

Sequence and Narrative

Narrative: Understanding and being able to use narrative concepts e.g. 'Who', 'Where', 'When', 'What happened'.

Sequence: Understanding and being able to use sequencing concepts. e.g. 'First', 'Next', 'Then', 'After that', 'Lastly/ Finally' etc.

Part 1: Developing Narrative Concepts

To enable children to effectively retell a narrative in sequence and create their own narrative sequences, children need to develop the narrative concepts. Concepts such as the 'Who?', 'Where?', 'When?' and 'What happened?' within narrative, as well as the sequencing concepts such as 'First', 'Next', 'Then', 'After that' and 'Last/ Finally', need to be explicitly taught.

Who? → Where? → When? → What happened?

When developing narrative with children, each of the concepts should be initially introduced. The order of these concepts, as recommended by Speech and Language Therapists:

1. **Who?** – Who is in the story?
2. **Where?** – Where is the story taking place?
3. **When?** – When is the story taking place?
4. **What happened?** – What has happened in the story?

Following individual introduction, the application of these concepts can be developed through sharing stories, identifying the 'Who', 'Where', 'When' and 'What happened' in a story'.

Example introduction of 'Who?' concept:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Fill a bag with different characters; figures, photographs and pictures.
- ❖ **Step 2:** Share that you're going to learn about the word 'who'. Use an action/sign for 'who', e.g. index finger turning in the air. You can also use the yellow 'Who?' card.
- ❖ **Step 3:** Adult to take one of the character's out of the feely bag and model: e.g. 'I wonder who (using the action/sign and yellow card) this is.' Pause and wait to allow the children to share the 'who'. If this isn't generated after the pause and wait model, 'This is a doctor.'
- ❖ **Step 4:** Pass the bag around for the children to select another character, supporting the modelling of 'who' someone/ something is in the story.



Who?

Example introduction of 'Where?' concept:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Fill a bag with pictures of places which are familiar to the children.
- ❖ **Step 2:** Share that you're going to learn about the word 'where'. Use an action/sign for 'where', e.g. both palms held out in front of you, moving in a cyclical outwards motion. You can also use the green '**Where?**' card.
- ❖ **Step 3:** Adult to take one of the pictures out of the feely bag and model: e.g. 'I wonder where (using the action/sign and green card) this might be.' Pause and wait to allow the children to share the 'where'. If this isn't generated after the pause and wait model, 'This is the canteen where we eat our lunch.'
- ❖ **Step 4:** Pass the bag around for the children to select another picture, supporting through the modelling of 'where' it is.

Where?

Example introduction of 'When?' concept:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Fill a bag with objects which are used at specific times of the day such as cereal, a lunchbox and a pillow.
 - ❖ **Step 2:** Share that you're going to learn about the word 'when'. Use an action/sign for 'when', e.g. raise your hand to your cheek, tapping your fingers on your cheek. You can also use the orange '**When?**' card.
 - ❖ **Step 3:** Adult to take one of the objects out of the bag and model: e.g. 'This is a box of cereal. I wonder when (using the action/sign and orange card) we might eat cereal.' Pause and wait to allow the children to share the 'when'. If this isn't generated after the pause and wait model, 'We might have cereal in the morning for our breakfast.'
 - ❖ **Step 4:** Pass the bag around for the children to select another picture, supporting through the modelling of 'when' you may use them.
- * The 'when' may be time of the day, time of the year, an event, special occasion etc.

When?

Example introduction of 'What happened?' concept:

- ❖ **Step 1:** Fill a bag with pictures of different events of something happening, e.g. someone falling out of a tree.
- ❖ **Step 2:** Share that you're going to learn about the phrase 'what happened'. Use an action/sign for 'what', e.g. index finger in the air moving from left to right. You can also use the blue '**What happened?**' card.
- ❖ **Step 3:** Adult to take one of the pictures out of the bag and model: e.g. 'I wonder who (using the action/sign and yellow card) this is. This is a bear.' Share: e.g. 'I wonder what happened (using the action/sign and blue card) to the bear...' Pause and wait to allow the children to share what may have happened. If this isn't generated after the pause and wait model, e.g. 'The bear fell out of the tree'.
- ❖ **Step 4:** Pass the bag around for the children to select their own picture. The adult can then prompt the children to share 'what happened' in their picture, e.g. 'Oh, look a fox. I wonder what's happened to the fox...'

What happened?

Using 'Who', 'Where', 'When' and 'What happened' to generate sentences

Once each of the individual concepts have been introduced, you can use 'Who', 'Where', and 'When' cards, [e.g. Character, Object, Setting and Time cards from TES*](#), to support children in developing sentences using the 'Who', 'Where' and 'When' concepts. Together, you can generate what happens to the character.

