Starting Off on the Right Foot

Making a Writing Booklet

It's a good idea because…

It can serve as a guide for future writing tasks and/or any exams they will prepare for. It also shows how important their writing is to you as a teacher.

What to keep in mind

- Make different coloured covers, one for each group
- Have the students assemble their booklets in the first class to cut down on time you will have to spend making them
- 10 A4 pages printed front and back should be enough for nine pieces of writing of 150 words x2 throughout the year
- My template is saved in Amy Kelly- Photocopiables- Secondary- Writing Notebook correct.

Making Writing More Approachable Through Projects.

Surveys Lower Secondary

Students make surveys asking their peers what they spend time doing. The surveys are then used to make pie charts and write essays.

It's a good idea because…

it is a project that incorporates CLIL by teaching students how to use Excel to make pie charts and about recording and interpreting survey data.

How to do it

- Tell students they will all complete a survey about how much time they spend on

different activities

- Students think of categories such as time spent playing computer games, time spent talking to my family etc.
- Board the ideas and type them, give them out to students if possible before the end of the session
- Set students a particular day to complete the survey and have them set a reminder on their phone for that morning
- The next week, show students how to record the data on spreadsheets
- Students talk about the differences between time spent on different activities and the differences they can see between boys and girls
- Students learn how to use Excel to make pie charts
- Students are paired and each pair is assigned a pie chart to make. The data on the pie charts should reflect interesting differences and/or similarities.
- Print the pie charts
- The next week distribute the pie-charts. Students work together in groups of three to comment on what they find most interesting about the data
- Students study a model, highlighting key phrases and noting structure
- Students plan their essay together, highlighting key phrases as they use them. Monitor closely, giving advice and helping students to organise their ideas. Students will need a lot of support at this point.
- Students write their planned essay at home
- The essays and pie-charts could then be used to make a poster

What to keep in mind

- This is a term-long project, best done for a hour an hour at the end of every lesson or every second lesson
- Remember to ask students to set a reminder on their phones to do the survey
- Remember that this will be the first time most students will ever record survey data or use Excel to make a pie-chart, so you will have to be patient and give plenty of time in the lesson plan for individual help by teacher to groups

Surveys with Upper Secondary
Students make surveys asking their peers their opinion about a topic. The surveys

are then used to make pie-charts and presentations.

It's a good idea because…

        it is a project that incorporates CLIL by teaching students how to use Excel to make pie-charts and about recording and interpreting survey data.

How to do it
- In groups, students think about what they would like to know about their peers
- Groups write surveys of 10-15 questions with multiple choice answers
- Students type their surveys
- Print the surveys and distribute them to the other groups in the class and another class (preferably of the same age)
- Collect surveys
- Students record the data
- They discuss the interesting differences according to age and sex (and any other categories they can think of!)
- Students learn how to make pie-charts in Excel
- Students make pie-charts
- Students plan and write a 5-8 min presentation to present their findings
- Students type their notes (in paragraph form) and make a PowerPoint
- Students present their findings in the form of PowerPoint presentations in front of the class

What to keep in mind
- Remind students it is very important to start their survey by asking the age and sex of the student who will fill in the survey. They will need this to draw comparisons and comment on interesting disparities and/ or similarities.
- Remember that this will be the first time most students will ever record survey data or use Excel to make a pie-chart, so you will have to be patient and give plenty of time in the lesson plan for individual help by teacher to groups.

Using Post-Crossing
Students send and receive postcards using a website service. The postcards are

then used for a poster project.

<u>What is it?</u>
The goal of this project is to allow anyone to send and receive postcards from all over the world!
Every postcard you send, you will receive one back from another user.

<u>It's a good idea because…</u>
      it is a great way to start the year with enthusiasm, who doesn't love getting something in the post? It can be used as a platform for a writing task based on the countries that the students receive postcards from.
      It can also be used as a way to motivate students to write their best work on the postcard that they send. For example they could write a spring Haiku, the opening paragraph of a very scary story or a shortened review of the best film they've seen this year (as a recommendation for their reader).

