

### 1. Creative writing

This might be used as an ice breaker, or to consolidate vocabulary learnt in a previous lesson. It consists of giving a student a word and ask them to write an acrostic – a poem that spells out the original word with the first letter of each line.

For example: 'Classroom Objects' (this poem was written by a 12-year-old student)

Paint

Elephants

Not



Cry

Intelligent

Life

As a follow-up activity, students can read their poem to the class if they want to. The students could vote for the best poem and the winner could get a chocolate.

### 3. Journal diaries and storytelling

Journal diaries have been a great help to my students' writing. We use a web tool called [livelytyping](#)  and the [Edmodo](#)  platform, and the students can also use paper and pencil. I respond to every single piece of their writing without correcting them, but I also encourage them to reflect on mistakes. Most of my students have responded very positively, and are now much more comfortable about exposing their ideas. The journal diaries students post on Edmodo should only be visible to the teacher, not other students, because the entries may be more personal.

## 2. Peer writing

This is an activity children love doing, as they are allowed to work in pairs. They need to already know how to use the past simple and past continuous tenses to tell a story.

First, you give the students a sheet of paper with two columns of sentences about a young couple who met years ago. Depending on the children's age, the number of sentences should vary between eight and ten in each column. Next, you ask them to match the sentences in the first column with the sentences in the second one. There's no wrong or right answer.

Here's an example:

(1) Mark and Sue met / when Susan was 23




(2) They had twins /and got married

(3) They started a new school for children / after the war

(4) They fell in love / in France

After matching the sentences, the students write a story using the verb tense given in the sentences. As a follow-up, pairs of children can compare their stories and see the differences and similarities between them. In the next class, the teacher can show how to correct errors by writing any mistakes (anonymously) on the board and asking students to correct them.

## 4. Co-operative writing

**Padlet**  is a collaborative web tool that students love! Videos, images and songs can be uploaded on a virtual multimedia wall. I've used it recently to get children involved in writing **classroom contracts**  as well as writing about their **likes and dislikes** . It's a very rich tool as the writing can be done co-operatively in class, and the students can also edit their work at home.

## 5. Using word clouds and songs

This is an activity children are very fond of, but it is most effective for students aged 12 and up.

First, create a word cloud using words from a song, other words with similar sounds, and some verbs. Print the word cloud and hand out copies to the class. A good word cloud generator is [ABCya](#).

Next, play the song – either a YouTube video or just the song itself – and ask the children to circle the words they hear. One song I used recently was ‘[When I was your man](#)’ by Bruno Mars, as it is a song that both boys and girls like very much. Then hand out the lyrics for the students to check in pairs, and ask them to write an email together, based on the song and using the verbs given.

## 6. Cartoons

Another technique I’ve tried with my ten- to 12-year-old students is to create a cartoon using a web tool called [Pixton](#). First, I showed the children a cartoon on the screen of the interactive white board with speech bubbles and no words. Then I printed out the cartoon, gave copies to the children, and asked them to create speeches for the cartoon characters using new vocabulary. As a follow-up activity, the students wrote stories about the characters and shared them online with the group.

## 7. Book projects

In a lesson about 'best friends', ten- and 11-year-olds write a book called 'Best friends come in all shapes and sizes'. Before starting, the children learn ways to describe people, such as 'She's got blue eyes and dark hair'. They also learn vocabulary on favourite toys, likes and dislikes, and pets. For example: 'She likes... she doesn't like...', 'Her favourite toy is a/ an...', 'She's got a pet...', 'Her pet's name is...', 'It's a dog/cat...'.

After several lessons working on the above structures, the children bring their best friends to school and we take a picture of each child with his or her best friend. If that's not possible, the child brings a photo of himself or herself with a best friend.

Guided by the teacher, each child writes a little bit about their best friend such as, 'My best friend is Ana. She's 11 years old. She's tall. She's got dark straight hair and brown eyes. She's got a pet, a dog called Simba. Her favourite toy is a video game. She's got a bike but she hasn't got an iPad. She likes dancing ballet but she doesn't like swimming. I love my best friend'. The teacher collects the student's writing and corrects all the mistakes. Next, all the texts are typed and sent to a professional printing office to make a real book. If this is not possible, it can still be done beautifully by hand. On a set day, parents, families and friends come to the book launch, where the young writers autograph their book and take pictures.