National Literacy Trust

Change your story

The First Year

Year 6 transition project

Teacher Guide

SALFORD National Literacy Trust IT'S YOUR STORY

National Literacy Trust

Change your story

Contents

National Literacy Trust
Change your story

Introduction

Transition from primary school to secondary school can be a tricky time. Through these reading-linked transition activities, we hope pupils will discover the magic of reading and its ability to support them through this period.

These resources have been created with support from **the National Literacy Trust Salford Hub** and **Salford City Council,** to support pupils moving from primary to secondary education.

Salford's Literacy Hub is the latest in a network of 20 areas across the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland to share in the **National Literacy Trust** work. This community led approach means we can listen to the needs of the area and respond accordingly. Last year, more than a quarter (29%) of 11-year-olds in Salford left primary school without the reading skills they need to learn and thrive, rising to 38% of those eligible for free school meals. One of the areas of focus for the National Literacy Trust in Salford, is to support young people aged 4 to 12-years-old with the transition between phases at school. The aim is to improve attitudes and behaviours towards literacy and support schools in developing their reading for pleasure provision.

This project for children embarking on the transition from year 6 to year 7, is inspired by the incredible project **'Get Islington Reading'**, which was successful in achieving increased enjoyment for reading when working with pupils transitioning from Primary to Secondary School across a three-year project. This project proved the value of place-based working and the impact a project of this kind can have on young people and their enjoyment of reading.

The transition from primary to secondary is enormously important and tricky for young people. My hope is that The Final Year and The First Year allow young people a perspective on how that can feel.

Matt Goodfellow

National Literacy Trust
Change your story

The project

In this guide, you'll find a selection of reading-based transition activities, inspired by **Matt Goodfellow's *The First Year*.** We encourage you to read and explore the book with your pupils alongside delivering the activities, to provide further enrichment and to get the most out of the project in terms of both supporting transition and fostering reading for pleasure. However, we recognise that curriculum time may not stretch to explore it as fully as you may wish, therefore we have designed the activities so that you can dip into the book as needed.

In this teacher guide you will find:

- Three linked stand-alone lessons, exploring key themes of transition, supported by reading and oracy skills
- A brief overview of the themes and activities covered in a two-hour transition workshop delivered at Oasis Academy on 26/27 June for pupils attending in September
- An additional celebration event to be delivered after the transition day for all pupils
- Guide for pupils to create their own ideas book – inspired by Nate in *The First Year*

Note: This resource has been designed to work for all pupils, whether all, some or none attend the transition day at Oasis Academy.

Project Aim

This project aims to encourage pupils to read and talk about what they've read, as a means to digest the transition they are about to embark on. This project explores different reading skill-based activities along with oracy skill activities, to enhance pupils' enjoyment of ***The First Year*** and encourage further exploration of books on the same topic.

This project has been designed to link directly to the English programme of study. You will find the curriculum links for this project in appendix 4.

To get the most out of this transition project, we recommend following the steps below:

We suggest you start your transition project after the SATs and by starting ***The First Year*** as your class reader or story time book. You can use the *Book Chat for Big Change Poster* to prompt conversation around what changes the characters experience, making sure to link this back to the idea of starting secondary school.

We recommend that you deliver the first three transition sessions in their entirety, to prepare pupils for their transition days on the 26 and 27 June. If you cannot deliver all the sessions, choose the ones most applicable to your pupils for the time you have available.

Encourage the children to explore the *Books for Big Change Booklist*, creating a display in your book corner or library. You can find the booklist here. If you don't have any of the books on the list in school don't worry, create your own *Books for Big Change Booklist* using the books you have available to you.

Consider how you could incorporate the work your pupils have done on this transition project as part of their end-of-year celebrations. Use session 5 to support the sharing of their work.

Linking with your local secondary schools

Transition activities are most effective when primary and secondary schools are working in partnership to support pupils. **Oasis Academy** will be delivering a two-hour workshop with pupils on the 26/27 June, designed and created by The **National Literacy Trust** as part of this project. This workshop intends to bring pupils together with a commonality: reading. Pupils will all come together through the shared experience of following the journey of Nate from his last day of primary school, to the first year of secondary school.

