The Roadmap

A writing and thinking framework

A free resource to help students and teachers improve writing and thinking skills

A gift from

The EverLearner

www.theeverlearner.com
Introduction
The Roadmap was born out of a need to have a structured framework to help students write exam answers which really respond to the question being asked. We made it because we saw a lack of such a framework available.

Other writing frameworks, such as PEE, can help to provide a basic structure but do little to help students understand what key command words actually mean. The Roadmap demystifies common exam terminology and provides a visual, memorable and practical tool to help students not only structure their answer, but understand on a deeper level what the question is really asking.

Beyond this, as a student, when you intuitively understand what words such as ‘explain’, ‘analyse’ and ‘evaluate’ mean, it not only allows for more clarity in an exam answer, but begins to change the way one thinks about concepts. As an example, by understanding what it really means to evaluate, it becomes easier to think in an evaluative mindset. It becomes more natural to consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of a new concept. Or consider a student trying to understand a complex graph: being comfortable with the skill of analysis will enable that student to break the graph down and understand each part in turn, before synthesising that knowledge into a more complete whole.

As a teacher, you will not only see students writing with the question in mind, but the linguistic quality of the answer will improve too. The use of connectives along with carefully considered punctuation will be sure to drive up the quality of students’ writing. This is also true of teachers. The quality of teachers’ written communication stands to be improved alongside that of the students.

What could be considered the most fascinating output of using The Roadmap is that, whilst it provides structure, it also allows for increased flair and creativity. Unlike other writing frameworks, which dictate what should be written and when, The Roadmap allows students flexibility in their answer, so they can focus on their strengths and use good-quality writing to demonstrate the depth of their understanding.

The graphics used on the Roadmaps are exemplar and serve to depict one possible shape of an answer. In reality, the aim is for students to create their own journeys to produce good-quality content which demonstrates the knowledge and understanding that they have. As with all resources which support students, the aim is to allow students to use the Roadmap images at first and then gradually remove them so that their use becomes intuitive.

It is because of all of this that we are releasing the core Roadmap resources for free. There are some constraints to this, which are detailed overleaf, but we want these resources to be spread far and wide so that as many students (and teachers) as possible can benefit from them.

The Roadmap is more than a writing framework. It is also a thinking framework.
Training

Opportunities to become an expert in delivering The Roadmap

Full-day introduction to The Roadmap

Join us in Classroom 21: our bespoke training centre and classroom. Here you will learn how to improve your learners’ thinking and writing skills, specifically in relation to exam questions, extended writing and levelled questions in exams.

Your day will consist of a rapid introduction to our concept, a thorough and detailed examination of extended writing in all formats and, importantly, an introduction to how to develop the behaviours of higher-order thinking and writing skills through classroom activities and experiences.

You will leave this day tired (we are going to work hard and you are going to get your money’s worth) but equipped to improve the quality of exam writing for all your students and with a hunger to apply what you have learned back in the classroom.

Bonus: You will also receive one full classroom pack of our highest quality resources and a one-hour webinar recording to remind you of the key principles at any time in the future.

Cost: £250+VAT

Whole-school training

Invite The EverLearner Team to your school to guide your whole teaching team through The Roadmap principle. At least two members of our team (three for bigger schools) will work with you to develop whole-school writing skills, literacy and, if it is desired, marking policy.

Our whole-school training is one full day of development (please ask us about shorter sessions) consisting of a rapid introduction to our concept, a thorough and detailed examination of extended writing in all formats and, importantly, an introduction to how to develop the behaviours of higher-order thinking and writing skills through classroom activities and experiences.

We guarantee to provoke and support your teams in equal measure. Schools should expect a challenging but rewarding day with direct application from the very next teaching day.

Bonus: you will also receive five full classroom packs and 20 corridor/wall displays as well as a one-hour teacher guidance webinar which you can host in your staff development environment permanently.

Cost: £1,997+VAT
Lead practitioner six-week course

Our practitioner course is aimed at equipping up to two colleagues from each school/college to train their entire teaching team and deliver a whole school writing/literacy strategy involving The Roadmap. The course is ideal for literacy coordinators, faculty heads and senior leaders but should also be considered by teachers looking to make a whole-school impact through action research or project-based work.

The course is six weeks in duration and is held online with an in-person graduation at the end of the cycle. All participants work in teams with colleagues from other schools and teams are accountable to one another for task completion. By the end of the six weeks, all practitioners will have launched their whole-school project.

As a bonus, practitioners receive five full classroom packages and 20 corridor/wall displays as well as 14 Roadmap training videos, which can be used in the school online environment as self-paced development for all staff.

Cost: £2,497+VAT

Become a Roadmap Expert

- Download free Roadmap publication
- Full-day introduction to The Roadmap or Whole-school training
- Lead Practitioner training
- Whole-school implementation

Click here to book
Fair Use

Please share The Roadmap freely, but fairly.
**Why are we making it free?**
We want all students to benefit from The Roadmap. So, whilst it is somewhat of a commercial risk to give this resource away for free, we feel it is the right thing to do.

In return for being able to use this resource freely, we ask that you please follow this simple fair use agreement:

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Benefits

Why you should use The Roadmap
Improved exam skills

The Roadmap teaches students to understand what exam questions are really asking them to do. It demystifies exam command words so that students answer the question which is actually being asked.

