

Lesson Plan #6 - Writing

Title: MAGIC PENCIL STORY STARTERS

Introduction: Adult learners are often creative writers, but they may not realize it. This lesson plan offers writing prompts that provide opportunities for thinking and writing creatively and is designed for ABE and ASE students.

Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- understand that it's okay to “make stuff up” when writing
- gain practice in timed writing
- gain confidence in their writing skills

Session Time:

50 minutes

Materials:

- two dozen No. 2 pencils; pencil sharpener
- scissors, Scotch tape
- copy of the following handout with writing prompts
- writing paper

Procedures:

1. Teacher: Cut each writing prompt in a strip and tape it to a pencil, lengthwise.
2. Stand the pencils in a clear plastic jar or container
3. Tell students: *We're going to write a story today. You don't have to come up with a topic on your own. That's what these “magic story starter” pencils are for. Please select one of the “magic story starter” pencils. Read the “story starter” on the pencil you have selected and write for 20 minutes. You will need to “make stuff up” in this writing activity, so use your imaginations! When we are finished, we're going to share our stories with each other.*
4. Going around the room, ask each student to read his or her prompt on the “magic story starter” pencil selected. By doing this, you will know that students can read and understand their prompts. If they have difficulty reading their prompt, clarify it for them so they will understand the prompt.
5. Have a pencil sharpener handy in case someone breaks their tip.
6. After students have written for 15 minutes, let them know that only 5 minutes are left, then 3 minutes, then 1 minute, and instruct them to finish their story before time is called.
7. Ask students to read their story and share with the larger group.

Note: You are not looking for 100% accuracy in spelling and grammar in this lesson but rather the demonstrated ability to write to a prompt and get some creative thoughts and ideas down. The spelling and grammar can come later as the story is refined and edited, perhaps in subsequent lessons.

8. Discuss with students a) if they found this easy or difficult and their reasons; b) if they found that the time went by very quickly; and c) if knowing about the time limit made them a bit nervous or actually helped them to get some thoughts and ideas down, or both.

Conclusion:

This activity can be modified a number of ways.

You might:

- use colored pencils;
- use 'regular' pencils but different in appearance;
- ask students to write for 15 minutes with one pencil, put it back in the container, select another, and write for another 15 minutes with the second one;
- ask students to write for 15 minutes, then trade pencils with their neighbor and write for another 15 minutes using its prompt and tying it into their story.
- Have each student write a prompt and use them in a similar activity when you meet again.

MAGIC PENCIL WRITING PROMPTS:

1. Just as the clock struck twelve...
2. Suddenly, we heard the strangest noise coming from...
3. I never should have opened that door...
4. Just around the corner...
5. The principal threw open the classroom door ...
6. The whole class roared with laughter when...
7. A giant redbird circled overhead...
8. A very old man with a crooked cane walked slowly into...
9. The house had forty-seven rooms, ninety-two doors, and...

10. The magic egg began to crack...
11. If I had three wishes, I would wish for...
12. Even though the sign said, "No Trespassing," we...I
13. Someone had tied a pink ribbon to the baby elephant's tail...
14. We never intended to cause so much trouble...
15. The clowns began to cry...
16. A hundred years from today....
17. The wolf howled sadly at the moon...
18. As the spaceship came closer...
19. The zookeeper opened the tiger's cage...
20. As the train roared through the darkness...
21. A hundred years ago today...
22. Just as I closed my eyes...
23. We had never explored a cave before...
24. The moonlight was bright enough to read by...