

Write On: Best Writing Activities for Kids

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Words, Games & Writing Workshop

Presented by Frontier College

Table of Contents

1. Guided Imagery	4
2. All About Me Word Collage	4
3. Muted Movie	4
4. Script Writing	4
5. Group Story	5
6. Picture a Face.....	5
7. Box of Trinkets.....	5
8. Random Words	6
9. Music Writing Chairs.....	6
10. Word Memory	6
11. Pot of Nature.....	7
12. Reporter Exercise	7
13. Freeze Game.....	7
14. Person, Place and Thing Cups.....	7
15. Advertising an Odd Object.....	8
16. Time Capsule	8
17. Penny Writing Activity	8
18. Domino Stories	8
19. Word of the Day	9
20. Energizer – Word Ball Association	9
21. Weird Senses	9
22. Beachball Questions	9
23. Design an Olympic Sport.....	10
24. Mad Libs.....	10
25. If I Could Be	10
26. Magazine Poetry	11
27. Create Your Own Country Brochure	11

28.	Fortune Cookie Writing	11
29.	Heroes.....	11
30.	Newspaper Article.....	12
31.	Debate.....	12
32.	Letter to the Future	12
33.	Protect the Environment	12
34.	Letter Writing.....	13
35.	Interview the Characters.....	13
36.	Movie Critique	13
37.	Photo Journalism	13
38.	Living Appliances.....	14
39.	Box of Doom.....	14
40.	A Dream Come True	14
41.	Create a Creature	14
42.	Three Truths and a Lie	14
43.	Categories.....	14
44.	Alphabet Grocery Shopping.....	15
45.	Word Searches	15
46.	Word Scramblers	15
47.	Hang Man.....	15
48.	Find Small Words in Big Words.....	15
49.	Create a Game.....	15
50.	Magic Potion	16

1. Guided Imagery

For this activity, you have the child(ren) get into a relaxed position and close their eyes. Take them on an imaginary journey by reading them “guided imagery” or a storybook. Do not read the ending, if there is one; instead, have them create their own end to the story in writing.

2. All About Me Word Collage

Layout any magazines or newspapers that you do not mind being cut up, as well as craft supplies (such as sparkles and feathers). Give each child a piece of construction paper and have them pick **words only** that represents who they are. Create a collage with these words in a fancy design. You can create one for yourself along with them, or create yours beforehand to show them an example.

To follow up, give them a nice piece of paper and have them write a poem using at least five words from their collage. Allow them to share their work with the group if they are willing.

3. Muted Movie

Let the children watch a one-minute scene of dialogue from a movie or television show, while the TV is on mute. Using their imagination and creativity, they must write what they think that characters are saying and what the situation is. You may want to use a familiar movie the first few times to get them comfortable with the activity, but then begin using a movie they have not seen yet.

4. Script Writing

Ask the children to explain how a play works. Tell them that every play has a script, which tells the actors what to say and when to enter / exit the stage. Break the children into groups and have them write a script for one of the following questions:

1. How did the lion get his mane?
2. How did the zebra get her stripes?
3. How did the elephant get his trunk?
4. How did the giraffe’s neck become so long?

5. How did the leopard get her spots?

You should end up with a 5-10 minute script that answers the Legend question; the script should indicate who is speaking, as well as when characters are entering and exiting the stage. Encourage the kids to use props in their production, and allow them to act out their scripts once you have checked them over.

5. Group Story

Before starting this activity, talk about how every story has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning is where the reader learns about who is in the story (characters), and where the story takes place (setting). The middle of a story has more details, and a big event or problem takes place (climax). The end is where the problem is solved (resolution) and the story finishes.

Have the children sit in a circle and begin a story. Have each kid take turns, saying one word each. In the first round they will work on the beginning of the story and the second round is the middle of the story. Split the children into pairs, or let them work individually, and write an ending to the group story that was just produced. Let those who want to, share their work with the group.

6. Picture a Face

On a table, spread out a pile of faces cut out from magazines and glued onto pieces of construction paper. Have the child pick a face, and ask them to write a story that involves this person. Let them share their work.

Variation: Give your child a magazine and have them close their eyes, open it to a random page, and point. They can write about the face that is closest to where their finger landed.

7. Box of Trinkets

Have a box full of random items, such as an alarm clock, small statue, door knob, etc. Without letting them look in the box, have each child reach in and grab an item out of the box. They are then to write a story or poem that includes that item in some way, or you could have them do a five to ten minute non-stop writing session.

