

# 55 INTERESTING WAYS\* TO SUPPORT WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM \*and tips

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# #1 - "Adjective Knockout!"

When students are preparing to write a biased historical account, start by giving them 5 minutes to produce a personal list of "positive" adjectives (brave, clever, thoughtful, and so on).

Students then stand up, and in turn have to promptly suggest a word which is added to a class list. Any hesitation or repetition means they have to sit down.

The winner is the last person standing.

Repeat for "bad" words, then provide the complete list to the class to use in their written account.

# #2 - Use iEtherpad for Collaborative Writing

Use <http://ietherpad.com> to set up a writing frame which everyone can access.

For example, place a list of events into the document in bullet-point, present tense form. One student adds positive bias (with "good" adjectives), a second negative bias (with "bad" adjectives) whilst a third puts it into the past tense and a fourth turns it into continuous prose.

The teacher can use the "chat" feature to make suggestions as he/she watches the work develop.

## Resources

### Etherpad screencast



Itarr

# #3 - Five Card Flickr

Use the [Five Card Flickr](#) application to encourage creative writing.

The application chooses five random images from Flickr, and students then have to construct a story based around the images.

Stories can be submitted to the site, and there is an archive to search.

russeltarr



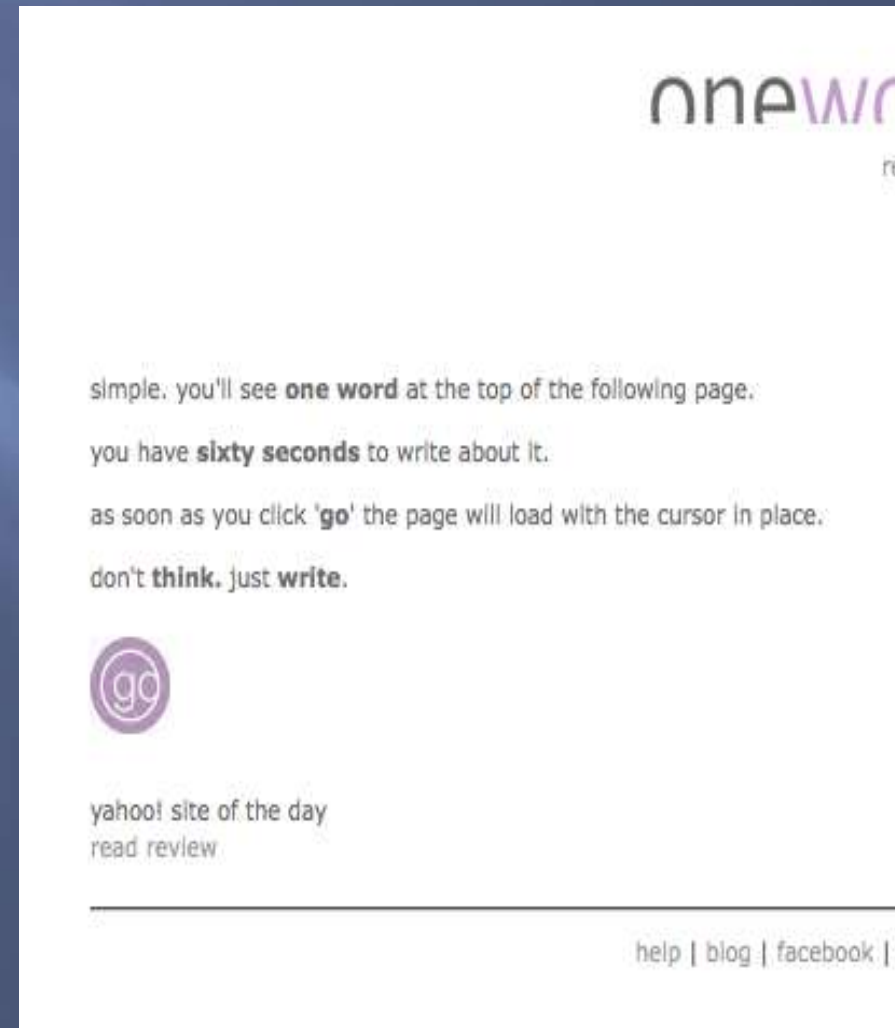
# #4 - 60 Second Warm Up: OneWord

Use OneWord to help students @kristenswanson get warmed up for writing.

Students write about a single word for sixty seconds, add their first name, and submit their work.

When they are finished, they can read everyone else's submission for the day. You may want to check these in advance.

It is a great "class starter!"



# #5 - Banned Words

Display a list of banned and semi-banned words. During writing, pupils should avoid using them at all costs!

Challenge them to find a more appropriate and accurate word.

Better words could be displayed and tagged as Heavenly Words'.

@davidrogers



Image created using wordle.net

# #6 - Visual Dictionaries



Give children access to the [KS1 and KS2 Dictionaries](#) (via an interactive whiteboard or individual laptops) to help them find vocabulary to use in their writing.

[@markw29](#)

# #7 -Show not Tell

Use show not tell technique. I.E. children discuss and write what a character is showing in the way they act, move, look, etc. If an emotion is the focus, it helps to 'ban' the original emotion / feeling from the writing:

'She was angry' becomes 'She stamped her foot so hard that the earth shook. As her face scrunched up a deep, menacing growl vibrated from between her jagged yellow teeth.'

Drama is very useful to start this technique off. Also set up whiteboards with an emotion above each for children to write show not tell versions during any free time / continuous provision.

