

METHODOLOGY



COMMUNICATIVE WRITING ACTIVITIES

Olena MIKHODUI,
PEARSON-Dinternal Senior
ELT Methodologist

Writing, as well as speaking, is a productive skill and with careful planning and a bit of creativity on the teacher's part, writing activities can add elements of communication and fun into your English lessons in primary school.

Communicative language teaching in the first year of English learning is mostly about students' vocabulary acquisition (grammar is taught implicitly through repeated practice of chunks of language) and integrated skills development. Speaking and listening are practised at every lesson with the gradual introduction of the elements of reading and writing.

Below there are some ideas for developing your students' handwriting and writing skills in the primary classroom. Kids practise letter tracing and letter writing in a fun and interactive way.

- *Fine motor skills development*

Kaleidoscope

What you need:

- slips of paper with letters of the alphabet which kids are familiar with;
- sticky price tags of different colours.

Procedure

Kids "trace" the letter on their sheet of paper by sticking price tags to it.

To add more dynamics to the activity, you could ask kids to start together and see who finishes first.

NB: *The important thing is to make sure they stick the tags following the right direction as if they were writing the letter.*



Mosaic

What you need:

- beans (or roasted coffee beans) in a bowl;
- pieces of rough cardboard.

Procedure

Kids use the beans to "write" the letter which the teacher tells them to. It is an exciting way to practice "off paper" letter writing.

NB: *You need to warn the kids to work carefully with the beans to make sure they do not swallow anything.*



• Unusual LETTER TRACING

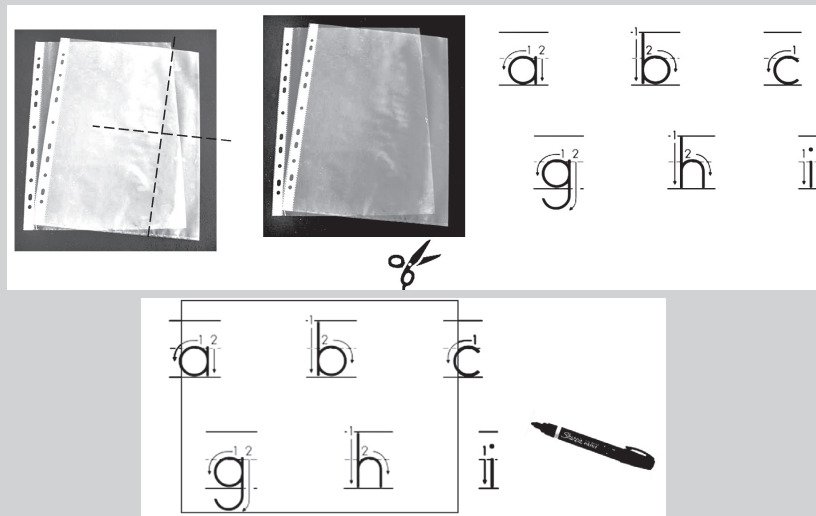
Mirror Tracing
What you need:

- transparent file sheet protectors (*pic. 1*) (cut into 2—4 pieces — *pic. 2*);
- black permanent markers;
- sheets of paper with alphabet/letters which kids are familiar with (preferably with direction of writing shown) — *pic. 3*.

Procedure

Kids cover the alphabet/ letter with their transparent file and trace the letter with a marker over it. The same transparent file can be used for writing several letters.

NB: Make sure students trace the letters following the correct direction of writing.



• Multiple letter writing practice with fun

Kangaroo
What you need:

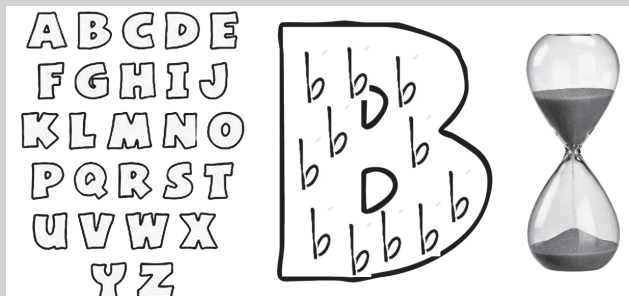
- slips of paper with bubble letters (*pic. 2*) (which kids are familiar with);
- pens;
- hour glass (to add dynamics).

Procedure

Students work in pairs or groups. The task is to start together and write as many letters *inside* the bubble letter as they can.

Extra challenge and dynamics: If the bubble letters are capital letters, students write small letters inside. If the bubble letters are small letters — students write capital letters inside. The winner is the student who manages to write the most letters inside the model. However, only those letters which are written *well* count as points — the aim is to make students write carefully, not just to have a competition.

NB: Set a time limit for the activity (e.g a 1 minute hour glass can be used for this purpose).



• Embroidery

Embroidery

What you need:

- slips of paper with enlarged letters for tracing (*Model letters*);
- pens.

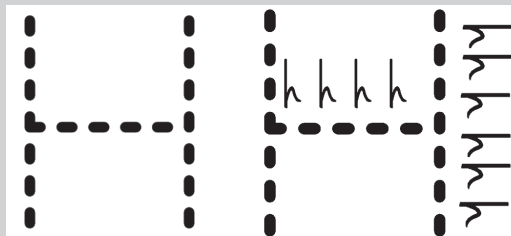
Procedure

Similar to the previous activity: students work in pairs or groups. The task is to start together and write the letters *around the border of the model letter* as fast as they can.

Extra challenge and dynamics: If the model letters are capital letters, students write small letters around it. If the model letters are small letters, students write capital letters around it.

Only those letters which are written *well* count as points — the aim is to make students write carefully, not just to have a competition.

NB: *Set a time limit for the activity (e.g a 1 minute hour glass can be used for this purpose).*



• *Communicative Writing*

Eyes closed

What you need:

- an A4 page with the alphabet (game board);
- pens;
- paper.

Procedure

Students work in pairs. Student A closes his eyes and points to some place on the ABC page. Then he opens his eyes and names the letter which he pointed at for student B to write.

Student B writes the letter. Next, they swap roles and student B closes his eyes, points to some letter, names it for student A to write and so on.

Extra challenge: specify what exactly students have to write. For example — only small letters, only capital letters, both a small and a capital letter.

NB: *Monitor students' pair work — go round, help if necessary, encourage use of simple phrases in English ("Your turn!", "Write a small b", "Write a big G"). Always praise students for using English during the game.*

Lucky Dice

What you need:

- an A4 page with the alphabet (game board);
- a dice;
- a counter for each player;
- pens;
- paper.

Procedure

Students work in pairs or in groups.

Student A rolls the dice and moves his counter one square for each spot on the dice. Then student A has to write the letter on which his counter lands. Encourage students to count aloud when they move the counter.

Now it is the next player's turn to roll the dice, move the counter and write down a letter.

The object of the game is to be the first to get to the end of the alphabet.

Extra challenge: specify what exactly students have to write. For example — only small letters, only capital letters, both a small and a capital letter.

NB: *Monitor students' pair work — go round, help if necessary, encourage use of simple phrases in English ("Your turn!", "Roll the dice"). Always praise students for using English during the game.*

Remember!

When setting up an activity in the classroom, make sure your instructions are short and clear to students. Always demonstrate the activity before you ask your students to do it.