

What it looks like in practice

Eight routines from UK and US listens, 16 September 2024 to 16 September 2026. Each row is a claim, labelled reported practice, practitioner claim or objection. The evidence column is the EEF guidance (second edition, November 2025, fetched 16 Sep 2026), the Toolkit (May 2025), or a named page, not the post. UK and US stay on the row. The live article already covers Zimmerman's forethought phase, micro-tasking and staffroom language. These rows add the first mark, talk-then-write, the writing-frame strip, and the US half-page.

ROUTINE	TEACHER MOVE	WHAT YOU WOULD NOTICE	WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS	REPORTED BY
The first mark is the example ● reported practice	UK: do not take the work in until they have read the instruction and ticked the example. The first visible move is a mark on the model, not a heading.	Fewer pieces handed back unread. A tick or underline on the example before any writing of their own.	EEF guidance, second edition (Nov 2025), recommendation 2: explicitly teach how to plan, monitor and evaluate, on this task, not as a thinking lesson. A tweet is not a trial of handing work back.	@DouglasRob0 8 Sep 2026 · UK "It's so exhausting having to hand back pieces of work because the kid hasn't listened, hasn't read the instructions and hasn't looked at the examples." @DouglasRob0 on X
Talk, then write ● reported practice	UK primary: the labelled reluctant writer speaks the story first. The page comes after the talk, not instead of it.	A spoken draft in the chair before a sentence on the page. Not a silent freeze on a blank book.	EEF guidance, recommendation 4: promote metacognitive talk. Town End Research School (fetched 16 Sep 2026) names oral rehearsal as a writing start. Not a trial of this classroom.	@SizzlesMum 27 Mar 2026 · UK "Oft found that many 'labelled' as 'reluctant writers' were imaginative story weavers... Unleashing that verbal talent oft led to them wanting to write!" @SizzlesMum on X
Writing-frame strips ● reported practice	Northern Ireland geography, Year 9 (Year 8 in England): a strip that holds the first sentences of an extended write. Fade it. Do not leave it on for ever.	A paper strip on the desk, then a paragraph that uses it. The photographed strips are redrawn elsewhere, not republished.	EEF guidance, recommendation 6: guided practice, then the support comes off. @gotpenmustwrite, on the same UK window: scaffolding works if you transition. Unverified whether frames raise quality or only get a first sentence down.	@TeachWithAlice 8 Feb 2026 · UK "I find they are the best way to get my reluctant Y9s (Y8 in England) to do extended writing"

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Chunk, then oral rehearsal ● reported practice	UK Research School: break the write, rehearse it aloud, put a sentence starter on the desk because working memory overloads at the start. US rooms keep the smaller first box; they do not need the Research School vocabulary.	A short first chunk on the board. Someone saying the sentence before they write it.	Stella Jones, Town End, 15 May 2025 (fetched): skilled writers plan, focus and self-monitor; without that, they have ideas and no sequence. Diamond (2013, DOI 10.1146/annurev-psych-113011-143750): working memory is a core executive function. EEF Toolkit (May 2025): +8 months is a mean across 355 studies and can be hard to realise. Not a trial of this blog.	@TownEndResearch 9 Jun 2025 · UK "Blog 1 @stelljo1 explores how executive function supports writing." @TownEndResearch on X Town End blog, 15 May 2025
Content before the blank page ● reported practice	US literacy intervention: they write when they have something to say. UK rooms already have this as talk-then-write; the US variant is a knowledge-rich first paragraph, not a pep talk.	Every learner producing a paragraph after a content-heavy lesson. Not a starter on a cold prompt.	EEF Toolkit: strategies belong on challenging curriculum tasks, not as a bolt-on. Zimmerman (2002, DOI 10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2): forethought includes goal setting and strategic planning. A tweet is not a trial of Fishtank ELA.	@EvidentlyR 2 Sep 2026 · US "Getting students to start writing has been one of our biggest challenges - but bc they had content to write about, they all did it! No work avoidance." @EvidentlyR on X
Half the page ● reported practice	US K-5 ESL: cut the composition book and the lined sticky note in half so the page looks startable. UK rooms can do the same with a half-page photocopy. One named teacher in the linked article; not shown as widespread.	A physically smaller writing space. A first sentence that fills the box. The photographs are redrawn elsewhere.	WeAreTeachers / Dr Tonia Randle, 12 Mar 2025 (fetched): smaller writing spaces make the task seem less daunting. EEF guidance, recommendation 5: do not overload cognitive capacity when a new strategy is being applied. Not a trial. Unverified beyond this classroom.	@PeerTutoring 17 Mar 2025 · US "To reduce the anxiety of filling a whole blank page, this teacher cuts student composition notebooks and large lined sticky notes in half." @PeerTutoring on X WeAreTeachers, 12 Mar 2025
Optional sentence stems ● reported practice	US ELA and STEAM: the same assignment, with a stem available. Not compulsory. UK listen found no teacher pairing "sentence starters"	A stem on some desks, not all. A first clause filled in. Some learners sitting without it if it is only optional.	EEF guidance, recommendation 3: modelled thinking and worked examples. Houston Chronicle, 12 Aug 2026 (fetched): a stem will not	@PaigeACrain 18 Apr 2026 · US

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	with avoidance; the US row is the variant.		rescue a senior who cannot yet encode four words. That is a literacy floor, not a planning trick. Country of @NShrubs unverified.	"With writing, some students are provided with the same assignment with sentence starters or the ability to use text to speech." @PaigeACrain on X
The scaffold that never comes off ● objection	The objection is that scaffolding replaces the building. The reply on the same thread is that it works if you fade it. Put both on the page.	A frame still on the desk in week six. Or a frame that has gone, and a first sentence that remains.	EEF guidance, recommendation 6: withdraw support as they become proficient. The replies disagree, which is the finding. @gotpenmustwrite: "Scaffolding can work - I've used it frequently - but key is transitioning to independent writing..." (7 Sep 2026, UK).	@JohnBaldLangLit 7 Sep 2026 · UK "Scaffolding in education leaves the learner to collapse once it is removed." @JohnBaldLangLit on X
What was not found. UK listen, 34 evidenced posts, 47 searches, and US listen, 33 evidenced posts, 72 searches, 16 Sep 2024 to 16 Sep 2026: no ten-minute pencil-sharpening stall as a lesson scene; no SENCO posting a now-and-next card that unstuck a start (vendor apps only); no UK classroom "task planner" or "first three steps" as a named routine; no US special education teacher posting that a first-then card worked; no pairing of "sentence starters" with avoidance in the UK window; no Ofsted or KS2 plus blank-page start.				

Every quote is verbatim from a named account. A tweet is a claim. The EEF +8 months figure is the Toolkit mean (May 2025, 355 studies) and the guidance recs are the November 2025 second edition, fetched the same day. Country of @NShrubs is unverified. Nothing here is a trial of the routine.