

Creation 6 – Handwriting and Spelling Activities

Name: _____

Instructions: To help you develop a range of techniques for teaching writing you will create an original sample writing activity each week. This week you will focus on techniques related to artistic expression through writing. Read the informative section below then follow instructions to complete the rest of the worksheet.



Information: Writing is difficult for children because they have to learn to hold a pencil and perform the careful movements to form the shapes of the letters in both upper and lowercase as well as cursive and script. It's a lot to learn and it takes lots of time and practice. Also, challenging for both children and older language learners is the tricky spelling system of English that does not have a strict phonetic correlation between sound and letter combinations. It is important for learners of all ages to have the chance to practice in class to gradually improve over time.

Handwriting

- **Noticing:** Young learners often confuse certain letters (m vs n, p vs q, etc.) or write certain letter backwards. They can benefit from tasks that ask them to simply notice letters in a text. Show students a letter or combination of letters and then a list of letters or words with similarly shaped letters and have them find and circle examples of the target letters.
- **Tracing:** Young learners who are still learning to writing in their first language need help learning to control their pencil. Tracing activities are ones where students have a written text of letters or very simple words and they have to put their pencil on the paper and draw over the letters. It helps to add little arrows showing students where they should start the letter and the direction they should follow.
- **Copying:** Students need plenty of chances to write letters and words. Copying tasks can be as simple as giving students a word and having them copy it five times on the same line or they can be more complex and meaningful. For example, teachers can write brief instructions for an activity or a short list of new vocabulary words on the board and students copy them in their notebook. Students can also be asked to classify words into two or more categories by writing them in a chart, for example: vegetables, fruits, drinks. This serves two purposes. It has students interact with vocabulary in meaningful ways and spend valuable time copying.
- **Read, Copy, Correct:** Give students a paper with three columns. In the first column they have a short list of words. They read the list then cover it with their hand or book and rewrite the list in the second column. Then they remove their hand or book and compare the original list with the one they wrote. If any of the words need to be corrected, they can write them again in the third column.
- **Games:** Students can play simple games to remember how to form the letters of words. Here are a few examples. They can take turns tracing a letter with their finger or pencil eraser on a partner's back or arm for the partner to guess. The teacher (and eventually the students) can use a "magic wand" to trace the shape of letters in the air for the class to guess. A student can be blindfolded and given a whiteboard marker which he/she touches to the board. The other students are shown a letter and they need to tell the blindfolded student what to do in simple commands (up, down, left, right, stop, etc.) to help them write the letter. Alternatively, the blindfolded student can be "helped" by a partner who holds his/her wrist and guides the hand to form the letter. This can also be done as a competition with two or more pairs doing this at once on the board.

Spelling

- **Dictation Variations:** Spell words aloud letter by letter while students write them. The first student to yell out the word is the winner. Alternatively, spell the letters backwards for an extra challenge. Have students work in groups to write a text. Put the text in the hallway outside of the classroom. One member of each group can run to the hall and read the text and then he/she returns to the group to say a part of the text for his/her group members to write. Then another student goes to the hall to continue to process until they have managed to write the full text. The teacher quickly checks to see if it is correct. If there are errors, students are told to send someone back to the hall to check until they get it right. Another version of dictation is for students to stand back to back each holding a notebook. On opposite sides of the classroom tape a paper with a text for each pair. Students walk to one side of the room and a partner reads the text to his/her partner who copies it asking for spelling clarification if necessary. At random intervals the teacher will yell “move” and students have to go to the other side of the class where the other partner will read his/her text. Students move back and forth until they finish dictating and copying both texts. Then they compare them with the originals and correct the mistakes.
- **Correct the Mistakes:** Show students a text with some conspicuous spelling mistakes and have them identify and correct the errors.
- **Games:** There are many ways to practice spelling through games which can be done on the whiteboard, using websites, or worksheets. Here are a few ideas.
 - **Spaceman (Hangman):** A less violent version of the famous hangman games is to think of a word and write blank spaces on the board for each letter. Students, individually or in teams, take turns guessing letters in the word. If they are correct, the teacher writes the letters in the spaces and they can guess again. If they are wrong, the teacher draws a part of the picture eventually forming a UFO that abducts a person with a laser beam.
 - **Spelling Rallies:** Team competitions or rallies are also a fun way to practice spelling. Students can play broken telephone by spelling a word to their partners. The last person in the line has to write it down. The teacher can also give out squares of paper with single letters or letter combinations on them to each group and say words that students then have to quickly spell by sequencing the right squares.
 - **Wordsearch:** Word search tasks require students to recognize the correct sequence of letters to form a word. It's a simple task but helps them practice spelling in a more passive way.
 - **Bingo:** Create bingo cards using a five by five grid with five letter words written on each horizontal or vertical row or column. Pull letters from the alphabet at random from a list and see who is the first student to form a word.
 - **Crossword Puzzles:** These are great to remember and practice vocabulary but since students need to remember how to write the word for it to fit in the spaces, they are also practicing spelling.
 - **Bananagrams:** This is a game similar to crossword puzzles but students are given small squares of paper with letters on them which they have to use to form as many words as they can. However, all the words need to be connected by sharing letters similar to how crossword puzzles are arranged. Teachers can also create their own puzzle with four or five specific vocabulary words they want students to practice. Only give students the letters they need to form the puzzle. This means that many of the words can't be spelled without sharing letters between words.

Instructions: Now it's your turn to create an original Micro-Journaling Task. Complete the required information in the section below. Please note, you can use published materials for inspiration but be sure that the sample activity you submit is 100% your own work. No plagiarism will be accepted.

Title: Handwriting and Spelling Activities

Description: 75-100 word description of the category of Handwriting and Spelling activities in your own words.

Handwriting and Spelling activities involve...

Original Example Activity: An original student created example of a handwriting or spelling task. Include everything you would need to give students in order to successfully complete the task including the instructions, prompts, materials, and texts.

Instructions:

Sample Student Response: Write a sample response to your example activity that represents what a student might write.

Instructions:

Analysis & Reaction: 75-100 word personal response to the following questions.

What are the strengths of this activity type for students?	What are the (potential) challenges of this activity type for students and teachers?
<i>Handwriting and Spelling tasks can be a helpful way for students to learn to write because...</i>	<i>Some of the challenges involved in using Handwriting and Spellings tasks are... because...</i>