@primarypete\_

# #8 Write a novel (seriously!)

Use this excellent set of resources to write a novel. This easily forms the basis for 1/2 a term, if not a term's work. [The 126 page document \(pdf\)](#) guides the young writer through the whole process (alternatively, just use parts of it), covering:

**What Makes a Novel a Novel?** – book review, defining the features of a novel

**Great Book, Gross Book** – what are the features of books you enjoy / don't like?

**Create Awesome Characters** – (main character, supporting character and villain) how to make characters exciting to write about and read about

**Make Up Your Story** – decide on the adventures the main character has on the way to making his or her dreams come true

**Outline Your Plot** – using the Plot Rollercoaster concept

**Map Your Setting** – draw maps and pictures to help you describe the detail of your setting

**How to Write Really Good Dialogue** – work on how your dialogue moves the story forward and helps the reader learn about your characters

**Editing and Proofreading**

It includes bonus questions and super bonus questions in most sections for differentiation throughout. [Elementary and middle school workbooks available here](#)

@claire\_barnes

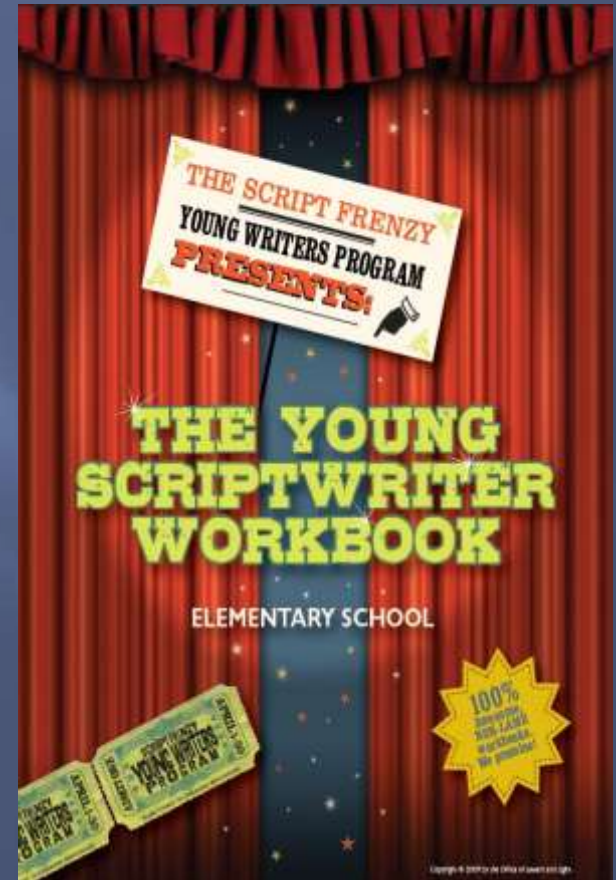
# #9 Write a script

Similar to last slide (sorry!), but more good ideas from the Young Writers' Program on [writing a script](#).

Similar approach, using [a workbook](#) to support character, plot and dialogue development, you could either use the whole book for a unit of work, or use elements of it to support things you are already doing in the classroom.

Lots of opportunities to take the scripts forward with a whole variety of ICT tools.

@claire\_barnes



# #10 - Invent a Text

This is an oral rehearsal activity used before writing. Take in some props to support the story. I usually use toys. Take out one toy and ask children what stories they know with that character in. Get the main details of the story. Then introduce the second prop and discuss stories that they know where it is included.

Now how could the two be used together in a story. Borrow or 'magpie' parts of stories that have been discussed to make up a new one.

Children then practice telling this story again and again with you supporting the use of story language, description, connectives or whatever the children need to get better at.

You can also use this idea to make up non-fiction texts.

Joy Simpson <http://literacyresourcesandideas.edublogs.org>

# #11 Write a short story

Introduce the five elements of a short story (plot, character, conflict, theme, and setting) with rap. The lyrics are available to examine in more depth. The rap can be listened to or downloaded from

.

It makes reference to texts which kids will be familiar with (Harry Potter, Lemony Snickett, Romeo and Juliet). It also makes reference to Jack London's 1908 short story "To Build a Fire", which can be read (or listened to) [here](#).

# #12 Write a rhyming couplet

Another Flocabulary idea:

A lesson plan to help students learn, master and retain difficult vocabulary by writing a rhyme/rap. This exercise can be done while a beat is playing (here are some free beats) or without music.

- introduce the new vocabulary and the definition
- develop the first line to include the word and its meaning
- make a bank of rhyming words (perfect or slant rhymes)
- complete the rhyme (using context of the original word)
- perform

@claire\_barnes

# #13 Model, Model, Model

- Spend time showing children outstanding examples of writing.
- Be prepared to write 'live' for them, so that they can see you as a writer.
- Use the IWB to edit, sometimes leaving a piece of writing for a day or two before returning to it to see how it looks now.

Some resources:

[http://www.abilityvsability.co.uk/files/teacher\\_resources\\_03.pdf](http://www.abilityvsability.co.uk/files/teacher_resources_03.pdf)

<http://www.learningwithsouthglos.org/literacy/acrobat/UsefulPublications/Improving%20Writing%20-%20Guided%20Writing.pdf>

# #14 Read Aloud to Children - Often!

There are so many reasons for doing this. Not only do they get to hear great writing, but the you take the class to places to meet people and situations that it would otherwise not be possible to do. They hear the music of words and learn from you how wonderful books are how powerful is our imagination.

Writing following great reading becomes easy.

I had a supply teacher come to my last school who was a Year 5 in the first class I ever taught. She recognized me and said, 'I'll always remember you because you read *The Queen's Nose* and *Tyke Tyler* to us.' That's a great way to be remembered!

