

Using diaries to develop Young Learners' writing skills

Alison Crooks

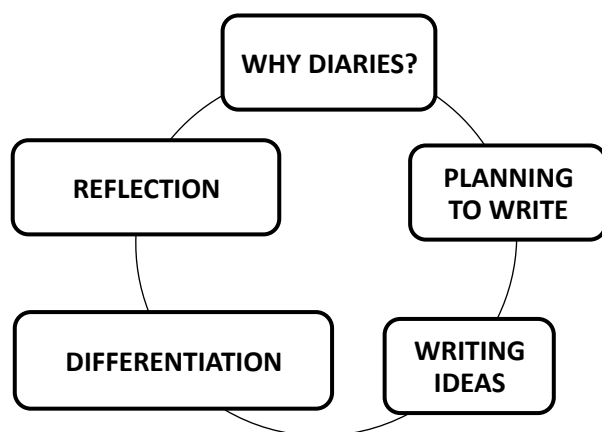
Sunday 5th March 11.45 a.m.

Presentation Abstract

In this session we will work on practical ideas designed to enable young learners to plan and develop their personal writing and examine how diaries can be used as a tool for self-reflection. We will look at how mixed level classes can be given differentiated diary tasks to allow the teacher to assess student progress.

Biodata

After a career including management and training roles in real estate and fashion production, Alison Crooks decided to train as an EFL teacher. She has worked in a range of teaching roles including small traditional monolingual academies and a multi lingual Summer School. She currently works at the forward-thinking academy, ELI Malaga.



Challenges in the classroom

- Cover the syllabus
- Create and maintain motivation
- Measure ongoing student development
- Feedback to DOS and parents
- Pass internal exams
- Succeed in YLE exams

Identify levels of ability – Look at the range of ability in a class, either exam results or level test.

Purpose of diary writing – for the student

- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ Enable self evaluation
- ✓ Encourage perseverance
- ✓ Develop independent learning
- ✓ Celebrate success

From January 2018 the Cambridge Young Learners Exams at Movers and Flyers levels will include a new writing task. These can be found at;

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/young-learners-english/movers/preparation/2018-update/>

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/exams/young-learners-english/flyers/preparation/2018-update/>

Movers Level (Primaria 4)

Past tense diary

- Start was/were
- Focus on past tense
- Use book vocabulary
- Add selected verbs
- Develop sequencing

Sunday 5th March

Saturday	Sunday	Tuesday	Saturday	Sunday
last weekend		last Tuesday	yesterday	today

← past →

24

• play	• went
• see	• had
• go	• played
• have	• saw

25

played saw went had

26

24th February 2017
My Weekend

At the weekend I _____ to the supermarket with my Mum. I was _____.

On Saturday I _____ my friends. We _____ football.

On Sunday I _____ my family. I _____ an icecream. It was _____.

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Other activities at this level

- Picture story – speak then write
- Picture ideas – my holiday/Christmas/weekend
- Bubble wrap use a verb/linker/adverb of frequency (see Flyers/KET section)

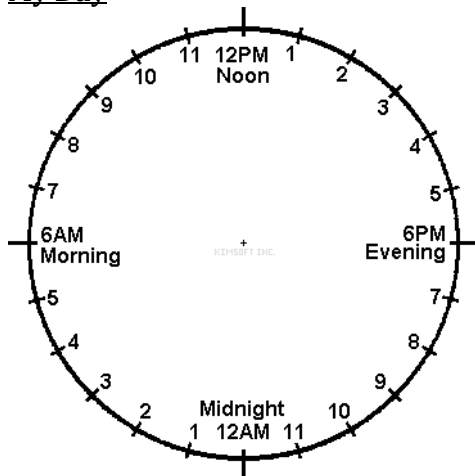
Flyers/KET (Primaria 5)

These ideas/plans could be adapted for PET for Schools activities.

Storyboard

Take an A4 piece of paper and fold in six. Draw your holiday/weekend/event in sequence.
S2 ask about each other's pictures and use your story board as your plan for your story.

My Day



See Appendix 1 for clock blank.

(Present tense) Divide the clock into 24 hours and complete with your activities for a day of your choice. Include the subjects you do at school and when you have something to eat.

S2 – Speaking - ask your partner what time they do various activities.

S3 – Speaking – ask each other using third person. e.g. “Pablo, what time does Maria go to school?”

This task identifies vocabulary needed by individual students to talk about their situation.

I’ve used the above for Elementary adults to provide support when they are speaking.

Diary - use the clock as a plan to write about your day – specify which tense you want your students to use. Or revisit the exercise when you are focusing on past tense.

Extension – complete a clock for students around the world

<http://www.timeforkids.com/destination/china/day-in-life>

Students can use the clock to complete for their own choice of sports/pop/film star - the clock limits the Wikipedia effect as they can only write a few words in the clock space, back in the classroom they can talk and write about their chosen person – again using the clock as their writing plan.