<u>How to do it</u>
- First, you need to register. It's free and you can send five postcards at a time
- Then, you send your postcards to the addresses that the website assigns
- As soon as your postcard has been registered as received, you will be sent a postcard
- When you receive your postcard, register it as received on the website
- Repeat this process
- Then, use the postcards you receive to have to students write fact-files or make posters about the countries

<u>Things to keep in mind</u>
- Make sure you put *Student of teacher's name* as the first line of your address
- This takes time; it will be about a month before you send and receive ten postcards. You could set up multiple accounts to speed up the process

Make a Magazine with a Snazzy Cover!
Students make a sports magazine complete with a cover made online.

<u>What is it?</u>

Big Huge Labs is a website that allows you to create your own magazine covers using text and images from the internet.
https://bighugelabs.com/magazine.php

It's a good idea because…

making a nice cover for their magazine and knowing that it will be made into a poster will motivate the students to do their best writing for the writing tasks.

How to do it

- Set up the task by telling students they will make a sports magazine
- The three tasks they should do as a group are: an interview with a famous sports person (100-150 words), a multiple choice quiz (ten questions) and a profile of a sport (100 words)
- Show ss how to use Big Huge Labs
- Give them a good and a bad example of a cover so they can see the mistakes they might make and how to avoid them

Things to keep in mind

- This can be tricky. Make sure to give students a model, a run through of how to do it and be there to help them at every stage
- Carry out a last spelling check before emailing it as you will not be able to edit it afterwards
- Do not attempt this unless you have tried it first!

Making Writing Tasks More Motivating.
Guess the Film Narrative Tenses
Students narrate a scene from a movie and then use it to play a guessing game.

What is it?

It's a writing game.

- Students pick a scene from a movie and write about it using the narrative tenses.
- They then stick a picture from the movie on the underside of the writing.
- The other students read their text and see if they can guess the movie.
- They lift the flap to see if they were right!

It's a good idea because…

it engages students and makes it personal to them. It also gives their writing a purpose as it will be used to play a game and used as a wall display.

How to do it

- ☒ Students pick a scene from a movie they like
- ☒ Students write a descriptive passage about the scene using narrative tenses
- ☒ Teacher corrects
- ☒ Students type edited version and pick a picture to match
- ☒ Teacher prints
- ☒ Students assemble and play a *guess that movie* game with each other
- ☒ A wall display could then be made

Things to keep in mind

Make sure they start typing their scene half way down the page so that when you print it the fold is in the right place to show the photograph.

Guess the Business Reports
Students write a business report and then use it to play a guessing game

It's a good idea because…

it engages students and makes it personal to them. It also gives their writing a purpose as it will be used to play a game and used as a wall display.

How to do it

- Students pick an imaginative business to write for
- Students write a report for the business using a model text
- Teacher corrects
- Students type edited version and pick a picture to match
- Teacher prints
- Students assemble and play a guess the business game with each other
- a wall display could then be made

Things to keep in mind

Make sure they start typing their scene half way down the page so that when you print it the fold is in the right place to show the photograph.

Assigning Students an Alternate Persona
Students are assigned a character. They must write an opinion essay from the point of view of that character

It's a good idea because…

it takes some of the stress and boredom out of students having to write opinion essays. The guessing game at the end also gives students an audience.

How to do it

- After studying a model, give students the title of the opinion essay, for example *Teenage Crime*
- Students sit in groups of three and each group is assigned a character
- Allow students to plan together and encourage them to use dictionaries to come up with vocabulary that this person might use
- Students write their planned essay for homework
- Teacher corrects
- Students read each other's corrected essays and guess which character the student was writing as

Wheel Decide and Fruit Machine
Use an online tool to assign different items which must be included in a news

report.