# #15 Practice writing dialogue

Create the dialogue for animated movies in [XtraNormal](#)

Suggest a focus for dialogue writing, such as getting to know a character, or developing the speech patterns of different types of characters (historical language, slang, etc.).

Alternatively, convert one of the movies on the site into prose. How can the visual elements of the movie be converted into descriptions?

You could also focus on different vocabulary for the word "said" by finding an alternative which describes the way the dialogue is being spoken for each line in a script.

@claire\_barnes

# #16 Make Poetry Come Alive

When teaching poetry, make sure you balance the reading of it with the writing of it and inject some collaboration into the through **Poems for Two (or more) Voices**. We use Paul Fleischman's *Joyful Noise* and a text called *Math Talk* (math ideas in poetic verse!) as mentor texts because the poems have complex overlapping voices which create "mood." Then students write their own poems for two voices. They come together and we record their poems as podcasts, sharing out at our blog. This kind of writing and collaboration gives the poems a playful tone.

Here is an example of some sixth grader poems

Submitted by Kevin Hodgson  
@dogtrax

<http://dogtrax.edublogs.org/>

# #17 Letter from the Future

Ask students to imagine their lives sometime in the future - what will they be doing in ten, fifteen or twenty years time? They write a letter from that person to their parents or friends or teacher, describing what they are doing. I received one of these letters from my Grade 6 son at his 'graduation' and have kept it in a memories box. Future me allows you to do this in an electronic version with an e-mail address.

<http://futureme.org/>



Thanks @margm for this idea!

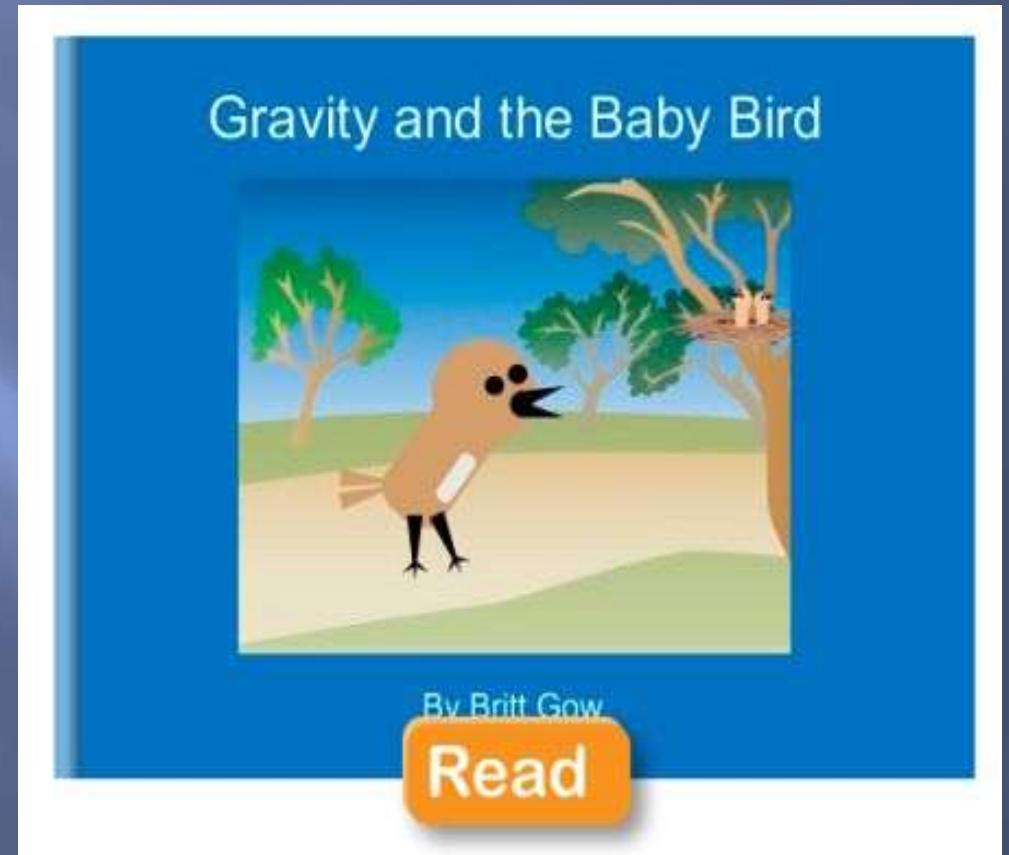
# #18 Co-operative Story-telling

Each student writes three or four sentences of a story and then passes it to another student to write the next few sentences. Agree on some ground rules before starting, about keeping in character and themes to be used.



# #19 "StoryJumper" and "Storybird"

Both of these free programs offer on-line story books for children to read, add to , modify or create from scratch. You can choose from a range of backgrounds, characters, props, text boxes and fonts. Students can create a whole book or collaborate by doing one or more pages each. I used science themes as a prompt - Year 6/7 students were asked to teach Year 1/2 students about Forces.



<http://www.storyjumper.com/>  
<http://storybird.com/>

@brittgow

## # 20 MySpace Page.

Create a hard copy MySpace or Facebook page. (MySpace is better because you can 'bling' it up.)

Include a profile pic and the all about me info.

Add a bio poem and leave a big space for the comments wall.

Display the page in the classroom and other students can use sticky notes to add comments.

Go to [Glenn's blog](#) where he has created a facebook template for students to use, it's phenomenal and a great way to aid students in understanding their digital presence and online citizenship and responsibility! [@nlakusta](#)

# # 21 Piclits for writing poems

Use [Piclits](#) for writing poems. Just choose a picture, then drag and drop words and change the word forms when appropriate. A great warm-up activity that students love.