If your pupils are not attending Oasis Academy, it's a good idea to connect with your feeder secondary schools to let them know about your reading-related transition activities, particularly the English and Library departments, and discuss how else you can use reading to aid the transition. We have also created a guide for secondary transition leads, containing the activities that can be delivered on transition day to replicate this project. If you would like more information, please contact **martha.o'brien@literacytrust.org.uk**.

National Literacy Trust

Change your story

The Idea Book

To support their work in this project, we recommend providing pupils with a designated notebook where they can respond to the activities set, track what they've read or use it as a place to write, like the character of Nate.

Below is a suggested introduction for pupils and how they could go about using their own Ideas Book.

In the book ***The First Year*** by ***Matt Goodfellow***, Nate loves to write. He writes when he's happy, when he's angry, when he's confused or worried, or any time an idea comes to him.

Nate writes whatever comes to mind in his **Ideas Book**. This booklet is for you. For your ideas. A place for you to collect everything you know, feel, wonder and learn about yourself, your world, and what's next.

You could write about your day, or about a book you've read, about your new school, or your primary school. New friends, old friends, home, the weather, or even something bigger. You don't even have to write, you could doodle or draw or stare at a blank page. But it's yours. For whatever you need it for.

It's just a starting point for wherever you want to go, and whatever you want to take with you on this journey.

Transition Project sessions

Where possible, we recommend you read the book ***The First Year*** with your class before you start the transition project. However, there is no need to have read the book to be able to access the activities. Each session dips into the story and the key moments of Nate's transition into secondary school, without a need to understand the wider context of the character's story arc.

Session 1 – Transition

Learning objectives

- To remember and recall key vocabulary related to transition
- To interpret the meaning of transition in relation to their own journey
- To reflect on their time at primary school and create an image of what they will leave behind

Activity 1

Invite pupils to look at the pictures in Appendix 1, (you may wish to print this one copy between two, or project them onto the board for all to see). Share with pupils that this is a random selection of images that have no connection to each other. Take a moment to "read" each image. Encourage pupils in turn to explain what they see, and what emotion they think it shares. If needed, share the sentence stems below.

I think this is a picture of...

This picture might represent the feeling of...

These are a set of random pictures with no thought about how they are laid out.

In pairs, invite pupils to use these images to tell a story.

Challenge:

Option 1: Ask pupils to incorporate the emotions they identified into the story as well.

Option 2: Challenge pupils to incorporate the following words into their story: change, move, transform, adapt, evolve, journey.

Invite pupils to share their new stories with the class. Are there any similarities between the stories?

Activity 2

Explain to your pupils that they are embarking on a period of transition.

Invite the pupils to contribute to a mind-map to discover what it means. Ask pupils to share definitions or examples of what a transition might be.

Encourage pupils to contribute and note any answers down on a collective mind-map, even if they are not accurate. After you have collected all those who want to share, invite pupils to look at what they have collated and see if any need removing. This can be repeated throughout the following activities until the mind-map reflects a clear and accurate definition of the word transition.

Invite pupils to go back and look at the images from activity one. If they were going to pick one of these images to describe what transition is, what would they choose? Below are some sentence stems they could use to explain their ideas.

I think the best picture to describe transition is the one where... because

The image of the ... best fits with the word transition because...

The image ... makes me think of transition because it ...

Share the following definitions with pupils.

The need for something to adapt in a new situation

A period when something is changing

The process of going from one thing to another

Now they have explored this word as a class, invite your pupils to reflect on what they understand transition to be.

Encourage your pupils to respond to the definition by choosing one of the following options and completing it on the first page of their **Ideas Book**:

- Draw an image or doodle to describe the word transition

- Choose their favourite definition and copy it
- Write their own definition, incorporating as many of the following words as they can: move/moving, journey, change/changing, shift, adaptation

Activity 3

Read page 89 of ***The First Year*** with pupils.

