



CFE Levels Early – Fourth Level (Ages 3-14)

Food-based writing

**Food-based writing activities
in a wide range of genres**

About the Nourish writing campaign

Our Nourish campaign invites members of the public of all ages to submit personal pieces of writing about food for our website.

We're looking for autobiographical pieces rather than imaginative stories, and we'll publish prose, poetry, comic strips and song lyrics.

For all details, including the dates for submitting entries, check out the campaign here: scottishbooktrust.com/nourish

Why not get staff writing alongside pupils? The food theme is an excellent opportunity for staff across the school to model themselves as writers to pupils, and also just to have fun sharing experiences with others. PE teacher Phil Stephen speaks about his venture into whole school personal writing in this blog: bit.ly/WSPersWriting Staff will need to submit their writing to the adult campaign rather than the schools one – visit the Nourish URL above for more details on both campaigns.

About this resource

This resource has been produced to support teachers and pupils who want to contribute pieces of writing to our Nourish writing campaign, but it can be used at any point after the campaign ends too.

We have just a few goals in mind for this resource. We hope it does the following things:

- Helps you and your pupils come up with ideas for a piece of writing about food;
- Helps everyone take part by providing a range of suggestions about writing formats;
- Helps you and your pupils feel motivated to write.

The tasks are loosely banded by age and stage, but in many cases they will be applicable at higher or lower stages too.

Creating motivation to write

You and your pupils are more likely to produce great writing if you feel motivated to do so. In the case of autobiographical writing, it can sometimes be difficult to see how the little details of our experiences can be interesting to others.

The example pieces of writing in the Appendix of this resource have been selected to show (amongst other things) how everyone's life contains the ingredients for great writing, no matter what the scale or nature of your experiences.

However, it can be more powerful to go and find your own example pieces. Ask pupils to go and find some autobiographical writing that they like, and get them to tell you why they like it. It's great if you can do the same! You and your pupils can look through previous public writing campaigns for inspiring pieces from members of the public:
scottishbooktrust.com/reading/previous-campaigns

Early Years/Level 1 activities

Using food to build social skills

HWB 0-05a, HWB 0-14a

Talking about favourite foods is a good activity to help a new group get to know each other, or to reinforce social skills emphasised through the year.

Gather pupils in a circle and introduce a ball, which will be the 'talking object'. Only the person who is holding the ball is allowed to speak! Tell the class your name and your favourite food. Then, say the name of a pupil and make eye contact with them, and roll the ball towards them. Once they have the ball, ask them to repeat what you've just done until everyone has had a chance to speak.

Talking about celebration days

LIT 1-09a

Every family celebrates occasions like Christmas slightly differently. Encourage pupils to talk about the different foods they eat at Christmas, Hallowe'en, birthdays or any other special occasions.

You can use this discussion as an opportunity to build a story with pupils. Gather them in groups of six, and explain that you are going to make up a story and everyone in the group is going to help. Suggest a main character for the story, and suggest an occasion that character is about to celebrate: for example, a prince or princess who is about to celebrate Christmas.

Ask the pupils what the character is doing at the start of the story. What time do they get up, and what do they do first? What foods are they preparing or eating? This can provide an opportunity for children to draw from their own experiences. Ask the children questions to build on their suggestions.

After a while, suggest a problem or surprise for the main character. For instance, do they run out of food? Does someone unexpected turn up for

dinner? Ask the pupils how this problem might be overcome, and how it all turns out in the end.

This activity could be a good way for shy pupils to share their experiences through a fictional character.

Create a food timeline

LIT 1-28a

This activity can help pupils to discover the wide range of dates celebrated across the world, and how food features in each one of those dates.

Ask pupils which special days of the year they can think of, and if they can think of any foods they might eat on those days – Christmas, Easter, pancake day, Burns night, Hallowe'en, birthdays and any other day they can think of.

Pupils may already have suggested celebratory days from other cultures, but if not, you could introduce them to the foods eaten at these celebrations. Perhaps hold a themed week with dishes from different cultures, or have guest speakers in to tell pupils about their national dishes.

After this, ask pupils to create a timeline on the wall, with important celebration days marked. They can accompany the timeline with notes next to each entry about the foods eaten during that particular celebration, or draw pictures of the foods.

Food poetry

HWB 1-30a, LIT 1-31a

Set up a taste testing session where your class prepares a range of simple snacks. Get the pupils to try each snack, and ask them to describe the taste and texture. Write down their suggestions on the board.

Alternatively, if you don't have time for your pupils to prepare food, you can use pictures of food. Try Pippa Goodhart and Nick Sharratt's book *You Choose*, which has a lovely double page spread of different foods. Chat with pupils about what foods they might choose and who they would eat them with.