@meerisild

## #22 - Hands on and Drama Stimuli

We are currently REALLY improving writing in Y4 by starting each unit (which are generally skills based) with a hands on or dramatic starter. My class wrote amazing Tudor Murder stories after I mocked up a very bloody murder with a large puppet. We also had a Tudor Fair in the classroom. When we wanted to write a setting we all listened to wooden ship noises, watched video and pulled ropes soaked in salty water. I got some super pirate ship settings from reluctant and EAL pupils. Recently we have made fairy cakes to stimulate Instruction writing.

After the starter activity, we teach a carousel of 25 minutes skills and supporting activities sessions over 5 days (these are differentiated for 5 groups), children then have a long writing time of 40 minutes. We edit the next day. I have seen 3 sub-levels of improvement in one term with some pupils.

Alison Green @[theotheralig](https://twitter.com/theotheralig)

# #23 - Telescopic Text

## Telescopic Text

([telescopictext.com](http://telescopictext.com)) is a fabulous demonstration to children of how to extend their creative writing. From the simple starting text "I made tea", the writing unfolds with each click on one of the "greyed" words to insert new details, adjectives and emotions.

At [telescopictext.org](http://telescopictext.org), you can register and make your own unfolding texts.

I made tea.

by Joe >

I boiled the kettle. The kettle grumbled so I poured water onto a teabag and watched it brew. I put the teabag in the bin. I picked up my mug and left the kitchen with a nice, hot cup of strong tea.

by Joe >

[@richardanderson](https://twitter.com/richardanderson)

# #24 - USE ONLINE PROMPTS

Use this link to allow choice:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/storystarters/storystarter1.htm>

Kids click on each wheel and get the main story elements. It is fun and the lack of predictability makes it even more interesting for kids to use it.

@surreallyno



# #25 - USE 1,000 IDEAS

This link provides kids with many ideas for writing (especially for Journal Writing):

[http://www.timesaversforteachers.com/index\\_page0010.htm](http://www.timesaversforteachers.com/index_page0010.htm)

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## 1000 Ideas FOR Writing

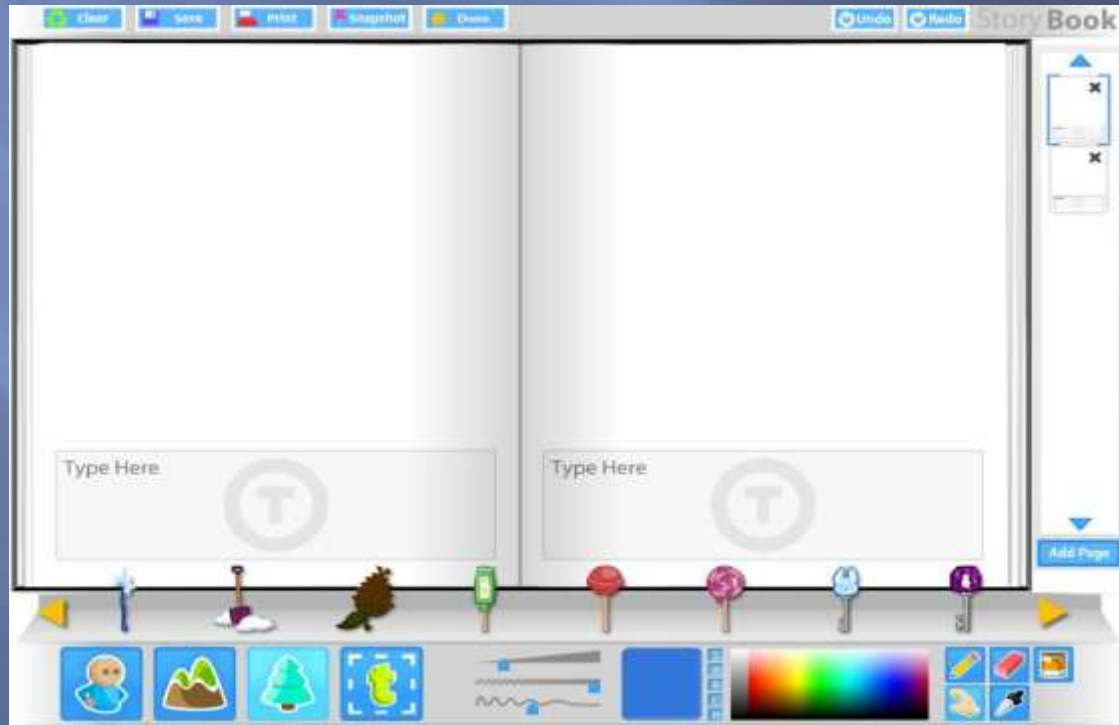
1. **If I could become invisible...**
2. This is my father's/ mother's job.
3. Reasons why people lie.
4. Reasons for going to church.
5. These are the reasons why I don't go to church.
6. The meaning of "freedom."
7. I will tell you a story that is only half true.
8. Why do nations wage wars?
9. There will be peace on earth only when...
10. **I have something to tell you, teacher.**
11. Did you know that...
12. The scariest thing that ever happened to me.
13. I once had a scary dream.
14. The strangest dream I ever had.
15. I believe in God.
16. I don't believe in God because...
17. The meaning of Christmas.
18. Hockey is my life.
19. I get scared when...
20. **I wish that I could...**
21. I am happy when...
22. I am sad when...
23. The things that get me upset.
24. My favorite subject.
25. My least favorite subject.
26. I just can't seem to get along with anyone.
27. The things that bug me.
28. Why is it that...?
29. This is my family.
51. **The happiest moment of my life.**
52. My accomplishments.
53. Why I like animals.
54. My favorite movie.
55. My favorite television show.
56. My fondest school memory.
57. The person that I admire.
58. The most interesting person that I have ever met.
59. The biggest mess that I ever got myself into.
60. **My fondest childhood memory.**
61. This is my hobby.
62. My biggest goal in life.
63. Things are not going well for me right now.
64. My parents.
65. My religion.
66. My first flight.
67. I like..., and these are the reasons why.
68. I very much dislike..., because...
69. My life as a citizen of a new country.
70. **What I think about vandalism, drugs and smoking.**
71. Ways in which troubled kids can be helped.
72. Reasons why people argue.
73. The best book that I ever read.
74. This book was really bad.
75. I often get frustrated.
76. Dear teacher, I would like to ask you some questions.
77. Dear teacher, there is something that you need to know.
78. When I turn 16.
79. When I become an adult this is what I will be like.

