



content of what they have written, whereas a right handed writer can maintain the flow of writing whilst reviewing what has been written.