** use cards which use non-gendered vocabulary, e.g. police officer instead of 'police man' or 'police woman'.*

- ❖ **Step 1:** Have a selection of 'Who', 'Where' and 'When' cards available.
- ❖ **Step 2:** Select a 'Who' card and place on the yellow story card, e.g. a gymnast
- ❖ **Step 3:** Select a 'Where' card and place on the green story card, e.g. the beach
- ❖ **Step 4:** Select a 'When' card and place on the orange story card, e.g. in the morning



- ❖ **Step 5:** Share the 'Who', 'Where' and 'When', e.g. 'A gymnast was at the beach in the morning...' Pause and wait for the children to generate what happened. If they don't, after the pause, adult can model: '... building a sandcastle. A gymnast was at the beach in the morning building a sandcastle'. You could use a picture card or drawing to demonstrate the 'what happened'.
- ❖ **Step 6:** Generate alternative 'What happened' actions with the children. The structure of the sentence should be modelled each time, e.g. 'A gymnast was at the beach in the morning and got stung by a jellyfish.'



Once children are familiar with the generation of sentences using 'Who', 'Where', 'When' and 'What happened', demonstrate how you can change the order of these concepts when generating sentences, e.g. 'Early in the morning, the gymnast was at the beach building a sandcastle.'

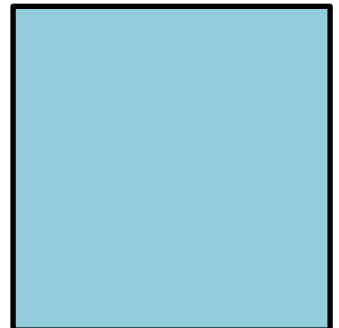
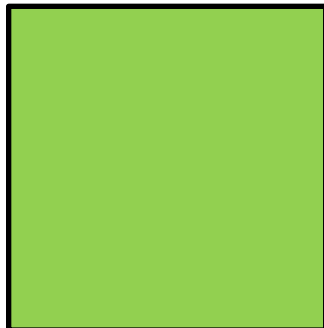
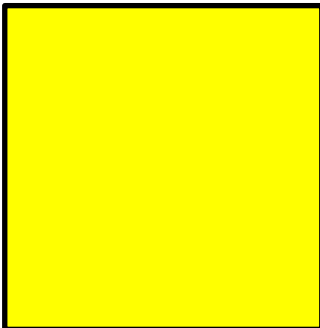
Once children are familiar with the narrative concepts of 'Who', 'Where', 'When' and 'What happened' concepts, creation of narrative can be done using any order of these concepts.

Who?

Where?

When?

**What
happened?**



The ‘Who? → Where? → When? → What happened?’ cards and strip can be used to support the use of each of the concepts.

Sequence and Narrative

Narrative: Understanding and being able to use narrative concepts e.g. ‘Who’, ‘Where’, ‘When’, ‘What happened’.

Sequence: Understanding and being able to use sequencing concepts. e.g. ‘First’, ‘Next’, ‘Then’, ‘After that’, ‘Lastly/ Finally’ etc.

Part 2: Developing Sequencing Concepts

To enable children to effectively retell a narrative in sequence and create their own narrative sequences, children need to develop the narrative concepts. Concepts such as the ‘Who?’, ‘Where?’, ‘When?’ and ‘What happened?’ within narrative, as well as the sequencing concepts such as ‘First’, ‘Next’, ‘Then’, ‘After that’ and ‘Last/ Finally’, need to be explicitly taught.

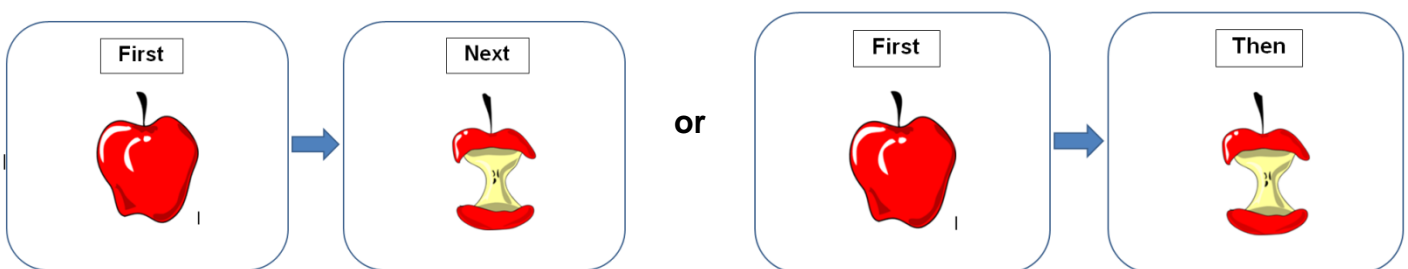
First → Next → Then → After that → Last/ Finally

Once children are familiar with the narrative concepts of ‘Who? → Where? → When? → What happened?’ sequencing concepts should be developed with children. The order of these concepts, as recommended by Speech and Language Therapists:

1. First
2. Next
3. Then
4. After that
5. Last/ Finally.

These would initially be developed in two part sequences, e.g. ‘First’ → ‘Next’ or ‘First’ → ‘Then’, before building sequences of more than two parts. The sequencing concept structures (below) can be used to support the introduction of sequencing concepts.