## #26 - USE KERPOOF

**Kerpoof** is a kid-friendly, intuitive application where students can create fairy tales, realistic fiction etc using illustrations (for characters, setting, plot etc). The books can be printed, too.

I noticed that kids get inspired when you provide them with **visual stimuli** so it works wonderfully.

@surreallyno



# #27 - USE COMICS CREATORS

This is a link with many online comics creators that my 2nd graders used:

<http://thebunnies.wikispaces.com/COMICS++creator>

My students are second language learners and they loved using all of them! See a sample below.

I taught them how to screenprint and crop them so they wouldn't need an e-mail account. They could embed them into class blog.

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# #28 - Write a #25wordstory

Short, concise stories of 140 characters or less, the #25wordstory can be a powerful short writing exercise. Begun as a hashtag on twitter, this activity can be done offline as well. Have the story reflect current content, concepts, theories, themes, etc. and combine with writing traits that make for an effective, attention-grabbing story. Add an image too, to reflect the story. Or, create a 25wordstory based on an image.



[dogtrax](#): All of his life, he had been told of the great love between his grandparents. His fingers clutched the photo. He didn't see it. [#25wordstory](#)  
4 days ago via *TweetDeck* - [Reply](#) - [View Tweet](#)

[@ckendall](#)

# #29 - ENHANCE CREATIVITY WITH POETRY PROMPTS

Use this link for kids to begin loving poetry. Enhance the poems with photos (see a 2nd grader sample below).

<http://thebunnies.wikispaces.com/POETRY>

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## Pitu's Blog

### My Lion Goes to School

February 16, 2011 ~ 3 COMMENTS  [Edit this Post](#)



I came across a lion

On the way to school

His wings were very fluffy

And his beak was very sharp

I hid him in my shoe

So that teacher would not see

He stayed there very quietly

Until frightened by an ant

# #30 - USE TAG GALAXY FOR INSPIRATION

Tag Galaxy is a photo application that connects to Flickr. You can search photos from all over the world and they load up in an instant according to your search. Allow students to use it and get inspired.

<http://taggalaxy.de/>

@surreallyno



# #31 - USE AUTOMOTIVATOR

<http://wigflip.com/automotivator/> With Automotivator kids can make their own poster easily either by using the given photos or by choosing own photos. This could work very well in many lessons - e.g. writing non fiction. See sample of 2nd graders below (we inquired into the arts and how we express ourselves).

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# #32 - USE PICLITS

PicLits is an application that combines writing with photography. Kids can type ON a photo of their choice.

It may be a short poem, a story starter for a classmate (kids can challenge each other) etc.

[http://www.piclits.com/compose\\_freestyle.aspx?PoemTemplateId=474](http://www.piclits.com/compose_freestyle.aspx?PoemTemplateId=474)  
@surreallyno



The screenshot shows the PicLits website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Home, Explore the Gallery, My PicLits, Learn It, About, Coming Soon, and News. Below this is a gallery of small images. The main area features a large photo of a bee on a flower with the text "Beautiful silence in the small life..." overlaid. To the right of the photo is a "SHARE" section with buttons for Save, Blog or Share, Email, and New PicLit. At the bottom, there's a "CREATE" section with tabs for DRAG-N-DROP and FREESTYLE. The FREESTYLE tab is active, showing a text input area with the same text "Beautiful silence in the small life..." and a list of words: car, chrome, decorate, even, frozen, glare, hood, noticeable.

**Kids choose a photo.**

**What students type is visible here.**

**Kids type here- they can MOVE the words on the photo as they wish.**

ly students create writing as well (what

**Kids can bring items that inspire them - photos, posters, toys etc.**

[illegible]

# #34 - THE BRAINSTORMER

Use this advanced story starter ideas generator to get your narrative juices going.

Some interesting ideas for older age groups to explore.