2. Writing plan – Appendix 2

Choose a series of pictures

Write prompts across the top. For example

WHAT DID YOU DO

WHEN

WHO WITH

WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

Students select 4 to 5 pictures they want to write about and complete the prompt boxes.

Cut the strips you want to keep.

Put in chronological order

Stick together and add linking words at the joins.

Roll up from the end and tell your partner your story.

Write up your story in diary, adding to it as you wish.

3, Other Plans See Appendix 3

Ant planner (this was too abstract for a Flyers group!)

Objectives

To revise use of past continuous and past simple pre exam.

To plan an introduction, body and ending.

To write a story in a logical progression

Use vocabulary learnt in the book to date which includes

- adjectives of personality
- geographical features
- school words
- possessions
- materials
- household furniture and activities

Other ideas

Lego figure

Burger – there are loads of examples on-line

Cake – I like the idea of a birthday cake with candles as additional vocabulary, for example Flyers adjectives excited, lucky, lovely, special, strange, wonderful

I've also seen an OREO (as in the biscuit) planner for persuasive writing.

And anything else with a beginning, middle and end!

Write in the voice of another person/inanimate object.

- Heroes and villains
- Sports stars
- Film stars
- A computer game/book character
- Your pet/ zoo/wild animal
- An inanimate object
 - dustbin
 - football
 - necklace

4. Bubble wrap

Once you pop you can't stop!

Verbs, infinitives, adjectives, adverbs, linkers, sequencing, students could create for peers.

Give the bubble strip for homework.

5. Shoe box room

Students plan their bedroom or dream bedroom in a shoe box for home work (weekend/holiday or week long project)

Using a box allows positioning of windows, doors, items on walls etc. Basic shapes can be provided to cut and stick or the concept of a three-dimensional room introduced.

Differentiation

Three tasks

Class divided into three groups and work on three activities, one of which is diary writing, the other two tasks in a format the students are familiar with. Students rotate, weakest doing the most visual (distracting!) first.

- 12 students
- 3 groups of 4
- Grouped by perceived ability
- Put in groups on arrival to class
- Two activities familiar to students
- Lower level students on vocabulary revision task first
- Diary activity based on homework task

Examples of tasks

On line vocab etc game (most books have these now)

Flashcard games

Speaking activity or survey

Question strips

Sentence ordering/error correction on mini whiteboards.

Picture dictionary

Benefits

- Collaboration
- Challenge
- Faster pace in some groups
- Higher level
- More turns at the game!
- Mixed level grouping may “pull” slower or reluctant learners
- Teacher focus on small groups

One task – 3 differentiated instructions

- Clear objectives
 - Write a plan
 - Use target language
 - Minimum word count

Whole class

- Write about three days last week.
- Minimum 50 words
- Plan which days you are going to write about

Monday – maths and English

Tuesday – art and P.E.

Wednesday - pizza

Divide class by ability, working in small groups

Lower level – model text

Thursday 14th April 2016

On Monday I did maths and English. Maths is my favourite subject, and I like English too.

On Tuesday I did art. Art is my worst subject because I can't draw. P.E. is my best subject because I like playing table tennis.

On Wednesday I had pizza for lunch, it's my favourite food. Ham and cheese pizza is better than four cheese pizza.

Last week was a good week.

Mid level – target language with examples

Thursday 14th April 2016

Write about what you did this week. Remember to use the past tense.

Write about your best and worst subjects at school.

Use good, better, best, bad, worse, worst.

For example, I'm good at maths, but I'm better at science because I like nature.

Finish your diary entry with a comment about your week. For example, last week was a good week.

High level – no example, grammatical terms

Thursday 14th April 2016

Write about this week.

Use the comparative and superlative of good and bad.

Finish your diary entry with a comment about this week.

If you start with the low level text it's easy to adapt the subsequent instructions.

Reflection

After a few diary sessions add an extension flap to the diary cover where students can write any vocabulary specific to their lives and interests. Go through the diary to identify those words. This can be added to and re used as needed.

Ask students to look at a piece of work and elicit what they should pay attention to. Adapt to students' level.

What was I asked to write about?

Did I plan?

Did I use the plan?

Did I use the words/grammar I was asked to use? (Adjectives/adverbs/comparatives/tense).

Did I write the correct number of words? (encourage counting by lines and avoid obsessing on this).

Are there any spelling mistakes?

Is my handwriting easy to read?

Is my story easy to understand?

Is my work interesting?

What can I change to make it better?

Useful websites

Online games

Cambridge – specific YLE vocabulary and grammar

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/games-social/>

Incredible English pub Oxford University Press

<https://elt.oup.com/student/incredibleenglish/?cc=us&sellLanguage=en>

Photos of miniature figures – Artist Christopher Boffoli

<http://www.bigappetites.net/>

Google name for more images.