Initially sequencing concepts can be developed with things which the children have done starting with two part sequences and progressing, e.g. eating an apple at snack time:



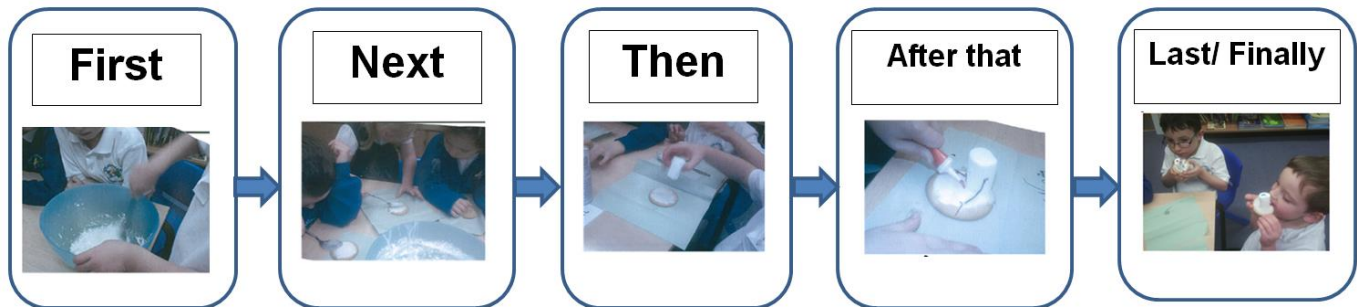
The adult can model (using photographs or pictures):

‘First we have an apple, next/ then ...’ Pause and wait for children to generate what happened next/then. If they don’t after the pause, adult can model, ‘... someone has eaten it’.

Oral Language

Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

In this example the children have iced biscuits, taking photographs of each stage. The children then used the photographs to retell each part of the recipe, in order.



The adult can model (using photographs or pictures):

At each stage the adult can pause and wait to allow children to share the next part of the sequence.

'First I mixed the icing sugar and the water in the bowl.'

'Next I spread the icing on my biscuit.'

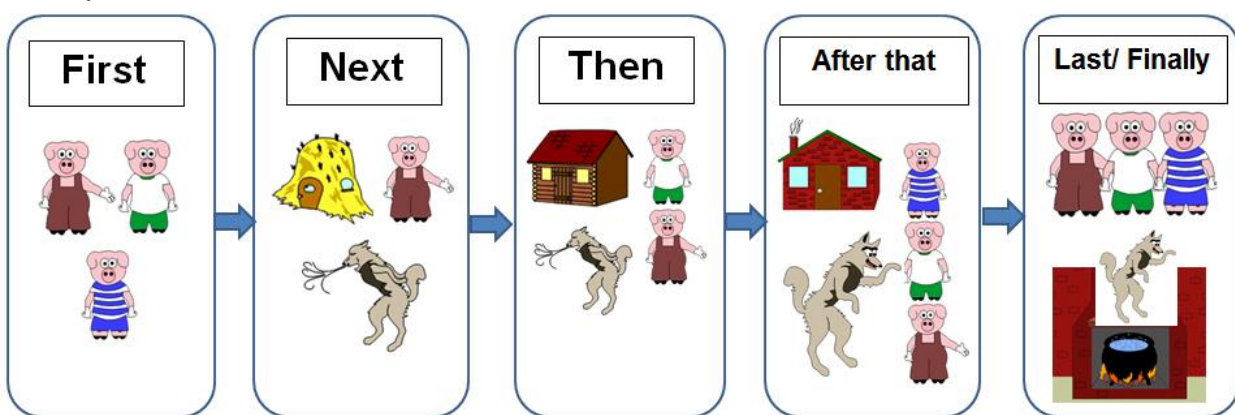
'Then I stuck the marshmallow on top of my biscuit.'

'After that I decorated my biscuit with the red icing.'

'Finally I ate my biscuit. It was yummy!'

Once children have had the opportunity to develop their sequencing skills within activities which they have been part of, this can be developed through retelling stories you've shared together using sequencing concepts.