8. Random Words

Give each child a post-it note and have them close their eyes while you count to five. After five, ask them to open their eyes and, as fast as they can, write down the first three words that pop into their head. Have them pass the post it notes down, 2 people to the right. Each child will write for five to ten minutes, non-stop, incorporating the three words from the post-it note they receive.

Variation: if you do not have a large group of students, you can stop and do post-it note words at different times during the day, or over the week. When you have a small collection of them, then have your child randomly pick one and write about those words.

9. Music Writing Chairs

Set up chairs around a table (enough for one chair per child), placing a piece of paper and a pencil on the table at each seat. Have each child sit at a chair and have them begin a story. After two minutes, play some upbeat music; this is their signal to get up and dance in a circle around the chairs. When the music stops, they must sit as quickly as possible at a chair, read the story, and continue on with it. After a couple of rounds, you can begin to remove chairs; those who do not get to a chair when the music stops are out. When there are only a few people still playing, ask them to end their stories.

10. Word Memory

Create a tray with 15-20 labelled items; for instance, an apple labelled with 'apple' or soap labelled with 'soap'. Cover the tray with a blanket and bring it to the child(ren). Remove the blanket for one minute and tell the child(ren) that they have one minute to memorize the items and their words on the tray. Give them one minute to write down as many items as they can remember. Recover the tray and take it into another room, where you will remove one or two items. Present the tray again with the removal of the blanket, only this time the kids have to guess which items are missing. Have them write down the name of the item(s) on a piece of paper.

11. Pot of Nature

Ask your child(ren) to describe their favourite things about nature and write these things down. Based on these favourite things, have each child write a short poem, or meaningful phrase about nature. Give each child a permanent marker, some craft supplies (i.e., pom poms, feathers, sparkles, and hot glue, or you could give them branches, leaves, sand, soil, and other items from Mother Nature) and a small terra cotta pot (only \$1 at dollar stores). Have them write their poem with the permanent marker and decorate the pot.

12. Reporter Exercise

Children learn the basics of writing a story through W5H (who, what, when, where, why and how). You can teach them this by showing them a picture (such as from a magazine or newspaper) and coming up with creative answers to explain the visual provided.

If kids want to challenge, they can use the “Pyramid of Journalism” and order facts from least to most important. Once the article is written, have kids glue the picture onto a piece of paper, write the article in columns, and include a title, and picture captions.

13. Freeze Game

Encourage kids to interact in a playful manner; public speaking, improvisation, and use of the English language. In the freeze game, two students pretend to act out any scene (such as working at a factory or walking a huge dog) using improvisation and creativity. The kids are encouraged to be as exuberant as possible. Once the two students have acted out enough of the scene, someone else has to shout out “FREEZE” and the two kids acting out the scene have to stop moving. Whoever shouted out “freeze” then replaces one of the two kids, and they ‘unfreeze’ and continue with the scene or start a completely new scenario.

14. Person, Place and Thing Cups

In three different cups have a list of ten people, places and things. Each child must draw a person, place and thing from each cup and write a short story using what they have chosen.

15. Advertising an Odd Object

Purchase several weird and unidentifiable objects from a thrift store or get them from home. Display these objects on a table from the child(ren), and have them pair up (or work alone) and pick an object. Imagine what they believe the object could be used for. On a large piece of construction paper, get child(ren) to make a poster advertising the object in any format they choose. Make certain to include certain guidelines like:

- What is it called?
- What is its function?
- How much is it?
- Where would you find it?

16. Time Capsule

In an old wooden box, place a variety of tangible objects. Tell the group that you found this time capsule with all of these objects in it and ask them to use their imagination and write about what these objects are, where they came from, and how and why they got there. If you put old-looking objects into an old box, the kids may actually believe that these were found, and may write intricate, fascinating, and descriptive stories using their imaginations!

17. Penny Writing Activity

Give each student an old penny. Have them write a story pertaining to the date on the penny, and let the kids tape the penny to their work. They may want to use the internet or some reference books to learn about what happened in that year. Newspaper websites would be very useful for this activity, to find local news.

18. Domino Stories

Students are given six small pieces of paper and asked to draw one character doing six different activities (one on each piece of paper). Students then pass their pictures two people down. Every student receives a new set of pictures; they use the new set of pictures to create a comic book.

19. Word of the Day

Introduce your child to a new word by writing it down, along with its definition and a sentence with the word in it. Encourage them to use it during the day. At the end of the day, find out if they can tell you what it means and use it in a sentence.