<http://andrewbosley.com/the-brainstormer.html>

[Also available as an iPad / iPod Touch / iPhone app](#)

Tom Barrett



# #35 - WRITING FUN SITE -

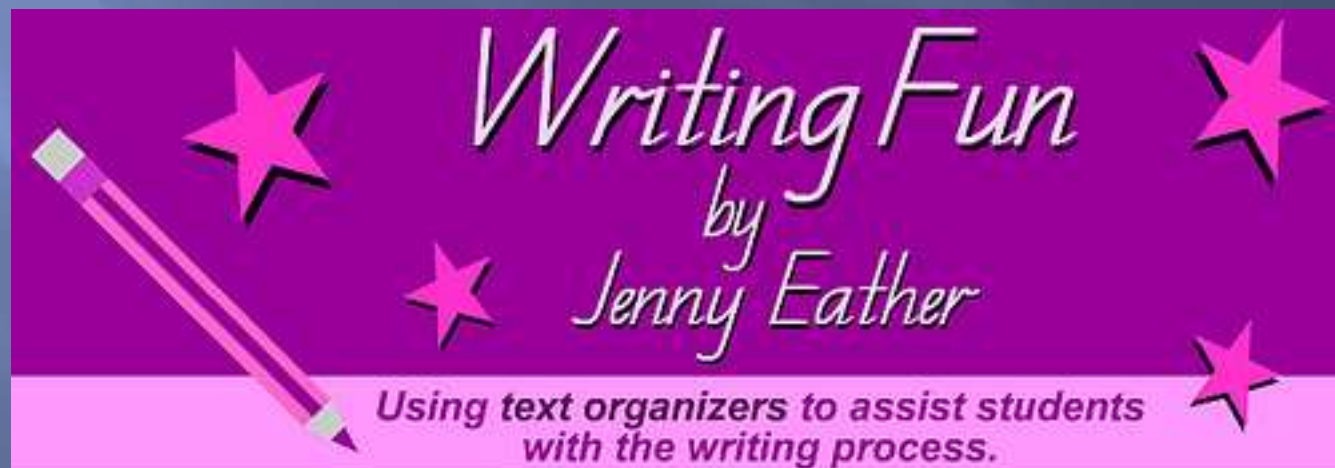
## [HTTP://WWW.WRITINGFUN.COM](http://www.writingfun.com)

*"An interactive writing help site that includes downloads to save for off-line use.*

*Writing Fun explains the types of text commonly written in schools with printable organizers and examples showing text structures, grammatical features and publishing ideas.*

*Writing text types covered include reports, procedures, explanations, expositions (persuasion, point of view), discussions, narratives, recounts, descriptions, responses (inc. reviews), letters, invitations, news articles and emails. Poetry"*

Tom Barrett



# #36 - Trading Cards

Read Write Think has a preformed template to make character trading cards. You can use the template or just go with the idea and expand it to fit your classroom needs.

Have students create a Character Trading Card for characters in the books they've read, the books the class has read together, or just for historical figures, people in current events, etc. Include a photo and basic information on the front and a more detailed description on the back.

Students could assign the characters points based on an agreed upon ranking. This would appeal to students that actually 'game' with trading cards. See wikipedia's explanation of "Collectible Card Games".

@angiebuys

# #37 - USE THIS AMAZING SITE

## BRUCE VAN PATTER

[HTTP://WWW.BRUCEVANPATTER.COM/FUNSTUFF.HTML](http://www.brucevanpatter.com/funstuff.html)

The BEST resource I found so far.  
It has *What if ?* questions generator, a story "kitchen" where kids can "cook" a story, drawings as story starters and many more!

@surreallyno



# #38 - Video Game Action Stories

Try using the action from video games to stimulate writing. Write the action that had just been played out on screen.

*Without a thought for his own safety, Mario leapt down the drain in pursuit of Bowser and Princess Peach. The world in which Mario found himself was filled with coins but also contained great danger. Man-eating flowers snapped from drains, fire-spitting turtles waited round every corner and Bowser Junior fired shells from on high...*

Great motivator for  
@learningjay

# #40 - CREATE PAPER BAG STORIES

In case you cannot use technology but want your students to get creative bring 3 paper bags (literally) and have colored strips ready (in 3 colors): *Character, Setting, Plot*.

Next have students brainstorm words/phrases for each bag. Kids write their ideas on the strips and place them in each bag.

Last, divide kids in groups. Each group takes a strip of paper from each bag and COLLABORATIVELY create a story.

It gets really fun because the combinations are truly creative (e.g. dizzy pencil/ in a forest/ becomes a detective)

@surreallyno

# #39- CREATE PERSONAL FABLES

Ask students to assign animal characters to represent people they know. They should not reveal who represents what. You'll hear lots of giggles while they write and their imagination blooms! They can add an illustration, too.

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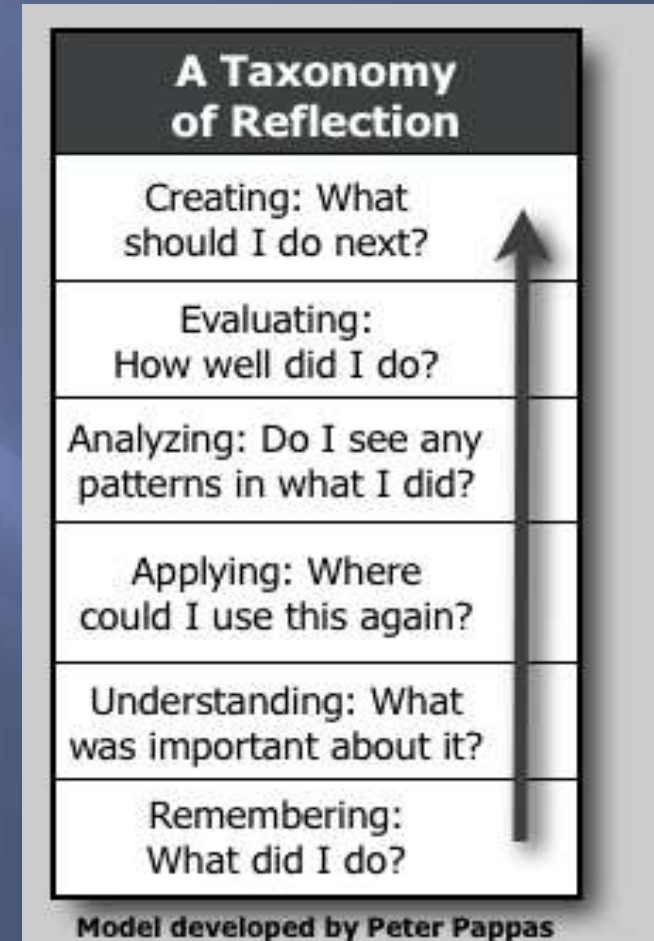
# #41 - Use reflective prompts to help them monitor their own progress as learners.