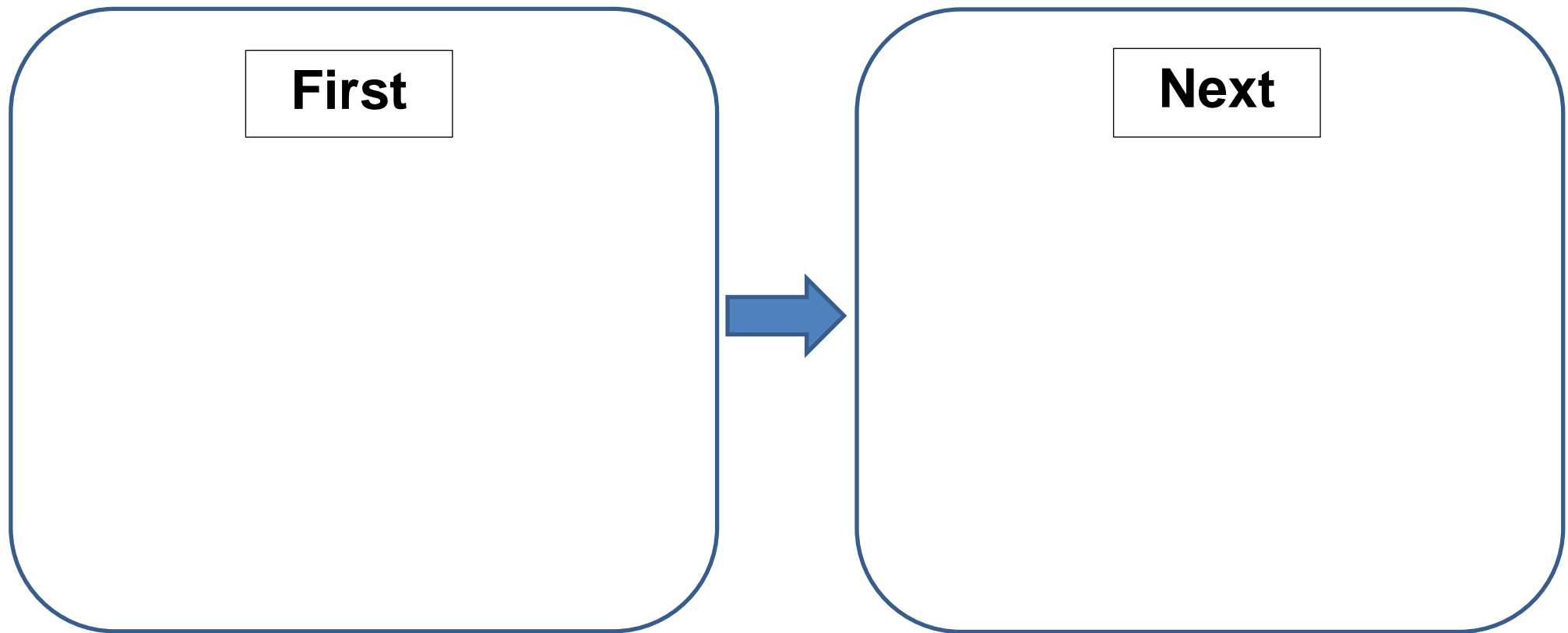
In this example the sequencing concepts have been developed by using visuals of the key events within a story which the children are familiar with. In this example images represent key events within 'The Three Little Pigs'. The adult first models the sequencing concepts orally describing the sequence of the images using the **First → Next etc.** language. Once this is modelled, children can develop their independent retell of familiar stories using pictures to support the sequencing concepts.