You can read this page as a standalone poem if you haven't had a chance to read the whole book yet.

Explain to your pupils that we meet Nate on his last day of school, he is about to embark on a big transition: school, life, family, friends, relationship, trust. On page 89, Nate notices that we leave an imprint on everyone we meet, who take that imprint with them on the next phase of that journey.

> We leave bits of ourselves with whoever we meet,
> Not on purpose,
> We just do,
> Sometimes it's just a tiny little flake
>
> ***The First Year*** pg. 89

Re-read the following extract to the class.

Invite pupils to consider what it means?

Are we literally leaving a piece of us with other people?

Share together what it means when Nate says: "We leave bits of ourselves".

Invite pupils to walk around the room, stopping when indicated to speak to a partner. Ask them to share one positive thing that comes to mind when they think about that person, from their time together at primary school. They could tell a story, or even share just one word, a colour or an image that comes to mind when they think of them.

Here are some sentence stems to help get them started:

When I think of you, I think about...
One word that comes to mind when I think of you is...

Try to repeat this conversation with as many peers as time allows.

When appropriate, ask the pupils to go back to their **Ideas Book** and note down some of the memories and phrases that their peers shared with them.

Activity 4

Read pages 90 and 91 aloud with the class. **Matt Goodfellow** uses the swift throughout Nate's story.
Share the swift fact sheet with pupils from Appendix 2. Ask the class to consider which of these facts about swifts might be a reason why they have been included in this story of transition.

Explain the idea that birds drop feathers as they grow and change. It doesn't hurt, it's part of who they were, but then they change and grow.

Think about the bit of yourself you will leave with your primary school. Encourage your pupils to draw an outline of a feather, or use the one provided in Appendix 3, in their **Ideas Book,** to create the feather they leave at Primary School. Invite your class to add words and phrases they heard and used today about themselves and what transition is, to populate the feather.

Session 2 – What has gone before?

Learning objectives

- To recall moments from The First Year that reflect on achievements.
- To identify their understanding of achievement by documenting personal milestones across different timeframes.
- To evaluate their own progress and reflect on their personal development.

Activity 1

Using a clean page in their **Ideas Book**, invite pupils to 'doodle along' as you read aloud from page 56 to page 67 of **The First Year**. They can create a little drawing or doodles of what is being read to them – what does it make them think of? How does it make them feel? Model doing this if necessary.

Hint: If pupils are enjoying this, allow the activity to run on for as long as the pupils are interested in being read to.

When finished, look back at the images they've drawn. In pairs, ask pupils to try to recall the story they have just heard using the images they have in front of them. Encourage them to collaborate in the re-telling by using "yes, and…". Remind them we are not interested in what is right/wrong but what is enjoyable for them.

Activity 2

What is an achievement? Discuss this question with the class – what does achievement mean to them? Allow pupils to identify what this is as a collective.

Provide them with the following definitions:

When you achieve something, it means you've set out to do something and you've done it — even if it was difficult.

An achievement is something you've done that makes you feel proud — it shows effort, bravery, or skill.

Ask pupils to consider if tying their shoelaces is an achievement? How about putting your hand up in class? Invite them to discuss their thoughts with the person next to them. To support this conversation, use the 'I bet you're thinking…' discussion structure below.

Person A: I bet you're thinking that … (person A predicts person B's answer to the statement)

Person B: Yes, and … (adding a new point)

Or

No, because… (explaining why they don't agree)

Pupils can swap over and try to give a different reason.

Bring the class back together and hear some suggestions as to what was discussed, trying to bring the conversation round to the notion that anything can be an achievement if they were previously unable to do it, and they now can.

Activity 3

Nate has come a long way in his journey at primary school. He deserves to feel proud of all he has achieved and so do you.

In the **Ideas Book** ask pupils to draw themselves a 5-pointed star (see instructions below if needed). Label each point with the following titles (starting at the top and moving clockwise): I achieved, this week, this term, this year, in primary and in the middle, I want to achieve...