Move students from simply narrating what they did, to thinking more deeply about their learning - finding patterns, making connections and setting goals.

I've posted a series of reflective prompts based on Bloom's Taxonomy. See: "The Reflective Student"

<http://bit.ly/7cOR28>

(also find reflective prompts for teachers and principals)



# #42 - USE VIDEOS TO STIR CREATIVITY VANCOUVER FILMS SCHOOL

[HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/USER/VANCOUVERFILMSCHOOL](http://www.youtube.com/user/vancouverfilmschool)

The videos are extremely beautiful. Students can watch them and then they can:

- add a new scene
- write a newspaper headline
- turn the film into a poem
- advertise
- have a character meeting etc.

It is up to you to use this medium so it can suit your goals. :)

You can also turn off sound so kids would imagine what characters might say, stop the movie in the middle etc.

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# #43 - PEER MARKING WITH VOICETHREAD

Upload children's writing to [Voicethread](#) so that the class can comment and add their thoughts.

Children can add voice or text comments, including text annotation.

Remember to make the text a large font size so the text is easier to work with.

[Read more about this idea on my blog.](#)

The screenshot displays a Voicethread interface. On the left, a student's story is visible, written by 'Dianne'. The text includes: 'g at the new science fair at the', 'It was very interesting. The lady', 't a nuclear radioactive electric', 's ruby red', 'crimson red spider jumped onto', '.. the radioactive spider moved', 'red and hairy legs. Was it going', 'ark like teeth?', 'unous spider had bitten me... my', 'g out of my hand! It was turning', 'was turning my BLOOD BLACK!', 'headache, my fingers were aching', 's rushing through my veins. I felt', 'home... get... some...help... I', 'th, my heart was slowing down.' On the right, a peer comment is shown in a speech bubble: 'I like how you told the story like you were there you really got drag the reader into the story! But try do not use a lot of elipse's .'. Below the comment are three avatars of other users. The interface also includes a trash can icon and a close button (X) in the top right corner of the comment bubble.

Tom Barrett

## #44 Use Flip Cameras (or sim



Get children to film the ideas they come up with in group discussions. This can allow those who find retaining information tricky to have a comprehensive bank of ideas to use in their writing.

It also allows them to describe facial expressions, body language & add detail to a scene or character.

@Mister\_Jim

# #45 Mirror, Mirror

When asking children to describe a character, specifically adding emotion, give them a mirror so that they can change the expressions on their faces.

They can then begin to add description to how a character's mood can change & identify how to make their characters seem more real for the reader. It's also really entertaining for you as a teacher to watch!

[@Mister\\_Jim](#)

# #46 TWO CHARACTERS MEET

For students who seem "stuck" and uninspired:  
let them pick two characters from books (or poems) they read  
and create an imaginary meeting.

(e.g. Harry Potter meeting Runny Babbit).

The more unlikely the meeting the more interesting!

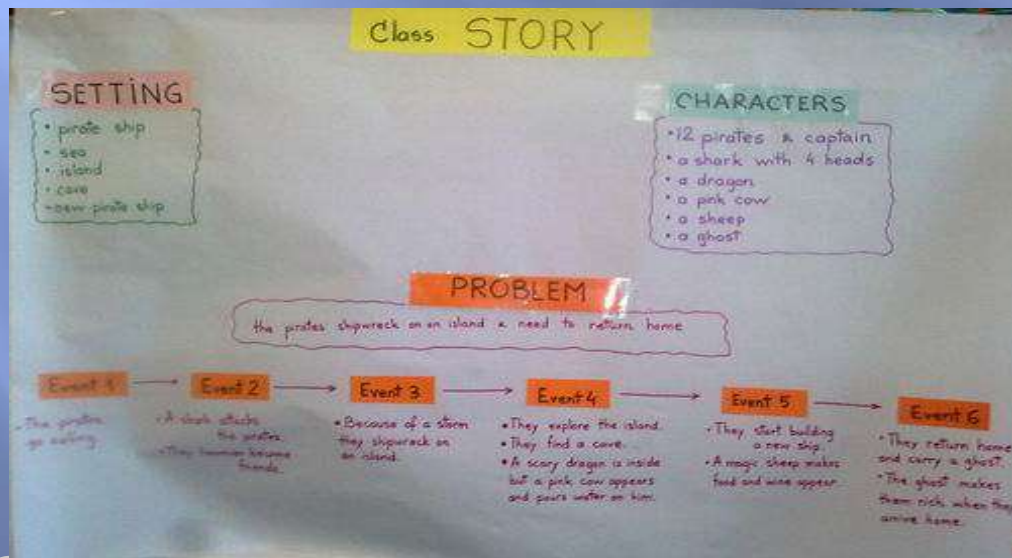
The outcome can be either a story or a comic book (as some  
students enjoy expressing themselves through drawing, too).

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# #47 CLASS SAGA

Brainstorm with students Characters, major Plot lines and Setting. Then assign groups/pairs to create a part of the story. Add drawings. Share with another class.