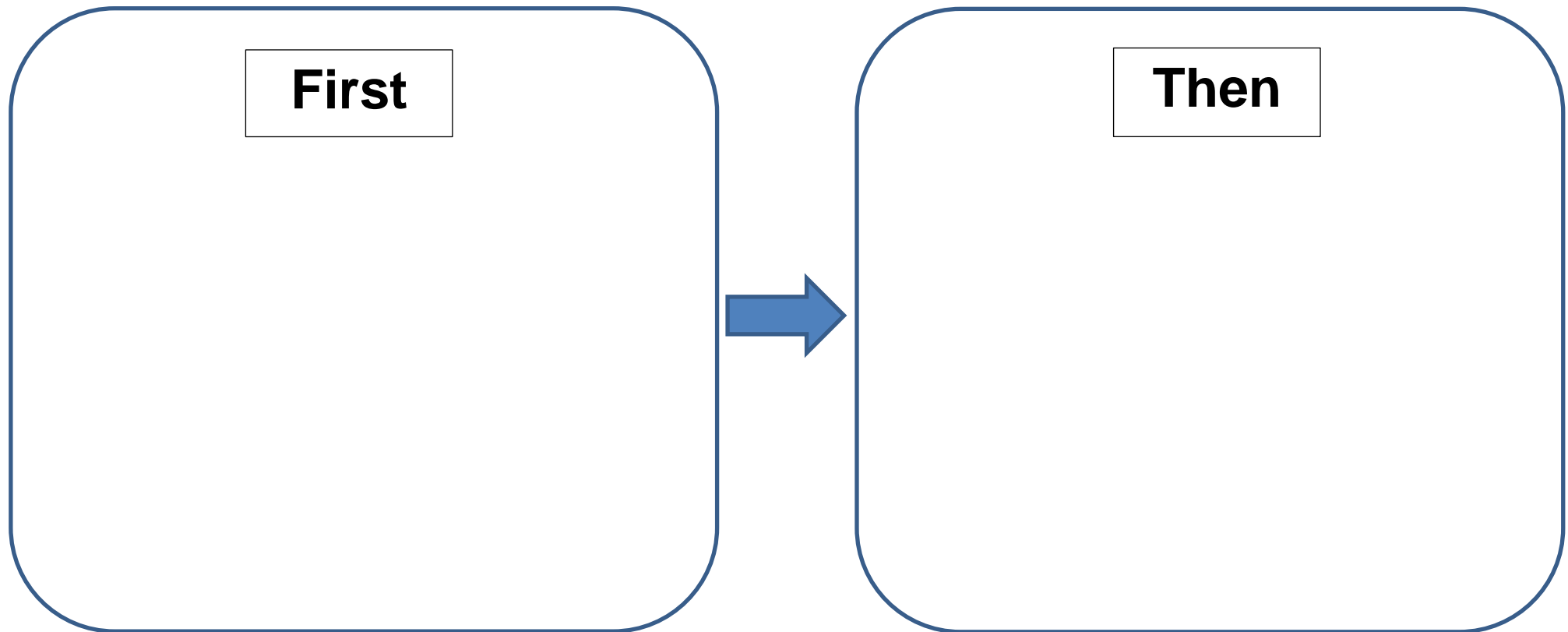
Once children are familiar with the sequencing concepts, they can use these to generate their own sequences. The following templates can be used with children and young people to:

- model the sequencing concepts using scenarios they've been part of/ stories they've read
- support them in using the sequencing concepts to generate their own sequences as a planning tool to record their own texts which they share orally and/or in written form.

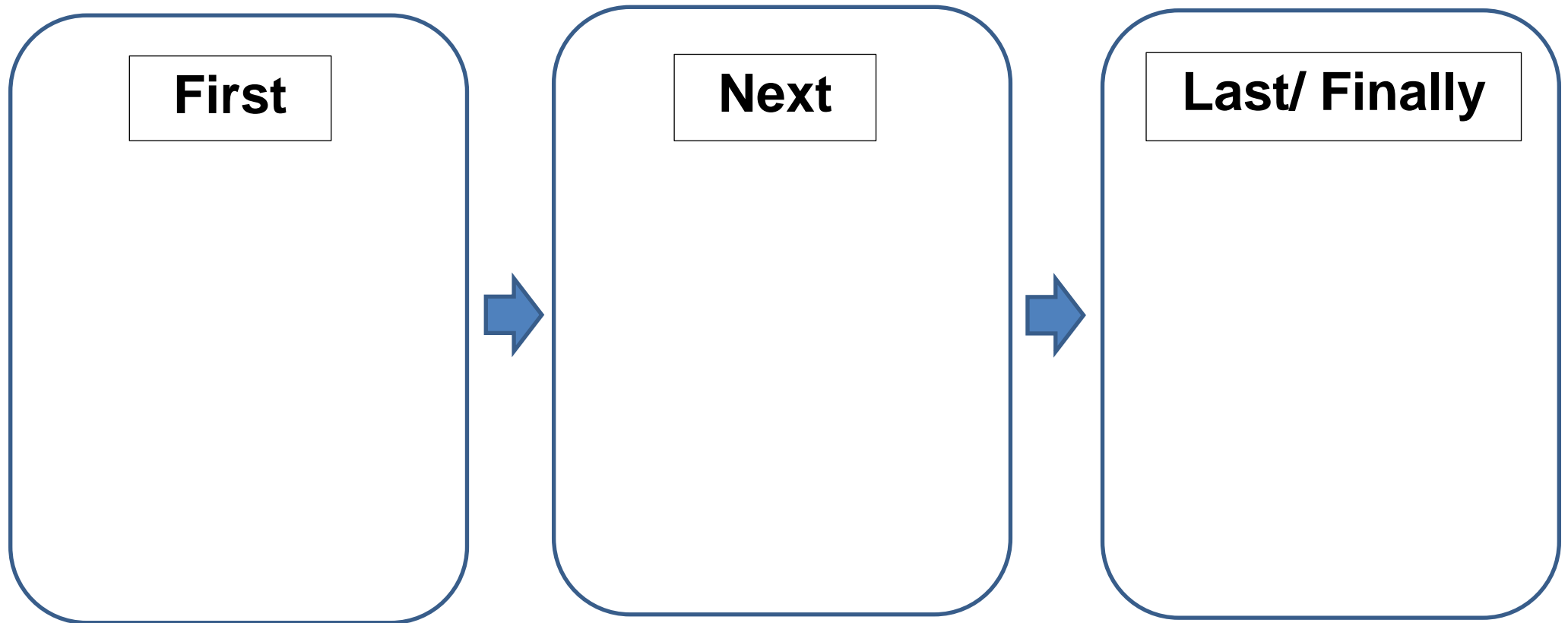
There are no ages attached to the templates; professional judgement should be based on the child's stage of development.