Give pupils a few minutes to consider anything they wish to note down in each of the boxes (not the centre section yet). Depending on your class, you may wish to give them some ideas, for example:

- Sporting achievements
- Performance achievements
- Taken part in a competition
- Achievements in confidence
- Achievements in friendship development
- Achievements in attendance

Hint: if pupils are finding this activity difficult, invite them to try aiming for one 'big' achievement and three smaller ones, or even writing about themselves in the third person.

Challenge yourself

Ask pupils to get into small groups with peers they feel comfortable sharing their achievements with (2-3 pupils per group). Invite pupils to take it in turns to share what they have achieved. If they couldn't think of one for each category, encourage their group to make suggestions and help their peer add to their star.

This is a good moment to circulate the class and point out to pupils who are struggling anything that you are proud of them for.

Activity 4

Independently, ask pupils to look at their star and consider how it makes them feel to look at some of the things they have achieved.

Invite pupils to stand and create a frozen picture depicting how they feel about their star. For example, they might stand with a wide stance, hands on their hips and their chest puffed out, to show they are proud.

Invite one half of the class to observe the other half's frozen feelings. Ask them to infer how they are feeling about their achievements. This can take the form of a class discussion or just an observation. Swap over so the whole class get an opportunity to share their frozen feelings.

Activity 5

Remind the class that their **Ideas Book** is something they get to keep and take with them on their transition to secondary school. Invite pupils to identify one thing they wish to achieve at secondary school. Allow them to think as small or as big as they like, considering their first day, week, term or year.

Session 3 – What's to come?

Learning objectives

- To recognise the power and importance of asking questions
- To analyse Nate's experience in ***The First Year***, and explore how his questions reveal his feelings
- To create a poem inspired by **Matt Goodfellow** and identify questions about secondary school

> And I am by his side — Caleb
> catches up
> Out through the gates
> Into the big wide world
> Into summat strange and new
>
> ***The First Year*** pg. 13

Activity 1

This activity can be done as a class with pupils calling out ideas or writing questions on the board with you, or it can be done independently in their **Ideas Book**.

Explain to your pupils that you are going to be setting them a challenge. How many questions about secondary school can they write down in 2 minutes? (this can be adapted depending on abilities and how the activity is being run) Encourage them to write down any question that springs to mind. Model questions on the board like, “How many doors will there be in the school?”, “What colour will the hallways be?”, “Will I prefer maths or drama?”.

Once complete, share some of your questions together, invite pupils to consider if they can answer any of these questions now?

Discuss the following prompts with pupils about asking questions:

- Why is asking questions important?
- Does asking questions mean you’re clever or not clever?
- How can asking questions help you in secondary school?
- Can you think of a time asking a question helped you?

Try to reinforce throughout the discussion that questions show strength, not weakness, they create new learning and can help you find your voice and build relationships.

Activity 2

As a class read page 73. What does Nate know about secondary school? What doesn’t he know?

Explain that Nate uses his **Ideas Book** to write a question poem. This poem is only four lines long, and he uses it to ask a question (page 131).

Invite pupils to choose a selection of their favourite questions from the first activity and note them down in their **Ideas Book** if they haven’t done so already (two or three will be enough). Ask them to look at the last word for each question and identify three words that rhyme with the last word for each question. (This will help create a rhyming poem like Nate’s).

> There’s a piece I’m told is missing and
> it’s supposed to make me sad.
> But can you ever miss a thing
> You never really had?
>
> The First Year pg. 131

Support pupils with writing their own question poem. Explain that the structure will be as follows:

Line 1: Opening question
Line 2: Second question with last word that rhymes with line 4
Line 3: Third question – this can rhyme with line 1 but doesn't have to
Line 4: Fourth question – this should be their favourite question, and it should rhyme with line 2

Recommend them starting with line 4 as their favourite question, then filling in the other questions to fit. They may have to write a new question for line 2, if they can't think of one, they may need to swap out line 4 for a different question.

Activity 3

Invite pupils to share their question poems with a partner. Encourage the partner to provide some feedback and allow pupils time to edit their question poems till they are happy with them.

