Language skills in the science classroom:

We classify writing into three types. All three can help to expose student ideas, help us assess what to teach next and work out what support is needed.

1. Writing to learn. Being asked to write makes students choose words and link them in a meaningful way. This process helps students form ideas and build upon them. For example: answering questions about a diagram, breaking down big ideas or preparing a summary.

2. Writing to reason - where students construct an argument using data to help make conclusions. Creating writing frames help them structure their use of language.

3. Writing to communicate. When students write to get marks it can constrain their writing approach. By introducing some creative writing tasks such as poetry or blog posts, we increase the chances that the writing will reveal the students’ understanding.

Excerpts of this checklist are taken from Approaches to learning and teaching Science cambridge.org/approachestolearning