

## Six Literacy Activities for Frontier College Tutors

**1. The Language Experience approach.** Acting as a scribe, you can develop a composition voiced by your learner into a written work:

- brainstorm first about what you'll write about;
- use the learner's words and print them clearly;
- when finished (it doesn't have to be long), read the piece back to your learner: is it correct?;
- encourage your student to edit and then have him/her read it aloud;
- save the writing as a "portfolio piece" and review later—it's a great way to make learners realize how far their reading and writing has come in a really short time!

**2. Encourage Prediction & Reading Aloud.** Talking about and sharing stories together aids with sight words, semantics (word meanings), context and syntax (sentence and story structures).

Keep these thoughts in mind:

- reading material should be predictable, and not too long or complex;
- read the material first and define words that your learner may not know;
- take turns reading;
- encourage questions and use lots of praise—but cut it short if interest wanes.

**Some Reading Games** from *Pass the Play, Please*:

**Hot Dog.** Hot dog is the word that can be thrown into a story every so often: "The three little pigs lived in a hot dog in the forest." The quick response: "No, no! In a house!" This is a fun game that will also keep a child's eyes following the print.

**Fill the Blank.** Read along normally right up to the end of the page, but stop with three words to go. "How about you finish up? You can read the words." As so many young children want the same stories read again and again, they have often memorized every word in the story! Congratulate the reader when he/she "reads" the ending.

**Everyone's A Hero.** Who says that *Thomas' Snowsuit* has to be about Thomas if your learner is named Julian? Who says that the hero of a boy's book can't be a girl? Bring your learner into the story.

P.S. There's a terrific story called *Once Upon a Golden Apple* by Jean Little that is a great example of these reading games.

After reading together, remember to:

- talk about what you have read;
- review difficult words; and
- try to write to reinforce the material read;

Different suggestions for reading can include poems, song lyrics, cartoons, magazine articles, or comic books.

**3. Written Conversation:** A chat but without the cyberspace! Use written conversation to:

- ask questions back and forth;
- act like you are writing notes back and forth. It still provides the opportunity to model spelling, grammar, punctuation and even style to a learner. Remember, focus on writing and not on correcting;
- ask about things of interest to your learner and try to develop a theme.

**4. Cloze Exercises:** These are fill-in-the-blank activities to engage your learner and get him/her to read and write!

- develop a paragraph (or less) with words deleted for a learner to fill in;
- some learners may NOT be interested in this game, but it can be silly and fun;
- can help practice spelling, consonant sounds, prediction, and word meanings;
- don't delete too many words, and consider a "pick list" at the bottom of the page.

**5. An Ancient Egyptian Code** (taken from *Pass the Play, Please*)

The ancient Egyptians used a code based on familiar symbols to represent numbers. In the same way, some story books use "rebus" or pictures of things to represent specific words.

Simple shapes and symbols can also be used to create a "hieroglyphic" looking code:

A = )	G = #	M = ☰	S = ☆	Y = ⊗
B = ▶	H = <	N = ☷	T = ←	Z = ●
C = ◐	I = >	O = ◆	U = →	
D = ◇	J = ^	P = □	V = ↑	
E = ~	K = (	Q = ○	W = ↓	
F = *	L = ◑	R = ⊙	X = ✓	

**6. ABC Crossout** (taken from *Pass the Play, Please*)

Children practicing the letters of the alphabet can use their eyes to search for matches in this game. Other variations can include matching uppercase letters to lowercase letters, or providing a list of words to "find" by crossing out letters one by one.

- this is a simpler variation of a word search, but with a different overall look. Instead of listing letters one beside the other in a grid form, place all the letters in boxes floating on a blank page.
- the player crosses out the letters that match. The game can be played with an equal number of matches (52 squares) or with some extra boxes with letters that can be unscrambled to spell a simple word.

Information on Prediction and Reading Aloud, Written Conversation, Cloze and Language Experience are from Frontier College's *A Tutor's Guide: Reading & Writing with Children and Youth*.

*Pass the Play, Please: Literacy and Learning Through Fun and Games* was developed as a Connecting Communities guide by Natalie Wilson and Meghan Wylie on behalf of Frontier College.