If you have a group of students, have them listen carefully for the word because whoever hears it used by you first must yell “Word of the Day!” They must then be able to define it and use it in a sentence. You may reward a prize or extra privilege for getting it correct.

20. Energizer – Word Ball Association

Decide on a theme for this game before beginning. Youth stand in a circle and a ball is thrown randomly around. Whoever catches the ball has to say a word that is associated with the theme. If they cannot think of a word within five seconds, or if they repeat a word already said, they are out.

21. Weird Senses

Separate kids into three or four groups, depending on the size of your group. Tell them about how sometimes dogs cannot see the rainbow because they cannot see colours like we do. So now the big job is to describe to Oscar, my dog, what the rainbow looks like.

Hints: write down the five senses, cross out “sight” and ask the kids to describe the seven colours of the rainbow in terms of the other four senses (smell, taste, touch, sound). Write the rainbow story down as a group.

Variation: You can do this activity with one child, or with just a few and have them do the writing on their own. You can also use a family pet for them to describe the senses to.

22. Beachball Questions

With a permanent pen, write a bunch of questions on a beachball and draw a blob around each question. Blobs should be side-by-side so that the entire ball is filled up with questions. Stand in a circle with the group and throw the ball to individuals. Tell

the kids to read out the question that lies where their left thumb is when they catch the ball. Have the kids write or draw the answer to their question.

Variation: To do this activity with just a few children, or even just one child, just toss the ball to the child(ren) and let them get to work on their question.

You can allow the child(ren) to help you come up with questions and get them to help write them on the ball.

23. Design an Olympic Sport

Brainstorm some different Olympic sports with your group and have them describe some attributes of each sport that they can think of. Let them create and describe their own Olympic sport on a sheet of paper. Ensure that they include how to play it, skill and equipment involved, etc. They can also draw a picture of the sport if they would like.

24. Mad Libs

Purchase a Mad Libs book, or create your own. Once children are familiar with Mad Libs, let them create their own.

To create your own, you can write a short verse and leave some words blank. Consider doing a pick list of words and do not leave too many blanks (it makes it too difficult for them to choose the right words without context). You can also take a passage out of book that your child is reading (a novel or a storybook); type or write the passage, deleting some words. Put the deleted words in a pick list at the bottom and let your child fill in the blanks.

25. If I Could Be ...

Ask Students to imagine that they are a type of fruit, a type of weather, an article of clothing, an instrument, etc. Tell them to decide what, in each category, they would be, and then to write down, and why – what characteristics does that item have that they share with it?

26. Magazine Poetry

Give students a canvas to work on (it could be construction paper, blank paper, Bristol board – whatever size/colour you would like). Lay out many magazines and/or newspapers and have them create a free verse poem using only words found in magazines. Have them glue the individual cut out words onto the canvas to form their free verse poem.

27. Create Your Own Country Brochure

Brainstorm some of the attributes of countries. Have children dream up an imaginary country and write down their ideas. Ensure that they include descriptions of the country's flag, national anthem, name, climate, currency, holidays, etc. At the end, they can present and sell their country to other kids as if there were travel agents trying to sell a trip package.

28. Fortune Cookie Writing

Give each student a fortune cookie. Have them open it and write for fifteen minutes about their fortune and what they think it will bring.

29. Heroes

Explore the term "Hero," finding out what the idea means to us, and what some examples of characteristics/attributes of heroism are. Write a short story about a hero and his or her community. Or, as a group, create a dilemma that needs solving or help. Write a short script about the dilemma and a protagonist hero who 'saves the day.' Act out, or film the story. Alternatively, create a TV talk show with a host and guests. Each youth will take on the role of someone who has done something wild and heroic; they will be 'interviewed' by the pretend host or journalist and must come up with a script to act out.

30. Newspaper Article

Kids cut out a picture from a magazine or newspaper and write a fictional article that relates to the picture. Glue the picture to a piece of paper along with the article written in column format, so that it looks like a piece of newspaper. Ensure to include a title for the article, an author, and a sub-heading.

31. Debate

Kids must listen to a debate between two other people on a controversial subject (i.e., the pros and cons of school uniforms). After evaluating the arguments, the kids must write a persuasive argument stating which side they agree with.

Variation: Talk about a controversy that is occurring in your city, town or neighbourhood, and have the child(ren) come up with a list of pros and cons, then write a persuasive argument for one, or both. By having children write an argument for both sides, it teaches them to think of the situation from all sides, instead of just one.