My 2nd graders created a wonderful story and made the illustrations with the help of the Art teacher. They are second language learners, too. (see photos below) We turned it into a real book!



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# #48 THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF...ANYTHING

Everything has a story! Everything comes, in its elemental origin, from the earth.

Bring various items (or encourage students to find) - shoes, paper clips etc - and let students write the story of each item.

Personify it and tell its story like an autobiography.

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# #49 PROVERBS AS STORY STARTERS

Display familiar or multicultural proverbs and encourage students to develop a story around them.

E.g. One finger cannot lift a pebble.  
When elephants battle, the ants perish.  
Little brooks make great rivers.

It is important to model the creation of such story so students can see the power of the metaphors contained within each and transcend the apparent simplicity of proverbs.

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# #50 IF I WERE...

Ask students to pretend they are an object in a painting, video, story (e.g. the sword on a battlefield, the window in Cinderella's house, the mat at the entrance of a house etc).

*What would they see?*

*What would they do?*

*What would they think?*

*How would they feel?*

They can choose any format to display their writing:

- a short poem
- another story
- autobiography (of the respective object)
- diary entry (from the perspective of the chosen object)
- comic

# #51 WRITING ADVERTISEMENTS

## Materials:

pictures of famous people/characters (e.g. Superman, film stars, sports star, TV personality, pop star etc).

## List of products to be advertised:

brainstorm with kids (e.g. toothpaste, car, mobile phone, a new chocolate bar etc).

## Grouping: pair

Each pair gets a picture and a product to advertise.

## Task:

- name your product
- describe it (using catchy words - reinforcement of adjectives)
- design a poster/video/slideshow (any medium that suits you)
- present it to class

This task encourages *creativity* (imagine Superman and chocolate ad) as well as *collaborative* writing. Students develop writing, presentation and social skills.

@surreallyno

# #52 USE WONDEROPOLIS AND CHILDRENTHINK

Wonderopolis <http://wonderopolis.org/> is a website that displays a Wonder of the Day video and explanation. Allow kids to browse categories, read one entry and then come up with an alternative explanation through a story.

ChildrenThink <http://twitter.com/#!/childrentthink> This user on Twitter collects children's questions - you can use them as story starters, too.

@surreallyno

## #53 Neverending story.

Create a story starter and share this out with the class via googledocs.

Students then add to it. Set up ground rules (e.g. if you see someone editing watch, and wait otherwise it can get confusing two people adding a sentence at the same time).

I also have students edit other students additions, with the rule they can fix grammar, spelling etc. But, cannot change the 'meaning'.

@charles\_au

# #54 INSPIRING FIRST LINES FROM NOVELS

This website has the best 100 best first lines from novels (amazing collection!).

[http://www.stumbleupon.com/su/2wUXW/www.pantagraph.com/news/article\\_a125216a-649f-5414-88b5-76a688ea3b6a.html](http://www.stumbleupon.com/su/2wUXW/www.pantagraph.com/news/article_a125216a-649f-5414-88b5-76a688ea3b6a.html)

Display some of them around the room and allow for student choice.

E.g. A screaming comes across the sky. - Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973)

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there. - L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953)

I recommend them for upper elementary students. These first lines lead to different genres (mystery, realistic fiction, biography etc) so student choice is essential.

@surreallyno

# #55 THE DOOR

Imagine a door. Close your eyes and visualise it. Describe its surface? Does it have a handle? What shape is it? What is it made of? Try to use simile or metaphor in your description. In your mind's eye, open the door. What does the handle feel like? Step through. You have passed in to a new time and space. Before you is an unfamiliar world. What are the first three things you notice? What do they look like? How do they smell and feel? What is under your feet? You hear sounds. Describe them. You see some words written. A sign? A piece of paper? What do they say? What is the weather like? Begin to explore the space. Write ten sentences describing the space. You meet someone. What do they look like? They say something. What do they say? How do they speak? Use another ten lines to finish this writing. Put what you have done away and in three weeks return to it and use the material to write a short story.

Adapted from  
The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing

@davidmiller\_uk

If you would like to:

- Contribute your ideas and tips to the presentation.
- Let me know how you have used the resource.
- Get in touch.

You can email me or I am @tombarrett on Twitter

If you add a tip (or even if you don't) please tweet about it and the link so more people can contribute.

I have created a page for all of the **Interesting Ways** presentations on my blog.

The whole family in one place :-)

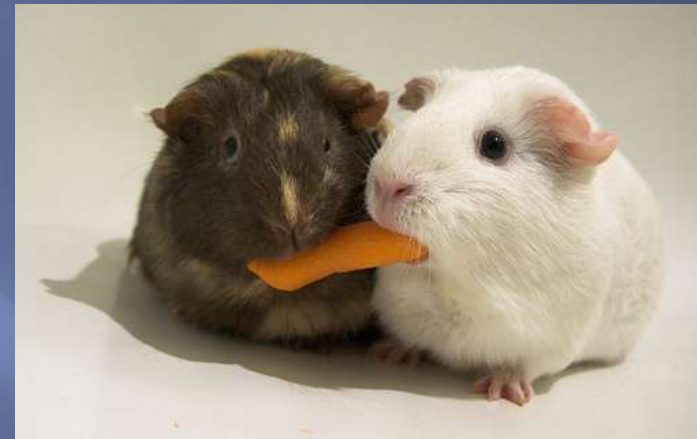


Image: 'Sharing'

Thanks for helping  
Tom Barrett

Have you seen Maths Maps  
yet?