

## Forms of writing: Recounts

### What is a recount?

A recount is the retelling of past experiences. Its purpose is to tell what happened, in order. Recounts are generally based on personal experiences but may also be imaginative or outside the author's personal experience. The purpose of the retelling can either be to inform or entertain, or both.

### Types of recounts

- A **personal recount** is the retelling of an event that the writer has actually experienced. Children often use personal recounts in their earliest forms of writing.
- A **factual recount** records the details of an incident or event.  
e.g. news report, science experiment, accident report
- An **imaginary recount** has the writer taking on an imaginary role to record or retell events.  
e.g. *A day in the life of an animal* or *The day I visited the moon*

### Structure of a recount

A recount has:

- a **title** which summarises the text
- three basic parts:
  - the **introduction** (orientation) which establishes the setting, characters, situation and gives background information about the events, i.e. tells who, what, where, when and/or why
  - the **events** in order of time
  - the **conclusion** (concluding comments) which expresses a personal opinion about the events described. This optional component may, for example, describe the outcome of an activity (e.g. in a science activity).

## Language features

The language used in a recount:

- focuses on personal experiences or events  
e.g. my holiday, sports day
- is usually written in past tense  
e.g. she yelled, he walked, we went
- frequently uses time words to link the text  
e.g. first, soon, later, then, after, finally
- often uses action words to describe events and adverbs to add detail
- often makes use of first person personal pronouns  
e.g. I, we
- is often chosen to add interest or humour.

## Suggested process for developing recount writing

- **Direct model** by presenting examples of the text for immersion and exploration:
  - discuss the information in or purpose of each part/paragraph
  - attach labels to the parts/paragraphs
  - talk about language features.
- **Reconstruct text** by reforming a text from jumbled sentences or paragraphs.
- **Read selected recounts** during directed or shared reading, focusing on the recount structure.
- **Model** the writing of recounts by choosing events that are familiar and of interest to the student and mention the various features as they are written.
- **Jointly construct** a recount, working together and encouraging the student to contribute information and ideas and make suggestions about the structuring.
- **Independently construct** a recount for which the student, with guidance, chooses a topic, writes a draft referring to models, consults and makes changes (as necessary).

## Points to help with recount writing

- Share oral recounts of events or happenings with the student. This could be a whole class/ family activity.
- Help the student decide on a topic or event to write about. They may like to tell the recount orally before writing their ideas down.
- Have the student write the first sentence and check that it answers some of the who, what, where, when and why questions.