Example Question Poem

How many classes will I have?

What colour are the halls?

Will I meet my new best friend,

inside these tall brick walls?

Session 4 – Transition workshop

Delivered by the secondary transition team

Learning objectives

- To reflect and articulate the transition to secondary school through personal experiences
- To analyse key moments on the first day of school, and consider what emotions these moments might lead to
- To create and perform a story poem, creating a character and circumstances to deal with the challenging topic of transition

This session will be delivered by Oasis Academy on 26 /27 June. Please see below a summary for your information. If you would like further details of how this workshop

could be run in another secondary setting, please contact **martha.o'brien@literacytrust.org.uk**.

Overview:

This creative and imaginative workshop supports your pupils as they prepare for the transition to secondary school. Through a combination of reflection, storytelling, group work and oracy, pupils are given the tools to explore their feelings, visualise the journey ahead and express their hopes and concerns in a safe, supportive environment. The session builds progressively towards a collaborative outcome, encouraging community and personal reflection.

Activities:

Optional Intro Activity – Transition Map-Making:
Pupils draw imaginative maps of their journey to secondary school, blending real locations with metaphorical 'obstacles'

Activity 1 – First Day Timeline:
Pupils sequence a set of "day one" cards to imagine a typical first day of secondary school. They annotate these with emotions and add any additional events they expect.

Activity 2 – Character Creation:
Pupils each create a fictional Year 7 character using guided prompts and then introduce their character to their group.

Activity 3 – Story Poem Journey:
Pupils collaborate to chart their character's first day through a structured series of reflection questions, drawing on earlier activities. Their responses are crafted into a seven-line story poem capturing the emotional arc of the day.

Activity 4 – Creative Sharing:
Pupils prepare to share their story poems in a format of their choice (spoken word, performance, visual art, etc.).

Activity 5 – Packing for Year 7:
As a closing reflection, pupils imagine what emotional qualities or inner resources their character would need to take with them into secondary school (e.g., *bravery*, *curiosity*, *resilience*).

National Literacy Trust
Change your story

Session 5 – Celebration

Learning objectives

- To apply active listening and speaking skills during peer interviews.
- To identify positive qualities and accomplishments in others, drawing on both the interview and prior knowledge.
- To compose and perform an original, uplifting awards speech that acknowledges and celebrates a peer.
- To evaluate how their speech choices (e.g., tone, pace, vocabulary) will impact their peer and the wider audience.

Introduction

This session is a celebration event, focused on encouraging pupils to celebrate each other as well as themselves.

Explain to your pupils that today they are going to be celebrating the achievements of their peers. Note to them that the session will end with an awards ceremony (in some capacity) where they will be presenting and receiving awards.

Before the session, put the names of your pupils into a hat, and at this point, ask each pupil to randomly choose the peer they will be writing a speech for. If by chance a pupil picks their own name, just ask them to choose again to ensure that everyone is writing for someone else.

Inform pupils that they have the responsibility of writing an award speech, which will both uplift their peer and send them on their way to secondary school. To do this they will need to do some investigating.

The interview

In pairs (interviewer and interviewee), encourage pupils to investigate and ask questions to learn more about their partner's strengths and school memories.

You may wish to share the following questions to support this process:

- What's something you've achieved this year that you're proud of?
- What's something you've got better at?
- What do your friends say you're good at?
- What will you miss about primary school?
- What are you looking forward to in secondary school?

Remind pupils about their listening skills when completing this activity to ensure they are taking all their information down.

Once the first group of pupils have conducted their interviews, ask the class to swap over and now those being interviewed will now become the interviewer.

Writing their speech

Now, allow pupils to spend some time crafting their award speech. You may wish to recommend that they focus on writing five to seven lines following the structure laid out below.

"Today's award goes to [Name] for being someone who...

They've worked hard this year on...

Their friends describe them as...

One thing they should take with them into Year 7 is...

Good luck, [Name]—you're going to be brilliant!"

