

**Course Topic: Teaching Writing****Course Instructor:**

**Dianne Tyers** has held numerous English language teaching, training and management positions over the past 22 years in six different countries. She owns Advance Consulting for Education, INC, an English language teacher training and curriculum development company. Dianne is currently a PhD candidate at OISE, University of Toronto and has a Masters of Applied Linguistics (University of Queensland) and an MBA (University of Western Ontario). She has presented at local, national and international conferences on teaching and management techniques, culture, and language learning.

**Course Synopsis:**

Story writing allows students to personalize the language they have learned. It is motivating and interesting because students work on their productive language skills, grammar, spelling and writing in a creative way. In this interactive course, we will first review the components of an effective story. Participants will then be introduced to various story writing activities that can be used in the language classroom with different levels of students.

**Course Agenda**

1. Why Use Story Writing?
2. The Components of a Story
3. Story Writing Activities

### 1. Why Use Story Writing?

Why do we want to give students the opportunity to write their own stories?

- Story writing allows students to personalize the language they have learned.
- Students work on their productive language skills, grammar, spelling and writing.
- Students can be creative.
- It is motivating and interesting.

Story writing also allows you, as the teacher, to learn more about your students.

### 2. The Components of a Story

Match the components of a story given on the left with their definitions given on the right.

1. Characters	a. This is the underlying meaning of the story.
2. Setting	b. This is usually the first part of the plot. It is also called the problem. There can be different kinds of problems: between a character and nature; between a character and society; between or among characters; and within a character.
3. Theme	c. This is the sequence of events in a story. There are usually four parts to this sequence: a problem or conflict that the characters have to solve; roadblocks that the characters encounter as they try to solve the problem; the high point or climax when the problem is about to be solved; and the solution when the problem is completely solved.
4. Plot	d. This is the perspective from which the story is told. There are two main perspectives: the first person (the writer tells the story through one character using "I"); and omniscient (the writer sees and knows everything).
5. Conflict	e. This is where and when the story takes place. It includes the location, weather, time of day and time period (past, present, future).
6. Viewpoint	f. These are the people in the story. The writer usually tells us about appearance (what they look like), actions (what they do), dialogue (what they say) and monologue (what they think).

### 3. Story Writing Activities

Try the following story writing activities with your students.

#### A. Story Planning Activities

**1. Brainstorming:** Put three categories on the board – characters, settings, and conflicts. As a class, brainstorm ten different characters, ten different settings and ten different conflicts. Have students select several characters, one setting and one conflict from the lists as the starting point for their story.

**2. Random Selection:** Put slips of paper in a box or hat. Each slip of paper has at least two characters, one setting, and one conflict on it. Students pick a slip of paper for their story.

**3. Drawing:** Make a worksheet with three boxes on it. Label the first box ‘characters’, the second ‘setting’, and the third ‘conflict’. Give one worksheet to each student in the class. Students start by drawing a picture in each box to represent what they will write about. They then write their story based upon the pictures they drew.

#### B. Picture-Based Activities

**1. Picture Series:** Students work in groups. They look at a series of pictures and talk about what is in the pictures and what is happening in the pictures. They then work individually to write a story based upon the pictures and their group discussion.

**2. Character Picture:** Students get a picture of a character. As a group, they talk about what the character looks like, who they think the character is and what kinds of things they think the character would do. They then work individually to write a story about their character, using the group discussion as a starting point.

**3. Picture Sequence:** Present a series of pictures to the class. Individually, students decide what order the pictures should go in. Students write one sentence for each picture to make the story.

**4. Family Picture:** Students bring in a picture of someone in their family. They write a story about that family member. Allow students to share their stories with either a partner or the whole class.

#### C. Beginnings and Endings

**1. Story Beginnings:** Give students the beginning of a story (either one sentence or, for higher level students, one paragraph). Students have to write the ending.

**2. Story Endings:** Give students the ending of a story (either one sentence or, for higher level students, one paragraph). Students have to write the beginning.

**3. Partner Story Writing:** One student writes the beginning of a story. Students then trade stories with a partner and write the ending for the new story they receive.

**4. Class Story Writing:** Each student has a piece of paper. They write the opening sentence of a story. They pass their paper on to another student and receive a different paper in return. They write the next sentence of the new story they receive. They pass the story on to another student and so on.

#### D. Other Activities

**1. Vocabulary Story Writing:** Students learn a set of vocabulary for a particular setting or character. They then work individually to write a story that makes use of the vocabulary.

**2. Object Story Writing:** Show the class several interesting objects (i.e.: a coat, a hat, a stuffed animal, an umbrella). Students write a story that incorporates all of the objects.

**3. Change the Viewpoint:** Give students a simple story written from a clear viewpoint. Have them work individually to rewrite the story from the viewpoint of a different character in the story.

**4. Change the Setting:** Give students a simple story which takes place in a unique setting. Have them work individually to rewrite the story in a different setting. For example, a story set in a big city may now be set in a small town or on a farm. A story set in a particular country may now be set in a different country.

**5. Proverb Story Writing:** Give students a saying or proverb. They must write a short story that illustrates that saying or proverb.

Thanks for participating!

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