



The Writing Workshop



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Tips on Writing Skills

"The Writing Workshop" is a booklet that includes 30 methodologically independent and simple tips on practicing writing skills in English and foreign language education. The tips are designed so that pupils and teachers can use them without having to make a lot of preparation, while they can also be adapted to different situations, skill levels, and needs. Although the booklet primarily focuses on writing skills, many of the activities also involve different approaches to language learning. Pupils will have to listen, read, and talk along the way, as well as collaborate with other fellow pupils.

One of our goals with this didactic toolbox has been to help pupils create their own texts with their own language and, in many cases, with the opportunity to work in a tactile manner. In this way, we want to contribute to more motivation and thereby to better learning. Through using pens, paper, and keyboards, we will motivate pupils to develop their writing skills in new ways.

'The Writing Workshop' is the third booklet from the Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages. It is in the same style as the Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages Education's booklet on reading called 'Reading is Worthwhile' and the booklet on oral skills called 'Loosen Your Tongue and Listen Up!'.

The Curriculum Renewal states that basic skills will continue to be an important part of language learning. No matter what language pupils write in, the most important thing is that their texts communicate content that is expressed through

everything from short and simple texts to longer and more complex ones. This development "also includes a gradually broader vocabulary, more linguistic structures and appropriate use of support materials" (LK20 foreign languages). The aim of this booklet is for pupils to achieve this expertise through varied and engaging activities.

The tips are divided into three categories: 'Working with pictures', 'Writing short texts' and 'Writing long texts'. The categories are only intended as a general guideline, and many of the suggestions can be adapted and changed according to the wishes and needs of the pupils and the teacher. All the activities in this booklet are also digitally available on the Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages in Education website.

We hope that 'The Writing Workshop' will motivate pupils and teachers to have fun with writing in English and foreign languages and help everyone develop creative and independent writing skills.

Halden, 19 August 2019

Natali Seguí Schimpke and Øystein N. Øksenvåg, Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages in Education



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Ask About the Picture

Pupils write a coherent text based on a picture that the teacher has brought along. The text must contain answers to several interrogative words. It is a good idea that the picture has thematic relevance in connection with historical and cultural aspects in the areas where the target language is spoken. Pupils work individually.

Duration:

60 - 90 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Firstly, the teacher explains the use of interrogative words and focuses on word order in the questions and answers.
- The teacher then shows a relevant picture and encourages the pupils to use interrogative words in the target language. Pupils then note down their questions.

- The teacher must try to answer all the questions that the pupils ask.
- After the pupils have noted down the answers to their questions, they can start writing a coherent text that is associated with the picture.

Adaptation:

The teacher may also ask pupils to bring along their own pictures, preferably about a topic that has been given in advance, and the activity can therefore be turned into a group activity. Instead of pupils asking the teacher questions, they ask each other questions. The rest of the activity is carried out as described above.

Describe the Picture Using Key Words

Pupils work in groups. Each group gets a picture that they have to describe using key words. When this is done, the key words are then sent to the next group that has to write a descriptive text based on their key words.

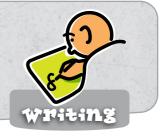
Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 The class is divided into groups of three or four pupils. Each group is given a picture that they are not allowed to show to the other groups. Pupils begin by describing the picture orally. Key words are noted down along the way.

- When the pupils have gathered enough key words, they pass the sheet of paper on to another group that has to describe the picture (which they don't get to see) based on the key words they have been given.
- The pictures and the descriptive texts can then be displayed next to each other in the classroom. How well do the descriptions match the pictures?



Shape Poems

A shape poem is a set of words that form a shape of what the poem is about. As a result, the poem creates a visual image. The degree of difficulty of this activity will be related to the topics one chooses to visualise.

Duration:

45 – 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Together, the teacher and the pupils choose a theme for the shape poem. The theme should be familiar to the pupils so that they can use vocabulary they are able to master (music, sports, friendship etc.).
- The pupils then write a poem or text based on the theme while giving the content relevant visual support. In other words, the poem should represent a shape or an image that corresponds with the selected theme.

corazón



From One Picture to Another

This is a version of the tip 'Describe the Picture Using Key Words'. In this activity, pupils are given a picture that they must describe with a coherent text and then pass the description on to another group. This group then draws/paints the picture based on the text they have received.