32. Letter to the Future

The child(ren) must write a letter to a future version of themselves; they can write about who their friends are, what they like to do for fun, the foods they eat, what TV shows they watch and other topics. Seal the letter, writing their name and the date on it; put on a future date (one year, five years from now – have the child decide when they would like to open it, to see how they have changed over the years).

33. Protect the Environment

Ask kids how they can protect the environment, and write suggestions on a piece of paper. Have kids create a brochure with the title “How Can I Protect the Environment?”

34. Letter Writing

Discuss letters and what they are; discuss the Prime Minister and issues going on in Canada. Ask the kids: "What sorts of things would you want to talk to the Prime Minister about?" Write topics that kids could write to the Prime Minister about in a letter, on a piece of paper. Some example topics:

- My experience immigrating to Canada
- What I like about Canada
- What I want to change about Canada

Have the child(ren) write a letter to the Prime Minister.

35. Interview the Characters

Have the kids listen to you read a story out loud and then a small selection of kids can choose which character they want to be. The rest of the group asks the characters questions, pretending to be reporters, and the kid/character try to relate their answers as much as possible to the book.

Variation: If you are not working with a small group, read a story and have the child pick a character that they would like to interview. Have them write down questions they would like to ask the character, and write the character's answers as they relate to the book.

36. Movie Critique

Show the kids clips from a movie. Have them practice reviews of the clip. Or you may have them review a news article.

37. Photo Journalism

Take your group on an outing or field trip to a local park, area or town, or historical location. On the way, have the group take as many pictures as they like of whatever they wish (you can use a disposable camera, or anything else you have at home). Have the pictures developed and ask the kids to make story books about their outing, putting words to their pictures (one page per picture).

38. Living Appliances

Have students imagine that their appliances at home came alive at night! Ask them to write a story about what would happen that night, using the appliances as characters.

39. Box of Doom

Fill a box with random clippings, such as coupons, short news articles, classified ads, old receipts, magazine advertisements. Have kids stick their hands into the box without looking into it, and pull out an item. Have the children read their item like a certain character. For instance, they could read it like an old English granny or like a robot.

40. A Dream Come True

Ask students to think about their biggest and most wanted dream. Then have students write about it.

41. Create a Creature

Have kids create an imaginary creature by writing about all its characteristics, its habits and habitat, its diet, lifespan, etc.

42. Three Truths and a Lie

Ask the child(ren) to write down three things about themselves that are true, and one thing that is a lie. Kids can read their work to the group and let group guess which part is the lie.

43. Categories

Have kids think up a song name, city name that starts with each of the letters in the word "read." You can also do this activity with the child's name, or favourite activity; you can even change the three categories they are trying to think of.

44. Alphabet Grocery Shopping

Have kids think of one item that could be purchased at the grocery store that starts with each of the letters in the alphabet. This activity can be made into a race, or you can change the category (Alphabet Toy Shopping, Alphabet Car Shopping, etc.).

45. Word Searches

Have kids complete a word search, or create their own. This is a great opportunity for them to practice some new vocabulary they are learning at school.

46. Word Scramblers

Have children complete a word scrambler, or create their own. This is a great opportunity for them to practice words that they have difficulty spelling correctly.

47. Hang Man

Can be done in a large group or kids can create and play their own hangman games in smaller groups.

48. Find Small Words in Big Words

Asks children to find as many words as they can, using the letters from the word TOURNAMENT. This can be done with other long words such as CHAMPIONSHIP. Encourage students to use letters that are not beside each other to make their words, instead of just the small words within the larger word that can be seen right away.

49. Create a Game

Have the children create a brand new board game description. Have them write up a rules booklet as well as a board and playing pieces for the game.

50. Magic Potion

Give children a bottle full of water, as well as sparkles, food colouring, dish detergent, etc. Ask the kids to create a “magic potion,” but do not let them drink it! Have the kids write about what this “magic potion” does and create label for it.

51. Spelling Snowball

Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil or marker (ensure that they are all the same colour to make the activity completely anonymous). Gather everybody in a circle; give them a word to spell on their paper then everybody bunches up their paper and throws them like a snowball (towards the center of the circle, not at anybody). Each child picks up a paper from the center and the group spells the word all together. By doing this, a child does not have their own paper and nobody can identify one specific voice if the word is spelled incorrectly on their page.