After this, ask your pupils to write two line poems using the following lines as a framework:

I went to the shop and what did I see?
Lots of juicy oranges looking at me!

Ask your pupils to come up with their own versions, substituting 'juicy oranges' for the foods they've tasted or talked about. You could also use pupils' favourite foods from the first activity – this might be a nice way to follow up that discussion.

Alternatively, you could ask pupils to come up with concrete poems, putting their lines of poetry in the shape of different foods. Here's a nice example: bit.ly/CupcakePoem. You can find lots more by typing 'concrete poetry' into Pinterest!

Set up a café Role Play window

EXA 0-12a, LIT 1-28a, MNU 1-09a, MNU 1-09b, Lit 1-09a

Role Play Windows are an excellent way to put learning in context and let children explore real world situations. For a detailed guide, see *The Little Book of Role Play Windows* by Melanie Roan and Marion Taylor (Bloomsbury, 2013).

Ask pupils to make a simple café window or counter out of cardboard. Ask them what kind of things need to be there – for instance, what kind of information needs to be displayed (menus, prices)? Ask pupils to take it in turns to act as the shopkeeper and customer. Challenge them to pick a combination of healthy foods and treats.

Level 2/3/4 activities

Personal writing – Food and memories Eng 3-30a

Ask pupils to think back through their lives about times where food featured. You can share some of your own food-related memories with pupils, or show them some examples.

You'll find some examples in the Appendix of this resource.

Ask pupils to create a piece of personal writing exploring different memories they have of food. To help bring the piece to life, they can explore the five senses in their writing, and you can use the questions below to get them reflecting on their experiences:

In the example pieces of writing, the writer of 'Food at Gran's' says that she realised her Gran showed her love for people through cooking for them and looking after them. Do you think food connects you to people?

What were your childhood experiences of food like? Did you have any foods you loved or hated, and did you go to serious lengths to avoid eating the foods you hated?

Have you ever experienced any food-related disasters like the writer in 'Some Like it Hot'?

You could also ask them to create a comic with panels describing their memories – this resource on our website can help introduce pupils to how to write comic book scenes: bit.ly/writeacomicbook

Slow writing – Taste test

Eng 3-27a, Eng 3-30a, TCH 3-10a, TCH 3-10b

Home Economics teachers can encourage pupils to prepare a selection of different types of party food. Then, pupils can taste each other's food and write about the experience!

For the writing part, here's the key: your pupils are going to use the slow writing technique outlined by David Didau in this blog post: bit.ly/WriteSlowly. You can introduce this technique in different ways – if you wish, you can ask pupils to write their text first, and then ask them to refine it using Didau's method. You can also choose to model the technique by trying it yourself and sharing your writing with pupils. As Didau explains, the technique can generate writing which pupils are proud of.

Slow writing – Food and culture

ENG 3-27a, ENG 3-30a, TCH 3-10a, TCH 3-10b

Ask pupils to cook some signature national dishes, and then hold a taste test session. Afterwards, get them to write about their experience, including what they found out about each dish.

Again, you can use the slow writing technique to help pupils come up with some great pieces.

Both this activity and the previous one might also provide the content for the next activity!

Write a food blog

ENG 3-30a, TCH 3-04a

Blogging is a great way to give your pupils a genuine audience for their writing. Teacher Peter Kelly gives a great introduction to blogging in school here: bit.ly/BlogSchool.

Encourage your pupils to blog about their activities in Home Economics. We aren't accepting recipes as entries for the Nourish campaign – but don't worry, this just means that we can't accept a simple list of ingredients and a method. If pupils write in a narrative form about cooking, that's absolutely fine!

See a good example here: bit.ly/NiceToMeetStew

Pupils can include any kind of information they think readers will find interesting, including where ingredients were sourced, whether the vegetables are seasonal and more personal things like childhood memories the food brings to mind.

Encourage pupils from other classes to check out the blog and make the recipes they like the sound of!

Blog about celebration days

ENG 3-27a, TCH 3-04a, LIT 1-28a

Encourage pupils to find out about foods associated with different celebrations across the world such as Diwali, Thanksgiving and Yom Kippur.

After this, ask them to write a blog post in a similar way to the above task, telling the reader about both the food and the context of the celebration.

Share stories with younger pupils

Eng 3-30a, EXA 3-03a, LIT 1-09a, HWB, 3-11a, HWB 3-13a

Celebration days such as Christmas, Hallowe'en and Pancake Day are celebrated in different ways by families. Writing about these days can give older pupils a great chance to share stories with younger pupils.

Ask pupils to write an illustrated account about a celebration in their home where food is a prominent feature. The story should be accessible by very young pupils of 5 and under, so the illustrations should show clearly what is happening, and use of text should be sparing.