Duration:

45-60 minutes

Proposed implementation:

 The class is divided into groups of three or four pupils. Each group is given a picture that they are not allowed to show to the

- other groups. The pupils describe the picture using key words.
- When the pupils have written enough key words, they create a correct and clearly descriptive text of the picture.
- This text is passed on to another group that uses the description to draw/paint a copy of the picture without having seen it.
- The pictures and copies are displayed next to each other in the classroom. How well do the descriptions match the pictures?

Collage Poems

This is a version of 'Blackout Poetry'. Pupils cut out or copy words and phrases from magazine and newspaper texts and combine them to write a poem or short text.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher brings along newspapers, magazines or a selection of texts.
- Pupils work individually, in pairs or in groups and are tasked with writing a

text, either of their choice or within a given topic. The task is to find words and phrases related to the chosen topic, cut these from the sources, and then put them together and glue them onto a sheet so that they form a poem. Alternatively, the teacher may specify the number of words and phrases the pupils must use.

 The finished poems can be read aloud in class and displayed on the wall.



Blackout Poetry

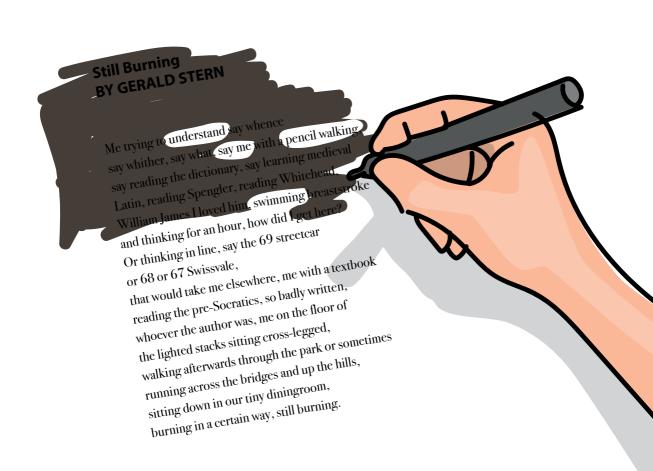
Pupils work with a text from a magazine or newspaper. Instead of writing a text, they cross out words and sentences. What is left should constitute a meaningful poem or a microtext. Pupils work individually.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher brings along newspapers and magazines.
- The pupils work individually and are tasked with crossing out words and sentences in order to create a poem.
- The finished poems can be displayed in the classroom.
- The poems can also be theme-based





Poems of the Future

How do pupils view the future? Pupils express what they imagine the future will be like by filling out a simple template in the target language, at the same time as practicing simple parts of speech.

Duration:

15 – 30 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

	l am
Г	l see
	l hear
	l feel
	l am
	l fear
	I want to
	l am going to
	l am

- The teacher writes the template in the target language on the board.
- Pupils copy the template and write an appropriate verb, noun, or adjective in the spaces where they think the words fit best.
- The poems can be read aloud. The class can also talk about each other's poems.

Adaptation:

The tip allows you to change the subject by copying the answers of a fellow pupil, pair or group and rewrite them in the correct person. The pupils who wish to do so can write their poems of the future without a template and use more complex sentence structure.

Writing Microtexts

Pupils use model texts to become familiar with the type of text called microtext, and write their own six-word stories, Twitter posts, haikus or micro-poems.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher presents different types of example texts and goes through the char acteristics with the whole class.
- The pupils then sit in pairs or on their own and write their microtext suggestions.

The topic of the microtexts can be agreed in advance. Here, pupils can choose whether they want to write a six-word story, a Twitter post, a haiku or a micro-poem.

Adaptation:

The teacher can also challenge the pupils by asking everyone to write about the same topic, but in different lengths. For example, from 6 words, to 140 or 280 characters. Afterwards, the texts can be compared and interpreted by the whole class. How does the length affect the choice of words and how the different texts are interpreted and understood?



Spoiler Alert

This is a version of the tip 'Writing Microtexts'. In this activity, pupils are encouraged to summarise a film, series, or book in just one sentence. Pupils work individually.

Duration:

15 - 30 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The class makes a list of films, series, and books they have read/seen on the board.
- Then, everyone is tasked with making summaries of them. Pupils are only allowed to write one sentence about each film/series/ book that they know. Pupils can write as many sentences as they want within the allotted time.