Encourage pupils to focus on:

- A warm, positive tone
- Specific achievements or strengths
- A message of encouragement for the future

Presenting the awards

Once pupils are happy with their speech, it is time for them to present their awards.

You may wish to allow pupils time to practice their speech before delivering it to their peers. A fun way to do this would be to invite pupils to think about their tone, pace and rhythm. Ask pupils to space out around the room and read their speech aloud, all at once, to the wall. Encourage them to imagine how their words hit the wall and bounce back at them. Consider which words you want to land softly, which need to crash through the wall.

Once they are happy with their final speech, you may wish to support pupils in presenting their work to their peers. Some options are outlined below, you might decide to only pick one, although all could certainly be used to form a larger

celebration event.

Option 1: Whole-class ceremony

Invite pupils in turn to present their speeches aloud to the class. Encourage the class to cheer and celebrate the individual who has won the award.

Option 2: Individual presentation

Invite pupils to find the peer they have written their speech for and allow them time to present their speech just between the two of them. When pupils have completed this then they can swap to find the person who must present to them.

Option 3: Award certificate

Provide pupils with the time and resources to write up their speech as an awards certificate, decorating the page and creating a special memento for their peer to take with them to their new school.

Appendix 1 –Session 1 activity 1

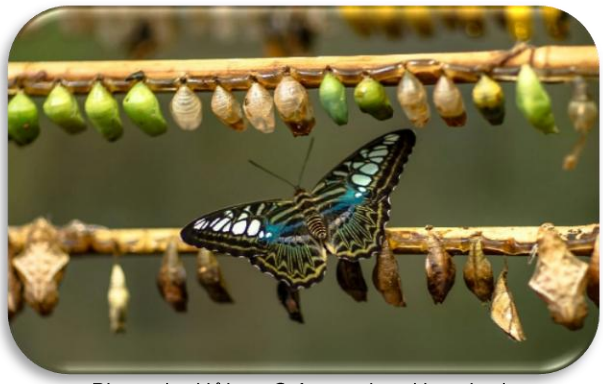

Photo by Håkon Grimstad on Unsplash

Photo by Liana S on Unsplash

Photo by Sandy Millar on Unsplash

Photo by Alex Diaz on Unsplash

Photo by Royal Oxford on Unsplash

Photo by Dino Reichmuth on Unsplash

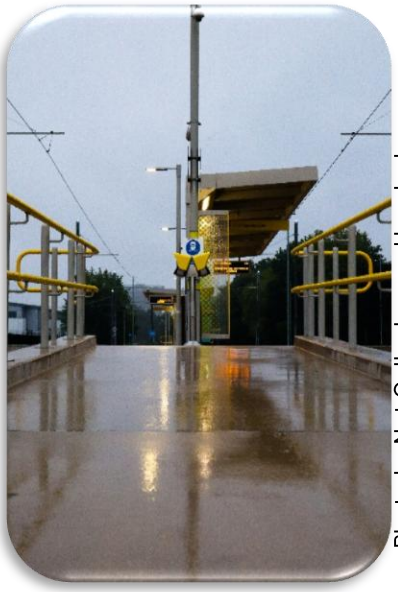

Photo by Nat Callaghan on Unsplash

Photo by Annabeth Robinson on Unsplash

National Literacy Trust
Change your story

Appendix 2 – Session 1 activity 4

Swifts eat as many as 100,000 flying insects a day.

Swifts travel through as many as 25 different countries on their yearly migration.

Swifts travel at speeds of almost 70mph, the fastest bird in level flying.

Swifts arrive in England at the beginning of summer and leave just at the end.

Some see swifts as representing endurance, adaptability and persistence.

A swift's high flight can represent dreams or big ideas.

National Literacy Trust

Change your story

Appendix 3 – Session 1 activity 4

Appendix 4 – Curriculum links

English programme of study – Years 5 and 6

Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:
• understand what they read by:
  ○ checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context
  ○ asking questions to improve their understanding
  ○ drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
• discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader

Spoken Language
Pupils should be taught to: • listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers • ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge • use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary • articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions • participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates