**Fundamental Skills English Audit**

Initial Teacher Education providers are required by the DfE to quality assure the English and Mathematics skills of all trainees, and we can only award qualified teacher status to trainees who consistently meet the expected standards. With regards to English, the DfE note that:

1. Speaking, listening and communicating are fundamental to a teacher’s role. Teachers should use standard English grammar, clear pronunciation and vocabulary relevant to the situation to convey instructions, questions, information, concepts and ideas with clarity. Teachers should read fluently and with good understanding.
2. Writing by teachers will be seen by colleagues, pupils and parents and, as such, it is important that a teacher’s writing reflects the high standards of accuracy their professional role demands. They should write clearly, accurately, legibly and coherently using correct spelling and punctuation.

See [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria/initial-teacher-training-itt-criteria-and-supporting-advice](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fgovernment%2Fpublications%2Finitial-teacher-training-criteria%2Finitial-teacher-training-itt-criteria-and-supporting-advice&data=02%7C01%7CA.M.Watson%40exeter.ac.uk%7C6c60171bad3341a6700908d7af11503f%7C912a5d77fb984eeeaf321334d8f04a53%7C0%7C0%7C637170361203280824&sdata=U4z%2BIOIcdnEdGV3bUY8yR2DCAyRLQsI0UiavOP136kk%3D&reserved=0)

While we are required to assure these skills, the DfE also make clear that “it is the trainee’s responsibility to secure Fundamental English and mathematics”. This audit is designed to help you to make a start on that process.

**You should:**

1. Begin by having a go at the ‘spot the mistakes’ task which asks you to identify common errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2. Review the answers, and then use this (and your wider knowledge) to identify areas of relative confidence or weakness, using the table provided.
3. Review your academic reading skills using the two articles linked to on page 5.
4. Use the suggested resources to work on your target areas before the course begins.

If you have specific learning needs relating to spelling, punctuation or grammar, please don’t panic. You need to show competence in how you use written and spoken English as a teacher, but this won’t be tested under examination conditions – it’s about how you practice literacy in your day to day teaching. You may, however, need to develop strategies for managing difficulties – for example when preparing teaching resources or responding to pupil questions in the classroom.

If you are **dyslexic**, please take a look at this useful document from [Southampton University](https://cdn.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/content-block/UsefulDownloads_Download/718F25F4FB4346CE876C54422C233E67/supporting_dyslexic_trainees_and_teachers.pdf). It is out of date in some respects (e.g. the QTS Skills Tests no longer exist) but the practical strategies are very useful.

You might also like to look at: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/gift-of-being-dyslexic-teacher-matthew-friday>

**School Report: Identify the mistakes**

Martin is a cheerful and motivated member of the class he is developing a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards his learning. He understands that it is important to listen carefully on the carpet and is now less easily destracted by other events going on around him. Martin is generally happy to put up his hand to answer questions and when gripped by a subject he can apply hisself with good concentration. He has made pleasing progress with reading this year and he is reading at a high level. He has really enjoyed being able to apply his reading skills across the curiculum when working on project based activities, eg researching famous inventors. Martin has worked really hard to improve his letter formation and 'joining' skills this year, and takes pride in his sucess. To his credit he will often comment on his own written work to let us know what he has been focusing on in a particular peace, whether its handwriting, spelling or punctuation!

Martin is a caring and gentle boy. He shows genuin thought and kindness to other children if they are upset he often talks very fondly of his younger sister. In class we have encouraged him to try to widen his friendship circle this year, rather than always depending on very close friends. This is an area Martin will continue to work on over the year ensuring he is happy working and playing within different groupings of children, both in class and on the playground.

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**Invitation to Parents: Identify the mistakes**

*Curriculum Evening: 4.30-6.30pm, Friday 18th October*

We would like to invite yourselves to attend a curriculum evening on Friday 18th October. You will have an opportunity to learn about how we have developed our curriculum to visit different departments across the school, and to see examples of students work. There is no need to registar to attend in advance - please just come along. We look forward to seeing you!