 When everyone is finished, the different examples can be compared, and the best summaries are read out loud.

Examples:

A short person went to a bad place and destroyed a magic ring for some reason.

Un homme tétraplégique embauche un assistant personnel très spécial.

世界最大的船沉了.

Muchas personas luchan todo el tiempo con espadas láser.

Ein kranker Mann stellt selbst viele Drogen her und stirbt später an Krebs.

Advertising Text

This activity is a version of 'Letter of Complaint' and 'Product Review' (see: Writing long texts). Pupils create a short advertising text for a product from the areas where the target language is spoken and come up with their own slogans. Pupils work in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Together, the class decides on a variety of products or known inventions from the areas where the target language is spoken.
- For example, the products could be related to food, travel, cultural experiences etc.
- Pupils are tasked with writing short texts that present the product or invention with an accompanying slogan.
- The advertisements are presented in class.



Anonymous Questions & Answers

The pupils ask and answer anonymous questions about relevant topics.

Duration:

15 - 30 minutes

Proposed implementation:

 Each pupil writes a personal question on a piece of paper, preferably based on topics that the class has worked on, involving anything from hobbies to language learning.

- The teacher gathers in the pieces of paper, quickly reads through them, and removes any inappropriate questions.
- The class is divided into small groups that are given at least two questions.
 All questions must be answered in writing.
- The groups read their questions and answers out loud in class.

Board Game

Pupils translate a board game.

Duration:

60 - 120 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher brings along several different suitable board games. Pupils work in pairs or in small groups. Each pair or group is given a board game and must translate the playing cards and any instructions from Norwegian to the target language. Suggested board games such as Monopoly and Alias are good examples.
- When the translations are complete, pupils can play the games with each other in the target language.

 In some games, it will be natural to adapt the pieces/counters, cards, topics, or geography to the areas where the target language is spoken.

Adaptation:

This activity can be carried out as a large project where the class is divided into several groups, which collaborate on a thorough translation of one board game. Each group is then responsible for a specific part (rules, cards, instructions, etc.).



Accordion Storytelling

Pupils collaborate in pairs or in groups of four to write every other sentence in a coherent narrative on an A4 sheet of paper that is folded like an accordion.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes

Proposed implementation:

- Pupils work together in pairs or in groups of four. Each pair/group is tasked with folding an A4 sheet of paper eight times, so it resembles an accordion (each fold is approximately a thumb wide). This gives 5 folds to write on (see illustration below). Each fold in the 'accordion' represents one part of a narrative that pupils have to write.
- On the first fold (which is visible to the whole class), a common introduction is written, such as 'Once upon a time...'

- Then, the first pupil continues to write the story on fold No. 2 using one or more whole sentences. Each fold begins with a sentence starter that the pupil must relate to and which the teacher has written in advance on the board. For example, fold No. 2 can start with 'One day...'; fold No. 3 with 'Suddenly'; fold No. 4 with 'Later' and fold No. 5 'Finally'.
- When the pupils are finished writing their part, it is the next person's turn to write on the next fold. What each pupil writes should not be visible.
- This is how the activity continues until all the eight folds have been written on.
- Finally, the paper is unfolded, and the texts are read out loud in class.

Adaptation:

It is most likely that the story turns out to be a 'crazy' story. As a result, one can ask each group to write a new story with all the elements from each fold in a better, more coherent manner.



Writing Relay Race

This is a version of 'Accordion Storytelling'.
Pupils collaborate on continuing each other's stories. Pupils work in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

30 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Pupils are given 3-5 minutes to start writing a story, preferably from a given topic or picture. After the time is up, the stories are passed around in a large circle around the entire class to the next group that then has to read them and continue the stories.
- This is how the relay continues until the

- stories have gone all the way around and each story is back with the group that started it. The stories are then read out loud in class
- The activity can also be carried out as a sprint where, for example, the groups only write one sentence each.

Adaptation:

If one wants to give the activity more structure, one can set the same number of criteria as there are groups. If you create five groups, you can, for example, follow the following procedure: Opening situation - development - first turning point - second turning point - conclusion.

Replace The Adjective Story

Pupils pick a story apart by replacing the adjectives.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Pupils work individually or in pairs. They are given 10-15 minutes to write a brief description of a person or place.
- The text is then sent to the next group in the room. The group is then asked to copy the text but remove all adjectives and leave a blank space in their place.
- This new text is shown to the teacher to check that it is correct, and it is then sent to the next group that must try to recreate the original as best they can by filling in appropriate adjectives.
- Finally, the text rotates back to the starting point, and both the original and the copy are read aloud in the classroom and compared.