The 'First' → 'Next' structure can be used alongside visuals to develop the terms when sharing texts or creating texts using 'Who?' → 'Where?' → 'When?' → 'What happened?'.

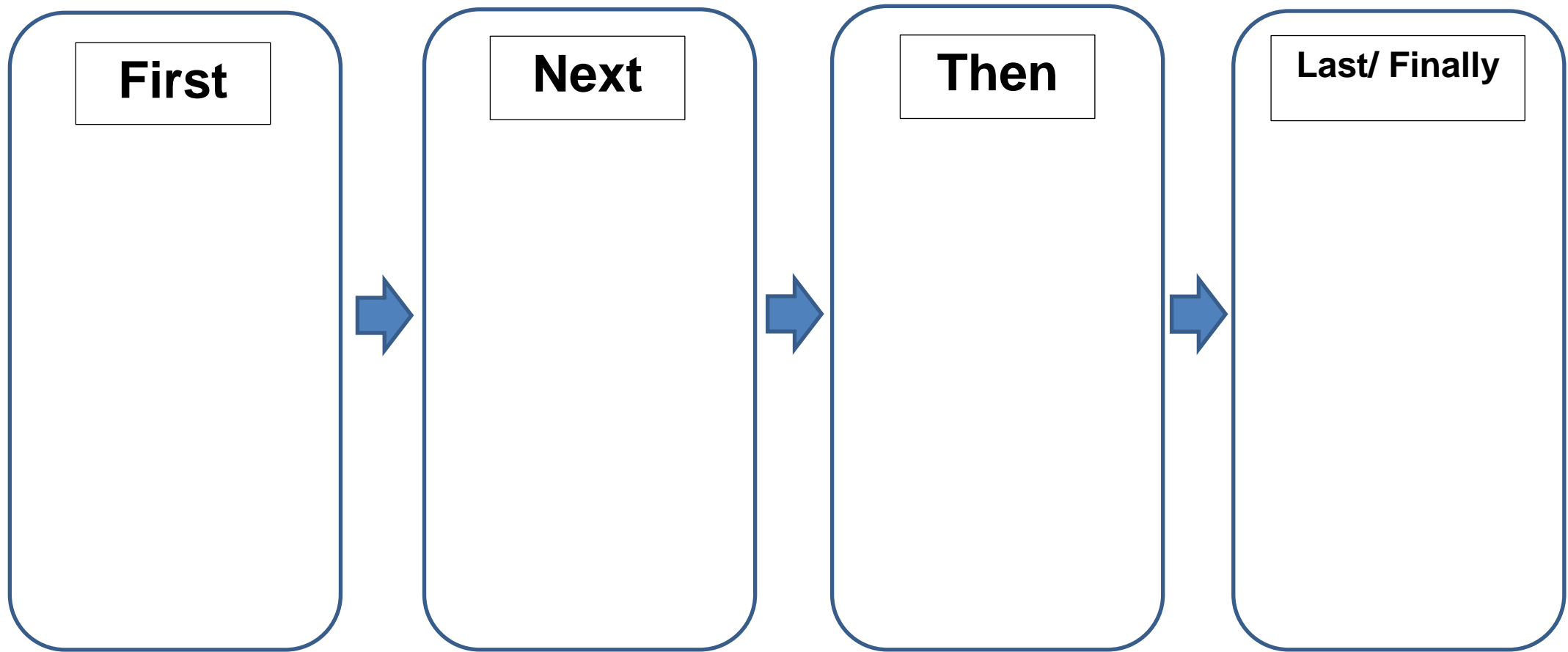


The ‘First’ → ‘Then’ structure can be used as an alternative to ‘First’ → ‘Next’ alongside visuals to develop the terms when sharing texts or creating texts using ‘Who?’ → ‘Where?’ → ‘When?’ → ‘What happened?’.



The ‘First’ → ‘Next’ → ‘Last/ Finally’ structure can be used alongside visuals to develop the terms when sharing texts or creating texts using ‘Who?’ → ‘Where?’ → ‘When?’ → ‘What happened?’.

Oral Language Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities



The 'First' → 'Next' → 'Then' → 'Last/ Finally' structure can be used alongside visuals to develop the terms when sharing texts or creating texts using 'Who?' → 'Where?' → 'When?' → 'What happened?'.