**Your self analysis:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area | Confidence  (High / Mod / Low) | Target area?  (tick focuses for pre-course development) |
| **Spelling** | | |
| Homophones (there, they're, their) |  |  |
| Silent letters (knife) |  |  |
| Suffixes (- ful, -ive, -able etc) |  |  |
| Prefixes (- dis, -un, -anti etc) |  |  |
| Titles (Dr, Mr, Ms, Prof etc) |  |  |
| Double consonants (e.g. run-running; drop-dropping) |  |  |
| Dropping '-e' when adding a suffix (e.g. make-making; take-taking) |  |  |
| **Punctuation** | | |
| Sentence boundaries (full stops; question marks) |  |  |
| Clause boundaries (commas) |  |  |
| Colons to introduce lists |  |  |
| Semicolons/commas to separate items in a list |  |  |
| Colons / Semicolons to link clauses / sentences |  |  |
| Apostrophes for possession |  |  |
| Apostrophes for omission |  |  |
| Speech marks |  |  |
| Punctuation for emphasis (e.g. exclamation marks, dashes) |  |  |
| **Vocabulary / Register** | | |
| When to use formal / informal register |  |  |
| Appropriate use of contractions (e.g. don't / do not) |  |  |
| **Grammar** | | |
| Appropriate use of reflexive pronouns (myself, yourself) |  |  |
| First person singular pronoun in subject / object position (when to write 'Amy and I' and when to write 'Amy and me'. |  |  |
| Subject/verb agreement (e.g. 'He goes' not 'He go') |  |  |
| **Conventions / Genre** | | |
| Layout, structure and conventions of a formal letter |  |  |
| Layout, structure and conventions of a formal email |  |  |
| Genre conventions relevant to your field (e.g. essay, report, argument, narrative) |  |  |
| Use of Standard English |  |  |

Answers:

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Reading review

1. **Read this short blog article, using the link here:**

Maitland, J. (2020) Whole-school approaches to building resilience and promoting mental health: Embracing complexity. *The BERA Blog*. Available online at: <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/whole-school-approaches-to-building-resilience-and-promoting-mental-health-embracing-complexity>

Test your reading skill by answering the following questions:

1. What makes a school a ‘complex social system’? In your answer paraphrase rather than quoting directly – see if you can expand and develop on the ideas in the article to show your own understanding.
2. What can prevent interventions on mental health from being effective, when implemented in a school? Again, try to paraphrase and expand.
3. What are the ‘three guiding principles’ for effective implementation of a whole school approach to promoting mental health? Why do you think each of these is important?
4. **Read the following short article, using the link here:**

Counsell, C. (2018) Taking Curriculum Seriously*, Impact: Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching*. Available online at: <https://impact.chartered.college/article/taking-curriculum-seriously/>

This article is not long, but it does cover some complex and important concepts. Don’t panic if you find it hard! This is an example of some of the most difficult professional reading material you will need to engage with as a teacher.

Test your reading skill by doing the following activities:

1. Make a list of any technical words that you might not immediately be able to define (e.g. pedagogy, constructivist, affective). Look up definitions of these concepts and create a glossary with definitions for each word. Then read the article again.
2. Write a definition of ‘substantive knowledge’ and for ‘discplinary knowledge’, including your own example of each. Try to phrase this in a way which would explain the concepts to teacher colleagues.
3. Can you follow the argument Counsell makes about the potential of knowledge to empower, and to support “social justice”?
4. This article is in 3 sections. Can you summarise the key points made in each, as bullet points?

As a teacher, you will need to be able to read and digest academic information quickly. If you found these articles tricky (and the second one *is* particularly challenging), then work on this by following the [BERA blog](https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog) or investigating other articles from the [Impact journal](https://impact.chartered.college/), and practise summarising information, highlighting key text, turning key points into tables, noting any questions you have about the material, and other activities to help you engage with texts as explored here: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/interacting-texts-directed-activities-related-texts-darts>

**To develop:**

**Everyone**, **across all Primary or Secondary routes** should work through the **Key Stage 1 and 2 spelling lists** and make a note of any words you’re not confident with (and learn them!):

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239784/English_Appendix_1_-_Spelling.pdf>

*Warning: some of these words are quite tricky!*

Have a look at these suggestions for ways to learn spellings: https://www.theschoolrun.com/primary-school-spelling-strategies

**Other strategies and resources:**

Make a list of other common spelling and punctuation errors which you might fall prey to. e.g. when to use *parents’* vs *parent’s*. Keep this list to build on throughout your training year.

Make a list of any subject specific vocabulary that you might struggle to spell (e.g. ‘simile’ (English), ‘heterogenous’ (Chemistry) etc). Keep this list to build on throughout your training year.

* Bristol Grammar guides for punctuation and grammar: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/exercises/grammar/grammar_tutorial/page_41.htm>
* BBC Bitesize on spelling: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9xthyc/revision/1>
* A useful list of common errors: <https://www.inc.com/christina-desmarais/10-common-grammar-mistakes-even-smart-people-make.html>

PRIMARY TRAINEES

You may need to develop your wider knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar in the light of the requirements of the KS1 and KS2 curriculum – particularly to improve your explicit knowledge of grammatical terminology.

Some useful resources for this include:

[www.cybergrammar.co.uk](http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk)

[www.englicious.org](http://www.englicious.org)

Myhill, D., Jones, S., Watson, A., & Lines, H. (2016). Essential Primary Grammar. Open University Press.

And for research-informed approaches to teaching and teaching resources:

<http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/research/centres/writing/grammar-teacher-resources/>