Research

Gareth Rees, teacher/teacher trainer, London Metropolitan University, UK (British Council Article)

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-mixed-ability-classes-1>

<https://prezi.com/56ioi9s6sode/using-self-assessment-in-the-primary-classroom/>

Nik Peachey British Council

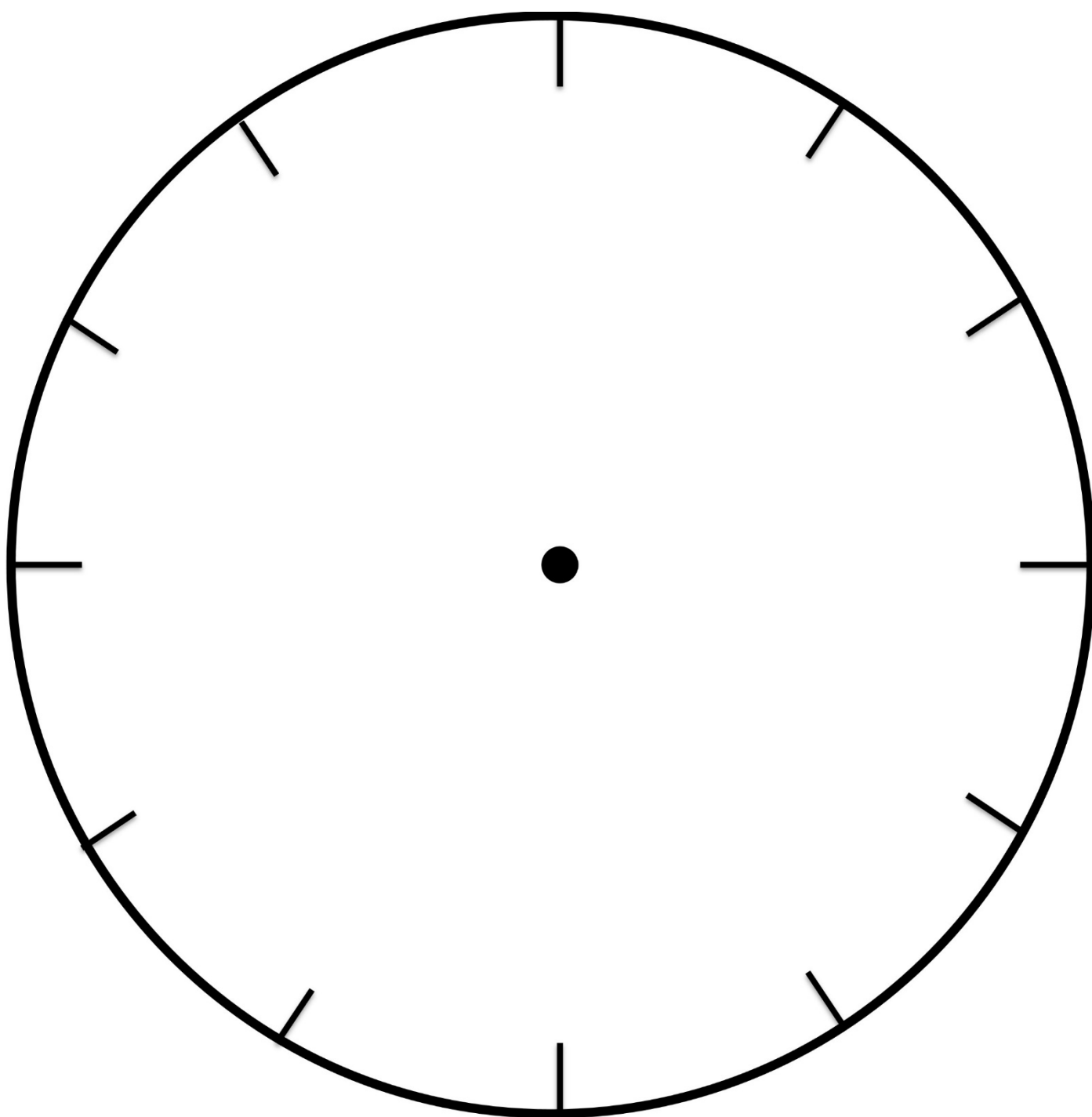
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/learner-diaries>

English for Primary and Early Years by Ian Eyers pub Sage Publications for The Open University



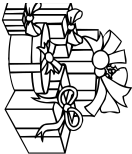

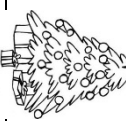



Reflection on Writing in Portfolio Assessment: A Case Study of EFL Primary School Pupils in Brunei Darussalam
Junaidi Hj. Abd. Rahman

http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/3090/1/WRAP_THESIS_Rahman_2001.pdf

Appendix 1 This clock needs to be divided again to give 24 hours – I haven't created the perfect template yet.



Appendix 2

								What did you do?
								When?
								Who with?

What was it like?

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Bite the reader

Title _____

Useful words

first
suddenly
after that
next
finally