Oral Language Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

First

Next

Then

After that

Last/ Finally

The ‘First’ → ‘Next’ → ‘Then’ → ‘After that’ → ‘Last/ Finally’ structure can be used alongside visuals to develop the terms when sharing texts or creating texts using ‘Who?’ → ‘Where?’ → ‘When?’ → ‘What happened?’.

Oral Language

Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

Who?	Where?	When?
What happened?		
Problem/ Event/ Scenario		Solution/ End

The narrative and sequencing concept grid can be used to plan texts using the narrative and sequencing concepts. (colour)

Oral Language

Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

Who?	Where?	When?
What happened?		
Problem/ Event/ Scenario	Solution/ End	

The narrative and sequencing concept grid can be used to plan texts using the narrative and sequencing concepts. (black and white)

Oral Language

Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

Who?	Where?	When?
Descriptive language:	Descriptive language:	Descriptive language:
What happened?		
Problem/ Event/ Scenario		Solution/ End

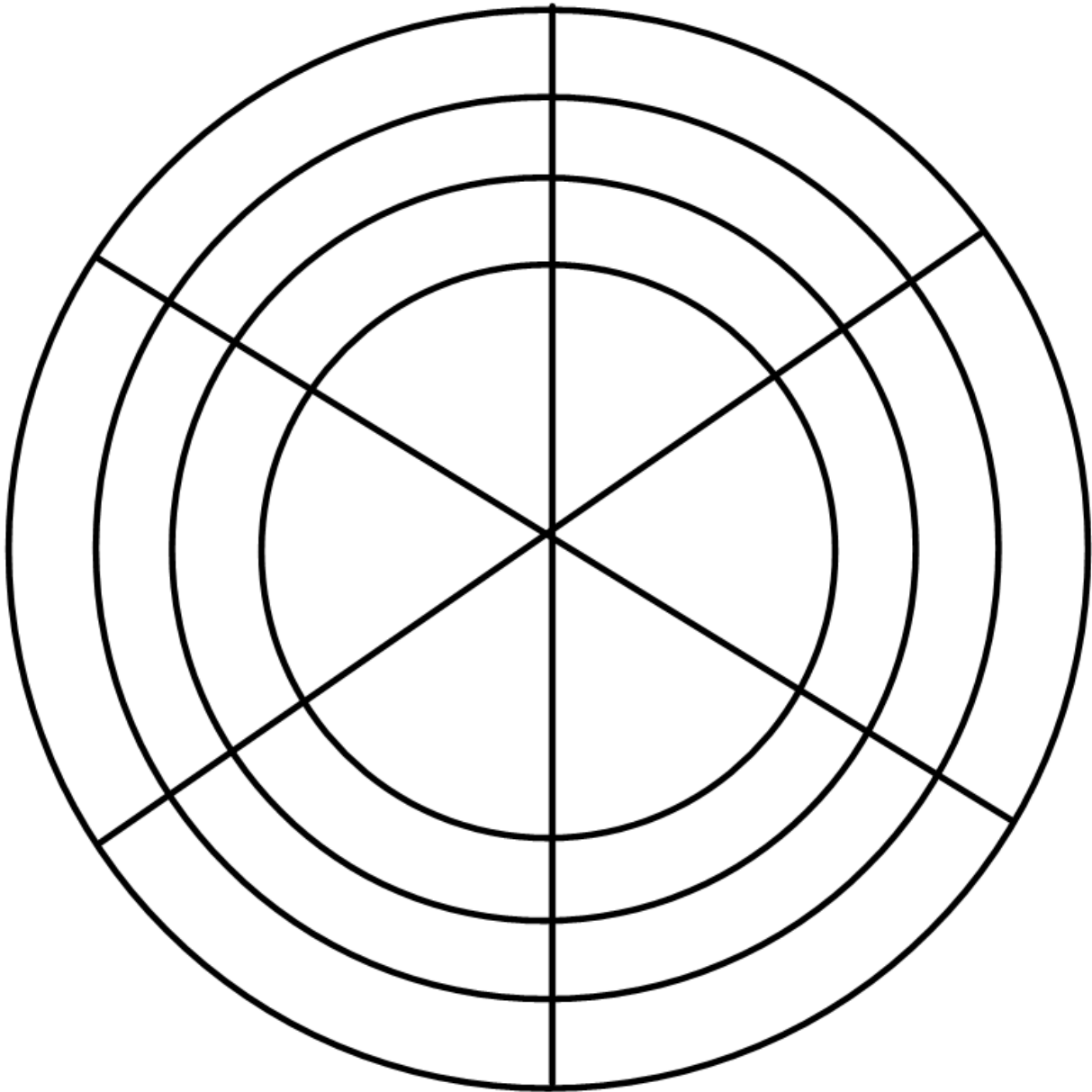
The narrative and sequencing concept grid, with descriptive language linked to ‘Who’, ‘Where’ and ‘When’, can be used to plan texts using the narrative and sequencing concepts. (colour)