One Word at a Time

Pupils write stories or poems in which they replace words in a sentence.

Duration:

15 – 30 minutes.

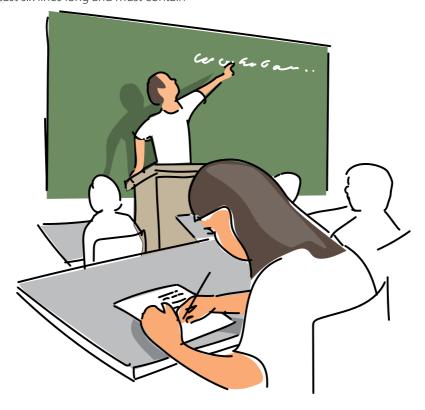
Proposed implementation:

- Pupils start by choosing one of several sentences that the teacher writes on the board. They must then copy the sentence but replace one word for each new line.
- For example, the teacher can start by writing: 'I have been to Paris' or 'Ich habe das'.
- The teacher can set criteria regarding how long the poem should be and what should be changed. For example, the poem can be at least six lines long and must contain

changes to personal pronouns, verbs, adjectives, nouns etc.

I have been to Paris
I have been to New York
I have been to your house
You have been to your house
You have been waiting
I have been waiting
I have been crazy

Ich habe das
Ich weiß das
Du weißt das
Du weißt was?
Du sagst was?
Du sagst Entschuldigung





Translation Competition

The pupils compete against each other in groups to translate individual sentences from Norwegian into the target language.

Duration:

15 - 30 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 Pupils are divided into four to six groups that are each given a starting place at different locations in the classroom.

The teacher hangs one large answer sheet per group as far away from the starting place as possible.

- The teacher says a sentence in Norwegian.
- The groups have to discuss the sentence and send one representative to write the answer on the answer sheet.
- The teacher checks to see if the answer is correct. If it is incorrect, the representative must run back to the group and discuss further. The first group to write the correct answer gets a point.
- All pupils in the group must take their turn answering.





I'm Going on Strike!

Pupils are informed that specific objects that they are familiar with have chosen to go on strike. The task is twofold. In part one, pupils must write a text describing how the strike has affected them. In the second part, pupils are tasked with writing a new text from the object's perspective. Pupils may work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

45 - 90 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

PART 1

 Pupils are informed that specific objects have chosen to go on strike. Feel free to bring the objects to the classroom so pupils can immerse themselves in the activity and ask pupils to select one of them. Try to choose objects that pupils can use in connection with familiar topics and familiar vocabulary (everything from house keys to mobile phones).

- The teacher encourages pupils to write some key words / create a mind map about the object (what is it usually used for, what it means to the pupil, how the pupil is affected by the object going on strike etc.).
- The pupils write a coherent text in the target language where they include all the points from the mind map. The text must show the pupils' perspective and not the object's perspective.

PART 2

- The texts are mixed and handed out to other pupils/groups. These are now tasked to write a new text from the object's per spective. Why did the object choose to go on strike? Pupils may write in the 1st person.
- In conclusion, one can compare the texts and read them out loud in class.



Superhero Day

Pupils work individually or in pairs and describe the 'working day' of a superhero.

Duration:

90 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Pupils choose an appropriate name that suits the superhero's characteristics and describe the appearance and personality of the superhero they have chosen.
- They then have to describe the superhero's day.

- Finally, they can describe what the superhero is like when they are an ordinary person.
- Pupils may draw their superheroes and present them in front of the class.

Adaptation:

At higher levels, pupils can practice using the past tense by describing how the superhero acquired his/her superpowers.





Travelling Light

Pupils have to use six words that start with the same letter to describe a journey. Pupils work individually.

Duration:

60 - 90 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher says a letter.
- Next, pupils must each find one word that begins with this letter for the following categories (country/city - clothes - things - food/drink - brand - artist/celebrity).
- After an agreed amount of time, pupils present their answers. Pupils who have not filled in all the categories can borrow words from others.

 Pupils use the six words to write about a place they would like to travel to (or a travel journal). All the words must be used.