Afterwards, pair older pupils with younger pupils. Ask them to share their stories and to encourage the younger pupil to talk about the way their family celebrates on special occasions. The older pupils can help the younger pupils to draw pictures too.

This approach is fantastic for building the confidence and questioning skills of older pupils, and is based on the Shared Reading model found in this resource on our website: bit.ly/ShareBooks

Appendix

Burying the evidence

When I was about twelve, my mum got together with my stepdad, who had two boys of his own. Suddenly, my brother and I had two new stepbrothers to get on with. The four of us tried really hard, but it was pretty quiet and awkward until one night when my mum was away and my stepdad had to cook for us.

He was not a good cook, and this was not a good meal. We were served tough gammon steaks, half cooked potatoes and peas swimming in water. My stepdad told us that it all had to be eaten before we were allowed to leave the table. He left us to it.

We did try. We ate in silence, uncertainly, fearfully. After some time had passed, my brother exclaimed, "Nut. Ah cannae eat this." He looked around and spied a large plant in the corner of the room, and used the cutlery to dig a hole before emptying his potatoes and peas into it. He covered it over with soil and returned to his place.

None of the rest of us had the guts to do the same. But how we laughed. And after that, the ice was broken and we got on famously well. We still chuckle about it to this day.

Food at gran's

When I was at primary school I had to spend the summer holidays with my grandma because my parents worked full time. There are so many food memories I have of those summers. Almost every day I'd have lemon sole and potatoes in some form for lunch. I never got bored of it, it's always been one of my favourites. We used to have to get the bus to Stockton high street to buy it from Dave the fish man who had a van on the market. She'd always buy grapes for me at the market too, but she kept them on the window sill so they were always warm. For treats I was allowed a pick'n'mix from Woolworth's and if I was ever staying overnight I'd get a hot chocolate and malted milk biscuits before bed.

She's not a woman who expresses her love verbally, she's quite closed off emotionally. Looking back on it I think feeding her family, particularly with treats, was her way of showing love.

Some like it hot

A residing memory of school was making some exceptionally bland food in Home Economics. During one of these long afternoon classes one of my fellow pupils Ben managed to spectacularly set fire to his spaghetti. This

was a complete accident, I'm not sure why they let us have gas hobs. The flames crept up the side of the pot and it went up like petrol! I didn't learn a huge amount from Home Economics but I did learn the highly flammable properties of spaghetti.

Magic E-numbers

Our family was a bit weird (at least I thought so at the time). Growing up my brother and I were fortunate enough to have a home-cooked meal every day, and we always sat together and ate our evening meal as a family. As an adult, I really appreciate all the work and effort that my mum put into making sure we had tasty, nutritionally balanced meals. But as a kid we were always envious of our friends who were allowed things that we just weren't – ketchup, for example, and fizzy drinks of any description.

Consequently, the occasions when my parents were going out were always great treats as on those days we got to eat processed food. Tinned ravioli, tinned meatballs, Findus crispy pancakes: these things were all so rare that we thought they were the best food ever! Even more enticing was Ice Magic – a sauce that set to a crisp, crackable shell on ice cream. My mum maintained, probably correctly, that it was the biggest waste of money ever invented. But to us it was just one more forbidden treasure.

Now I know that mum had a point about all of that stuff, but my younger self would always sit wide eyed in friends' kitchens as Cremola Foam and Angel Delight and Kraft Mac and Cheese were produced. Ah, the eighties – fun times of gimmicky food, preferably brightly coloured, and e-numbers beyond all belief.

Fudging the numbers

I was never allowed sweets or chocolate as a child, my mum was always super healthy, but once a week my dad would take me to badminton and a swim at Woodford Leisure Centre. It cost £1.20 but dad told mum it was £1.50 so I would have 30p for the vending machine (this is back when 30p could get you ANYTHING in a vending machine!). Every week after my swim I would buy a bag of Maltesers and wolf them down surreptitiously before mum came to pick me up. I don't think she ever cottoned on ...

Carb loading

A plate of browns and reds was always best for me. Turkey Drummers or Dinosaurs, Potato Waffles, Spaghetti Hoops or beans on toast. Potato Smileys ken the fun going on.

A plate of browns and reds meant loads of friends were round, or I was round at theirs, and what working parent has the time and the energy to make a balanced nutritional meal for umpteen rowdy boys?

A plate of browns and reds meant 'get in, get fed and get out again'. It meant you'd just ran round the park until you'd no breath in your lungs, or you had a foot half in to your roller blades ready to go as soon as the meal was done, or you were already arguing which video game to play and if it was fair go's or winner-stays-on.

Cheesy cauliflower was okay on that plate too, at a push.