Oral Language

Sequence and Narrative – Classroom Activities

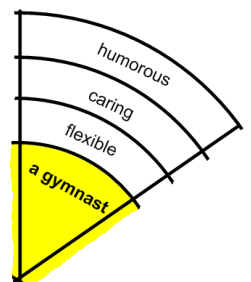
Who?	Where?	When?
Descriptive language:	Descriptive language:	Descriptive language:
What happened?		
Problem/ Event/ Scenario	Solution/ End	

The narrative and sequencing concept grid, with descriptive language linked to ‘Who’, ‘Where’ and ‘When’, can be used to plan texts using the narrative and sequencing concepts. (black and white)



This template can be used to as a plan for descriptive language when developing the narrative and sequencing concepts.

e.g. When developing the narrative concept of 'Who', children place the names of their characters (the who) in the inner segments. In the outer segments they then use vocabulary to describe the character. This could be used to analyse characters in a text which they have read, or to describe characters which they have created. This could be used for the concept of describing the 'Where', 'When' and the 'What happened'.

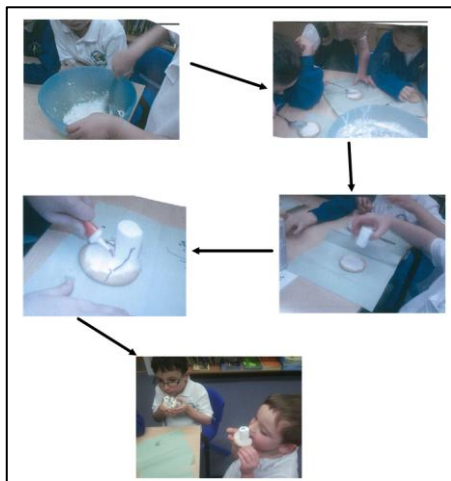
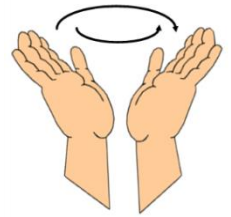


The Talk for Writing approach ©

The [Talk for Writing](#)© approach, developed by Pie Corbett, supports children's language development through repetition which connects a text's narrative to actions, props and visuals. The approach can be used to support oral language development which underpins the story making process, leading into children's writing. The principles can be applied to fiction and non-fiction texts.

Stage 1: Imitation – becoming familiar with a text

1. Select a text with a repetitive structure, e.g. 'The Little Red Hen', which will support the skills of imitation through repetition. Read this text a number of times with the children.
2. Begin to retell the text with actions/ signs, using the actions/ signs to support each of the key events within the text, e.g. 'Once upon a time' could be acting out opening and closing a book. ***If you're using Makaton or British Sign Language within your environment, it is recommended that you use these signs.*** Retell the text a number of times using the actions.
3. Create a visual map of the text using visuals and/ or props. Depending on the children's stage of development this can be co-constructed with the children, or constructed by the children individually or in small groups. This should be a large map which the children contribute to. Each action/ sign should have a correlating visual/ prop, e.g. 'Once upon a time' could be a picture of a book. Retell the text a number of times using the actions and visuals/ props. Children can develop their retell skills independently, in pairs and small groups using the story-map/ text-map and actions/signs. Display the map in an area where children can access this independently.



Text-map – Icing Biscuits

In this example the children have iced biscuits, taking photographs of each stage. The children then used the photographs to retell each part of the recipe, in order.



Story-map – 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'

In this example the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' has been used as the stimulus, using visuals for each key event.

Stage 2: Innovation – making changes to a familiar text:

When children begin to innovate, substitutions are the simplest form of innovation which children can be supported to make. As children's narrative skills develop, alterations can become increasingly ambitious, with independent innovations such as addition, alteration, change of viewpoint and reusing the basic story pattern.

Innovation: A focus on substitution

Once children are familiar and confident with retelling a text using the stages within imitation, changes can be made to aspects of the text to begin their own independent applications. This would be modelled initially before being developed in groups and independently. There are a number of innovations which can be made. Substitution is a simple innovation which can be made, using the steps below.

1. Using the familiar text from **Stage 1: Imitation**, make substitutions to the text e.g. instead of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' it may be 'Nessie and the three Whales', or instead of making porridge the bears may have made soup. Depending on the children's stage of development, you may wish to focus on one simple substitution, e.g. the 'who' of the main character, or a number of substitutions, e.g. the 'who' of the characters and the 'where' this took place.
2. For each of the changes, a new visual/ prop should be used as well as a new action/ sign. In the example below the porridge has been changed to soup. In the example below a sticky note has been placed on top of the substitution and a new image drawn on top. This allows for any number of changes to be made, following the sequential structure of the familiar text developed in the imitation stage.



3. Retell the story with substitution a number of times using the visuals/ props and actions/ signs.

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