

Get Writing

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There are many activities on the British Council's site for young learners LearnEnglish Kids which you can use with your learners to help them develop their writing skills. They range from writing poems, making stories, reading and sending book and film reviews and sending ecards to family and friends. In the classroom there are many ways of exploiting these activities to help children practise their English whilst developing their creativity and imagination. You can find them here:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-get-writing.htm>



On this page you will find tips for using and exploiting the activities in the classroom.

1) Play with Poems

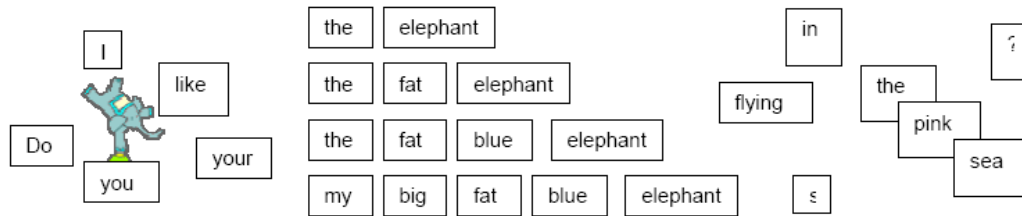
http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/makeapoem/index_obtree.html

Play with Poems can generate an infinite number of creative poems on the topics of animals, horror and love. They can be as simple or as sophisticated as the language of poetry allows.

- Before making a poem, you could introduce the topics by asking your learners to think of words they associate with the topic. For example, on the topic of animals, brainstorm the names of animals, body parts, colours, actions and places where animals live. Flashcards or pictures from story books or magazines can help to stimulate associations. For horror, encourage your learners to come up with 'scary' words just think of vampires and ghosts! As for love, think of relationships or hearts and roses on birthday and Valentine cards.
- Encourage your learners to keep a personalised mini-dictionary of words for them to refer back to, organised by topic, illustrated or translated as desired.
- Alternatively, your learners might like to organise their words alphabetically-poems often make use of alliteration to make a poem more rhythmical. Challenge your learners to think of as many words as they can that begin with same letter of the alphabet. For example, **o**ne, **o**ld, **o**range, **o**ctopus, **o**n, **o**kay.
- Now encourage your learners to play with the words and make connections. For example, what's orange? What's an octopus like? Draw an octopus and write eight things about it in place of its eight legs!
- Your learners could also make some short acrostic poems. For example,

P laying with poems	S mart	B ite boys
O nline is	A lways in action	A t night
E xciting for	M agic music man	T errible taste!
M e!	S am I am.	S top it!

- Your learners could create shorter and longer sentences, arranging and re-arranging their words and ideas like this: (If you have them, magnetic words or word flashcards are great for this activity!)



- With a class of learners you could also give each learner a word card and ask them to stand up and arrange themselves in order. How many different sentences can they create?
- Now your learners could view some of the poems online before making their own poems.
- When your learners have finished, they can print out their poems and make their own book of poetry to read and share with friends or classmates. They may also e-mail them to their friends and family.

2) Story Maker

Story Maker can generate a great variety of fairy, horror and science fiction stories, personalised by your learners themselves!

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-writing-storymaker.htm>



- Before making a story, you could introduce the story topics by asking your learners to tell you about stories they've already read. Let's take fairy stories as an example. Who are the main characters? What are their names? Where do they live? What are they like? What happens to them in the end? Have a look at some real books with visually appealing covers and illustrations, if available, to stimulate interest and language output.
- Alternatively, you could use the questions in the Story maker to brainstorm vocabulary and draw on your learners' preferences, for example, 'What's your favourite musical instrument?' 'Who do you like being with?' 'What are the scariest animals or creatures?' With a class, you could make the questions into a class survey.
- You could also turn the questions into a multiple-choice quiz using the Story Maker options. For instance,
Where is a place you like to go?
a) the forest b) the river c) school d) my friend's house e) the shop
Imagine you have a pet. What is it?
a) rabbit b) a parrot c) a frog d) a monkey e) a cat

- Now your learners can create their own story with the Story Maker.
- When your learners have finished, they can print out their stories to read and enjoy with classmates. You could then ask your learners to compare their stories and comment on the differences in the versions.

- Additionally, your learners could illustrate their stories or create storyboards for each part. Encourage them to talk simply about their pictures, prompting and interacting with them as necessary.
- Your learners might also like to act out their stories for each other. Whilst more advanced learners could create the dialogue as they perform their parts, other learners could simply narrate their stories.
- As further extension activities, you could ask your learners to come up with new options for the questions in the Story Maker, or to write questions and options for different story genres.
- For more advanced learners, you could use the final versions of the stories in the Story Maker as the stimulus for freer writing practice. For example, they could create different endings for their stories or write an email to one of their characters.
- Finally, encourage your learners to look at the **Topics** section on LearnEnglish Kids to expand their vocabulary and the **Stories** section to extend their interest in reading and writing-how about [Alan and the Alien](#), for example?!

3) Write a review

Learners can read and write reviews about books or films:

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/bookreview_obtree/your_reviews.asp

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids/filmreview/your_reviews.asp



- Generate interest and ideas by showing your learners books appropriate for their ages. If you have enough space, create a 'reading corner' where they can sit and read for pleasure during a quiet moment of the day. Display their reviews so that they can see which books have been recommended. If you have a library, you could integrate a trip to see all the books available.
- You could also introduce the topic of reading through the printable reading quiz 'Are you a bookworm?' and find out what kind of reader your learners are (click on 'books' in the 'Topics' section for the quiz) . Now talk about the books your learners are reading at the moment. What's the name of the book? Who are the main characters? Who would they like to be? What's their favourite part of the story?
- If you're reading a book as a class, you could elicit the language of a book review from your learners and create your own model to support them online, alternatively, you could use the best reviews on LearnEnglish Kids as models, asking your learners to find the words that describe the characters, for example.
- Print one of the film reviews. Look at the questions. Use these questions to write a model review. Ask your learners to send in their reviews to LearnEnglish Kids. Their review might appear!

4) Send an ecard

http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/kidsecards_frame.html

Sending and receiving ecards all over the world is a fun way for your learners to practise their writing skills.

- Ask your learners when they send cards? For what special occasions? Brainstorm some messages and greetings that they might send for these occasions.
- Show your learners the **penpal** option for ideas of things to write. Now they can choose an ecard and write their own messages.

