

"WRITING
IS THE
PAINTING
OF THE
VOICE!"
VOLTAIRE

WRITING

SKILLS

New Tutor Training #7



READ TO LEARN

Revised 5/2018

WRITING

Writing should be an extension of the reading process. It allows learners to create their own texts to read, as well as practice using vocabulary and grammar in an authentic manner. Let's look at two specific types of writing:

1. More structured writing - Language Experience Approach (LEA)
2. Less structured writing – Journaling

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

Taking the approach that writing is “*just talk written down*”, LEA integrates all four components of literacy (listening, speaking, reading and writing). It uses the learner's prior knowledge and experiences to create written texts to read that are a reflection of their own interests.

This form of writing works best in an “unplanned” setting, such as sharing a concern or worry that the learner might have about something happening in their life (ex. child having trouble in school; trying to understand a car repair person; planning a vacation to New York). It can also be used to complete an assignment (ex. listening to the TV news and responding to a specific story; after reading an article or story, writing about a similar experience in their own life). The idea is that whether it is used as a planned or a spontaneous activity, all of the language comes from the learner with the tutor's supporting questions during the dictation.

The tutor's role in LEA

- Write something *every week*. Repetition of the process is important.
- Minimize your own talking time
- Have learner talk about something relevant to them (prior or current life experience) or about a specific theme (tie in with what they are reading now).
- Ask questions (especially who, what, where, when why and how) to encourage your learner.
- Remind learner to use any past or present vocabulary words whenever possible.
- The first time you should write down *exactly* what they say, including any “mistakes” in grammar, word order, etc. (*This step is important the first few times you do this activity so the learner is not concerned with spelling, punctuation, etc. The idea is to just get words on the page.*)

- 🎬 Make very few, if any, corrections while your learner is dictating to you. Stopping to make corrections can disrupt the flow of ideas and words.
- 🎬 Review what was written with your learner. Ask them to read it back to you. Learners may self-correct. Allow them to comment on what errors they see. Choose ONE to discuss, correct, or “say it better”.
- 🎬 Eventually, the learner will do the initial writing, not the tutor

This activity is not a formal writing assignment, but it can be called a draft. This draft may or may not be edited and rewritten.

Other types of writing activities that might be useful to learners

- 🎬 Making lists
- 🎬 Notes to teachers, coaches, child-care providers
- 🎬 Filling out forms or applications
- 🎬 Practice putting words together to form sentences and sentences together to form paragraphs

Examples for writing topics:

- 🎬 Practice a dialog (with a teacher, coach or child-care provider; visiting a doctor or dentist; getting car repaired)
- 🎬 Tell or summarize a story
- 🎬 Share a recipe or a food experience
- 🎬 How to...
- 🎬 Share childhood or family memories
- 🎬 Relate a vacation trip
- 🎬 What is it? Describe a picture
- 🎬 Respond to something on TV, radio, or online podcast

Journal Writing (See Tutor Training information you received about this topic)

It is important that learners write daily in English, so writing at home is necessary. Using a dialog journal, for example, is one way to not only provide your learner an opportunity to write, but also to read and respond to someone else’s writing. This should be a weekly homework assignment.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are tools that can help your learner visualize and organize information for both reading and writing. Graphic organizers provide many benefits to learners who use them including:

- Increasing learners' reading comprehension
- Making it easy to brainstorm or plan their writing
- Encouraging learners to organize their thoughts and ideas
- Encouraging learners to make decisions about what to write

Using Graphic Organizers

Use graphic organizers to support many concepts, including but not limited to:

- Reading comprehension: KWL
(What I know, what I want to know, what I learned)
- Cause and effect
- Note taking
- Comparing and contrasting concepts
- Organizing problems and solutions
- Relating information to main themes and ideas
- Organizational skills
- Vocabulary knowledge
- Sequencing

Most graphic organizers are self-explanatory, but if you have trouble guiding your learner to use one, either look for a simpler version or talk to your site supervisor for some hints.

Types of Graphic Organizers

Reading Comprehension - KWL

Generic: Topic/details

Timeline

Who, What, Why, Where, When, How

Sequencing

Specific: Compare/Contrast - Venn diagram; Fact/Opinion; Cause/Effect