



Categories of Writing for English Language

As children explore and experiment with writing, they generally move from using less mature forms (e.g., scribbling, mark making) to conventional writing. While there are six broad categories of writing (Sulzby, 1990), they do not develop in a fixed order.

Drawing



Drawing resembles writing. When asked to share what they have “written”, children are able to share and make sense of their “writing”. At this stage, children demonstrate their awareness that drawing conveys meaning.

Scribbling



Children become aware that writing is different from drawing. As they develop their fine motor control, their scribbles start to resemble writing and are often in lines.

Letter-like forms and symbols



Children begin to recognise letters of the alphabet and become aware of the different shapes (i.e., lines, zigzags, loops) that make up letters. Their writing starts to resemble letters and symbols which are randomly scattered among their drawings and scribbles.



Random letters or letter strings



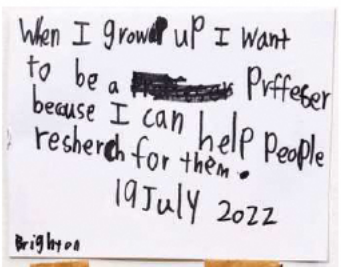
Children use letter sequences (e.g., letters in their own names, strings of letters in random order) in their writing. They may write the same letters in different ways as they refine the way they form the letters. They generally use upper case letters in their writing as lower case letters require more finger dexterity and are more difficult to form. They may form letters incorrectly or write them in reverse as they learn about directionality and orientation of the letters.

Writing with invented spelling



Children begin to discover that spoken words are made up of sounds which are connected to letters in printed words. They may invent their spelling and use letters/groups of letters to represent the sounds they hear in words. Often, they hear only the first sound in a word so they may use one letter (i.e., beginning consonant) to represent the entire word. They begin to leave spaces between words and may mix upper and lower case letters in their writing.

Writing with conventional spelling



Children progress from representing only the most prominent sound in a word to representing most of the sounds they hear (i.e., the ending consonant sound and finally, the vowel sounds in words). More words are spelled conventionally but there might still be some words written with invented spelling as the English Language has words with irregular spelling (e.g., blue and shoe).