Adaptation:

Those pupils who want to can argue for and against various objects from the categories given that should or should not be taken on the journey. At higher levels, pupils can use the past tense to describe a journey they have been on with the same requirement of including all of the above categories.

The Time Capsule

Pupils document their language skills and reflect on their own language learning by writing a text to their future self. The texts are kept for a specific period of time until one wishes to reread them. Pupils are then tasked with writing a new text based on the same topic. Pupils see and assess their own progression by comparing the new version with the original.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 The teacher introduces the idea behind the task: The time capsule is a closed object (box, chest, envelope or similar), where texts are stored in order for them to be taken out and read later.

- Pupils can write a short text about a given topic. Pupils can also write an assessment of their own language learning and their own linguistic level, their ambitions and how good they think they will be when they open the time capsule.
- When the time capsule is revisited later in the school year, pupils must correct any errors they find. They can then continue working on the text.

Adaptation:

Pupils can also write a letter and 'send it back in time', i.e., a letter to their old self telling them about what they have learned and what they have done during the time that has past, and about what they think of their old self's language skills.



My Blog

This is a writing project that runs over a long period of time where pupils write about themselves in a blog. The pupils process topics, words, concepts, and gather texts on topics that they will master (family, interests, etc.). The blog allows pupils to see their progression in the subject, and after learning new words, concepts, and linguistic structures, they can return to processed topics and correct the language and support it with new knowledge. The project is digital and may include things such as pictures of pupils, avatars, videos, songs, etc. The pupils' blogs may be openly accessible or closed.

Duration:

45 – 60 minutes, over several months or one or more school years

Proposed implementation:

- The project starts by creating a blog, or the pupils may want to create their own avatar or illustrate in other ways, so they don't have to upload their own photos.
- The blog should consist of various topics that focus on what the pupils are working on in the subject (personal information, presenting their family, hobbies and interests, favourite music, description of a person one likes, etc.).
- In connection with celebrations/holidays that one is working on in the subject, pupils can explain in writing how the experience these (Easter, Christmas, Carnival, Diwali, Eid etc.).
- Where relevant, pupils can upload (their own) videos, photos, songs, etc.
 It is important here to explore and think critically about the use of sources and intellectual property rights/copyright.

Receipt Identity

A shop receipt tells you something about what was bought, as well as where and when. The customer, on the other hand, is out of the picture. Pupils can invent the customer and describe their lifestyle and habits based on the receipt. Pupils can unleash their imagination while gaining knowledge about prices and general habits and living conditions in the areas where the target language is spoken.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 The teacher and students bring along one or more shop receipts that are in the target language.

- Pupils work in pairs. Each pair is given a shop receipt that is to be the starting point for creating a person they are going to describe. Points that pupils can include can be: age, civil status, occupation, description of purchased products and the reason for the purchase.
- The finished texts can be read aloud in class and discussed.

Adaptation:

The pupils who wish to do so can elaborate on their description and write about the lifestyle of the person and describe the rest of the person's day.



Roll the Dice and Write

Pupils work in pairs or in small groups and write a story based on different categories of content that are determined by a roll of the dice. The content can be chosen in advance by the teacher or by the whole class.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 The teacher creates a table on the board that consists of five columns and seven rows (see illustration below). For example, each column could contain a historical figure, a place, an event, or an object. The rows show the numbers on the dice (from 1 to 6).

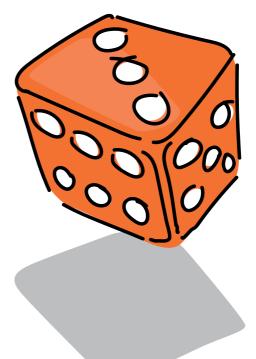
The teacher and the pupils fill out the template together.

- The class is divided into pairs or into small groups. Each group is given a dice.
- The dice is thrown, and the pupils select at least one item from the row to base their text on. The dice is thrown in turn and pupils must try to write a coherent text.
- The finished stories can be read out loud in class.

Adaptation:

At higher levels, pupils can write the story in the past tense. If one does not want to work with fairy tales/stories, simply change the content in the columns (e.g., person/profession; event/problem; place).

	historiefigur	sted	hendelse	gjenstand
•				
•				
••				
• •				
••				
	•	•	·	·





Celebrity Interview

In this activity, pupils assume the role of a journalist and a celebrity. The goal is to write an article for a magazine (or a post on a celebrity blog or Instagram profile).