It also sets out, with clarity, the language which is going to help them produce that specific answer, along with the relevant punctuation. In short, the quality of writing as a whole improves.

Far from being restrictive, this framework provides a structure within which students have unbounded freedom to demonstrate their subject knowledge. They can write with flair because they have the backing of a clear, well-understood framework.

Improved questioning

Beyond simple exam skills, The Roadmap provides a framework for thinking and not just for writing exam answers. With a deep, intuitive understanding of what it means to evaluate, analyse and discuss, teachers and students begin to think in a different framework.

This leads teachers to asking more pertinent questions, which challenge more deeply their students’ understanding. It also gives teachers the clarity they need to ask questions which are relevant and targeted. With The Roadmap, if a teacher asks a student to explain something, both teacher and student know what is expected of them, and they understand how that would be different if they were asked to describe it.

Consistent literacy and marking strategies

Although it was not necessarily intentional when we started, The Roadmap has become somewhat of an essential tool for teachers as well as students. Teachers gain clarity about what is expected of students when it comes to exam questions, especially those higher-order skills, such as evaluating, analysing and discussing.

The Roadmap offers the clarity needed to give teachers confidence in knowing which language demonstrates students’ knowledge in response to a question and also how the correct punctuation should be used along with this language. The Roadmap demystifies writing for teachers as well as students. By incorporating The Roadmap into literacy strategies or marking policies, teachers and students have a consistent and reliable visual tool to improve the quality of writing, which can be used in all areas of the curriculum.

Truly higher-order thinkers

By higher-order thinking skills we mean those which demand a deep level of cognitive processing such as being able to analyse, evaluate and create. Thinking at this level requires knowledge and understanding but also a specific skill set which frames the way in which a problem is overcome. The output could be in a written exam, a piece of extended writing or a discussion. Being able to think in an analytical or evaluative frame, for example, is the first step towards truly being able to think at this elevated level and be genuinely creative.
The Concept

How does The Roadmap work?
How it works

Each Roadmap is a metaphor. The students imagine they are the driver of the bus. Their aim is to pick up as many Marks as possible on their journey. Each road represents an idea or theme in their answer and each skill sign reminds them to use the suggested language to ensure they are responding to the command word (they can, of course, add their own).

The first stage is to plan the answer. Ask students to draw Roadmaps to plan the direction their answer will take. At first, they might practise using the diagrams we have provided but, in time, they should create their own Roadmaps, reflecting the answer which they want to write. This provides structure without limiting the students’ creativity and flair.

Along the journey, ask students to think about where they might pick up Marks, what content Marks will be awarded for and what language they need to use in order to achieve that.

An example

Assume students were asked the question “Compare the characters of Benvolio and Tybalt from Romeo and Juliet”.

Using the Compare Roadmap above, Benvolio (theme 1) would have a road of his own, as would Tybalt (theme 2). Notice that no Marks are available for discussing either character individually. The Marks are available when the roads meet and comparative language is used in relation to both characters. For example:

In Romeo and Juliet, the characters Benvolio and Tybalt differ mostly in their temperament. Benvolio (possibly from the word ‘benevolent’) is a kind, passive character. However, Tybalt (possibly from the word ‘tyrant’) is a cruel, aggressive individual.*

*Yellow represents content which would be represented by Marks and green represents the linguistic features which reflect the command word.
Define
Give the meaning

is
is a
is the
is the process by which refers to
Identify / State
Name it / them

is is called
are are called
Summarise

Give the main points

is characterised by
is composed of
its main features are
consists of
Another point is
Moreover,
Furthermore,
Suggest
Give possible solutions

I believe
In my opinion
One possibility is
Another suggestion is
We should consider
We could also consider

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Describe / Outline

Give main details

is
is not
is characterised by
is composed of
is like
lacks
Calculate

Give a numerical answer

Units
Answer

Workings

Work out the answer as a number.

Show all workings.

Use the correct units.
Resources

Roadmap A4 Posters

Roadmap A2 Bedroom Posters

Roadmap Pocket Guides

Roadmap Learning Mats

Roadmap Online Course

Roadmap Playing Cards

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Draw

Use diagrams in your answer.

Carry a pencil, ruler and rubber.

Label axes.

Add a title.
Explain

Why? How? What?

because
through by
Therefore, This means The reason for this
Justify
Give reasons why

Reasons

I think
I believe
The reason for this is
Since
Thus
Because of this
Similarly,
In contrast,
In opposition,
The antithesis is
An alternative is
Nevertheless,
However,
, whereas

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Analyse

Break into parts and explain

Firstly, Secondly, Lastly, Evidently, This means that This causes As a result of this, This is because Therefore,
Evaluate
Judge from both sides and reach a conclusion

Conclusion

A strength/weakness is
An advantage/disadvantage is
On the one hand,
In contrast,
, whereas
Similarly,
In conclusion,
Discuss
Talk about key points

As required...

Describe  Compare
Analyse  Evaluate
Conclude

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Skill Signs

- **Recall**
  - Remember facts

- **Explanation**
  - Extend by adding detail

- **Comparison**
  - Find similarities and differences

- **Calculation**
  - Work out the value and include units

- **Illustration**
  - Draw

- **Analysis**
  - Break down a concept

- **Evaluation**
  - Judge from both sides

- **Conclusion**
  - Reach a balanced outcome
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