

# Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching and Support Service

## How to use the four square method to support writing composition.

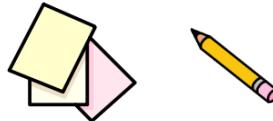
### Why?

- It can be used by any student, at any age/level. It is a simple and effective method which supports the development of ideas for writing. It can be used to support both fiction and non-fiction writing and is highly versatile.



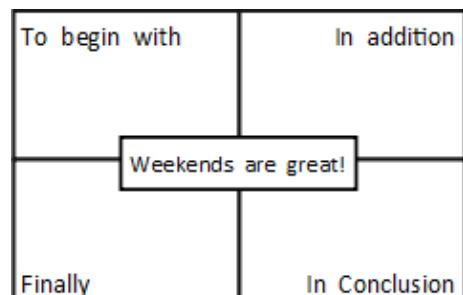
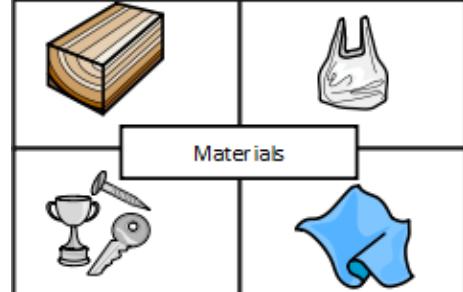
### You will need:

- A4 Paper (at least), pencil,



### How?

- Fold a piece of paper into 4 squares and draw a box in the middle of the page.
- For writing sentences: students can write the topic of the sentence in the middle box and in each square, they can draw pictures or write words of details they want to include in their sentence.
- Writing paragraphs: students write the topic sentence in the middle box, they write a sentence containing supporting detail in 3 of the squares and a concluding sentence in the last square. For example, in the centre box - Weekends are great. 1. To begin with, 2. In addition, 3. Finally, 4. In conclusion. This would lead to 4 sentences, or 1 paragraph.
- Writing short essays: students write what information goes in the topic paragraph in the middle box and then list details to include in supporting paragraphs in the squares.
- It can be done collaboratively or individually.
- Post it notes could work well if you need to move the order around.



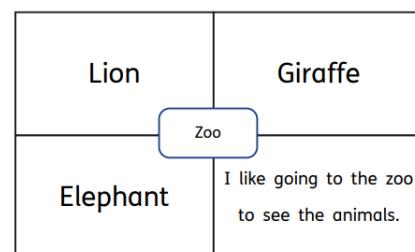
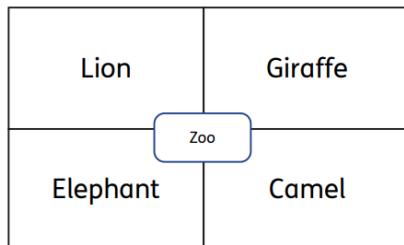
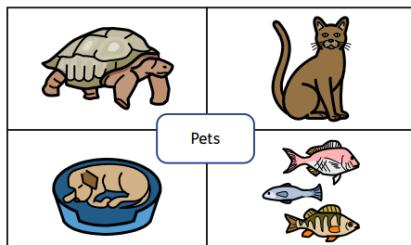
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Further examples of the 4 square writing method.

**Categorising with pictures and words** – this helps children understand the relationship between ideas.

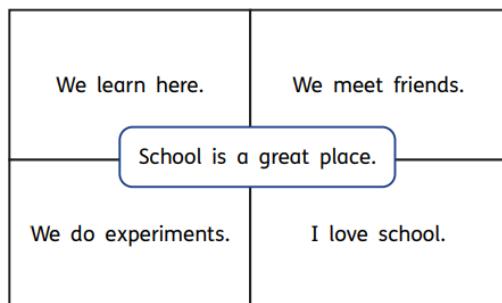


### Possible sentences:

A cat is a pet. Dogs, cats, fish and tortoises are all pets.

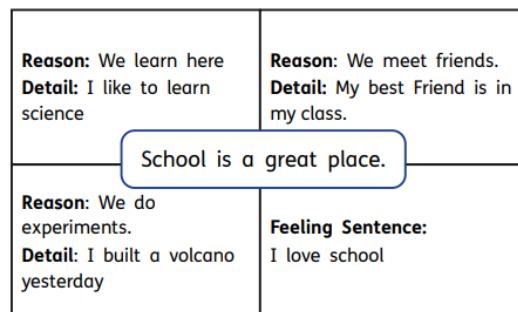
The lion is at the zoo. The elephant is at the zoo. At the zoo, I hope to see a lion, giraffe and elephant. I like going to the zoo to see the animals.

### Planning for a short paragraph.



**School**  
School is a great place. We learn here. We meet friends. We do experiments. I love school.

### Adding more detail.



### Developing writing in paragraphs



### Weekends

I love weekends because I can relax and do what I like. I always have a lie in and catch up on my favourite TV programmes.

I also enjoy doing exercise at the weekend. Sometimes I go running or play on my trampoline. Football is my favourite sport; I play most weekends and am in a team.

I get to play with my friends at the weekend. Last weekend two friends came for a sleepover at my house and next weekend my friend is having a party.

Weekends are just great because we get to recover from a busy week at school and see our friends.

### Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Four Square Writing is an instructional strategy developed originally by Gould and Gould, 1999.