Duration:

90 - 120 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Pupils are divided into pairs. They choose which celebrity to interview and which magazine (or blog) the interview will be published in. The celebrity must be from the area where the target language is spoken.
- Pupils then have to formulate questions for the interview and familiarise themselves with the celebrity's life. The pupils may

- decide what the interview should be about. It may be a good idea to inspire the pupils by giving them some magazines to look at (or they can find themselves).
- When the questions are ready, one pupil assumes the role of a journalist and the other pupil assumes the role of a celebrity. The interview itself takes place orally in the first and second persons (maybe in a formal manner), and the journalist notes down what the celebrity says using key words. Then, both pupils work together and make a final copy of the interview in the third person.
- The interviews are handed in to the teacher or displayed in the classroom.

Letter of Complaint

Pupils write a letter of complaint regarding a product they are not satisfied with. They can work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 The teacher explains the task: Pupils have purchased a product or service that they are not satisfied with, and they decide to complain. Together, the class can make a list on the board of products and services that they wish to complain about from the area where the target language is spoken. They also have to think about why they want to complain.

- For example, the products could be related to food, travel, culture etc.
- The letter of complaint must be factual and substantiated, with why they are not satisfied.
- Before the activity starts, the teacher and the class have a brainstorming session regarding relevant words and phrases that are suitable to use when writing about the different products.
- The letter of complaint may be formal or informal, for example written like a post on a website or on social media.
- Pupils may later be tasked with writing responses to each other's complaints.



Product Review

This is a version of 'Letter of Complaint', where pupils review a product. This tip allows one to use products from the areas where the target language is spoken so that pupils also learn about some cultural aspects. This tip works nicely with 'Letter of Complaint' and 'Advertising Text'. Pupils work in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 Together, the class decides on a variety of products from the areas where the target language is spoken.

- For example, the products could be related to food, travel, cultural experiences etc.
- They are then tasked with writing a brief description of the products, whether they liked them and whether they would recommend others to buy them.
- In conclusion, they can give the product a grade.

Embellishing the Truth

Pupils change parts of a famous person's or celebrity's biography who comes from the area where the target language is spoken.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

 Together, the class suggests a number of famous people from the areas where the target language is spoken and writes them on the board. Pupils are divided into pairs or groups, and they choose the person they want to write about.

- Pupils find a biographical text about the person.
- Pupils must then change the person's name.
 Apart from that, they can change as much personal information and other details as they want.
- Alternatively, the teacher can set criteria, such as five sentences of original information and five sentences in which the information has been changed by the pupils.
- When the biographies are finished, the groups can swap biographies and try to guess which people the other groups have written about.



Our 15 Words

The pupils suggest 15 words related to a familiar topic that they will then use to write a coherent text in the target language. The fact that the pupils have chosen the words themselves may make it easier for them to write about the topic. Pupils may work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- The teacher writes a topic on the board that the class is already working on or that is familiar to the pupils.
- In total, the class must choose 15 words that are related to the topic. These 15 words are

- divided into various categories such as: nouns, adjectives, and verbs. The class and the teacher are free to set the criteria together and agree on all the words.
- The pupils are then tasked with writing a coherent text in the target language. They do this individually. All 15 words must be used in the text.

Adaptation:

The teacher can adapt the task by suggesting different alternatives that are more or less creative or more or less open. For example, the starting point could simply be a title, or a more specific problem for discussion.

A Letter to My Younger Self

In this activity, pupils are encouraged to use future tenses to write a letter to their younger self about the most important events that they will experience up to the present day.

Duration:

45 - 60 minutes.

Proposed implementation:

- Each pupil goes back in time to their childhood and writes down some key words about the most important things they have experienced up to the present day.
- They then write a text to their younger self

- using future tenses (for example: Dear Martin, you are going to learn how to ride a bike when you are six years old. One day, you are going to have a nasty fall...).
- The finished texts can then be read out loud in class, or to each other in pairs.

Adaptation:

Instead of writing about the future, pupils can also choose to write about the past using the same method and approach.



Referanser

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The Norwegian National Centre for English and other Foreign Languages in Education Østfold University College, NO-1757 Halden

Telephone: +47 69 60 83 00 Website: www.fremmedspraksenteret.no