<u>What is it?</u>
These are online tools which allow you to input lists. You can then have the tool select at random the items on your list.
http://www.classtools.net/education-games-php/fruit_machine

http://wheeldecide.com/

<u>It's a good idea because…</u>
      it makes giving topics, assigning roles or suggesting items to include in writing more fun and allows students to see that they/their topic have been chosen at random.

<u>Things to keep in mind</u>
You can save your list of topics on Wheel Decide by saving the URL and copying and pasting it.

Using Rotten Tomatoes as a Starter for Writing Reviews
Students write a good, middling or bad review using a film review website as a starting point.

<u>What is it?</u>
Rotten Tomatoes is a popular film and TV review site.

<u>Why it works</u>
- Introducing students to real-life English and sites that people of their age use could lead to them using it in their day-to-day life
- It gives the students a realistic base to write from and adds an element of fun by dictating whether they like the movie they're writing about or not

<u>How to do it</u>
- Have ss guess what Rottentomatoes.com could do
- Have ss research what the three symbols of Rotten Tomatoes are and what they mean
- Assign each s one of the symbols at random

- ☒ Ss must write a good, middling or bad review depending on the tomato they are assigned

Using Post-Its to Vote for Topics of an Essay

Students choose a topic they would like to write about in an essay. They write their idea on a Post-It and then the class votes for their favourites.

It's a good idea because…

- o it personalises topics
- ☒ It gives students a chance to think about what they'd like to write about it
- ☒ It gives students a chance to vote and choose the best topics from the class

Things to keep in mind

Make sure you give students time at home to think about their ideas; they may find it difficult to come up with something on the spot.

Correction Codes.

Every piece of student writing is corrected twice; once using a correction code which categorises student errors and once to make sure that the students have the correct answer.

It's a good idea because…

- o Students will remember what they have discovered themselves for more time than something that is told to them
- ☒ Students often do not interact fully with all of the corrections you have made; simply looking at the grade instead
- ☒ Gives students autonomy, a chance to reflect on their writing
- ☒ Categorising the errors makes it much easier for students to correct them than if their errors are highlighted but not categorised

Sample Correction Code			
Word order	WO	I don't like very much this forest	
Wrong word	WW	I was looking in the internet	
Erase this	---	She saw the thing that it was happening	
Spelling	SP	thouhgt	
Wrong tense	WT	I see her yesterday	
Tense formation error	T	They had go to school	
Incorrect form of the word	F	I played basketball, it was very funny	
Capital letter	C	i live in spain	
Punctuation	o	I'm going to drink this potion said Sara	
Silly mistake	!	He goed home	
Plural	PL	People is going home	
Insert another word here	^	These days I'm not using internet too much	
Start a new paragraph	<		

Things to remember

- Students whose L1 does not use Roman Alphabet will find this very difficult
- It does not take into account style, audience, or use of advanced vocabulary and

grammar These need to be commented on separately which takes extra time
- ☒ Each writing needs to be corrected twice
- ☒ You will need to dedicate class time to this. (I usually give 20 mins in class for corrections.

This also stops students getting overwhelmed. If they can't correct mistakes in that amount of time, they probably can't correct them at all).

- ☒ Under level B1 not advisable; students may not have knowledge base to correct errors
- ☒ **Grass skirts** work well at that level

Grass Skirts
Student errors are written out and students must play a game to try to correct them as a team.

<u>It's a good idea because…</u>
- o   it allows students to pool their knowledge, correcting errors as a team.
- ☒ It brings movement into the classroom.

<u>How to do it</u>
- ☒ Type common errors from essays, one per line
- ☒ Leave as many spaces between the errors as possible
- ☒ Print the errors on different coloured paper, one colour per team
- ☒ Cut between the errors
- ☒ Stick the papers around the room or outside in the hall with blu-tack
- ☒ In teams, students must take turns to run and grab and rip one error from the paper at a time
- ☒ They must correct the error and bring it to you to check
- ☒ Once they have corrected the error and you have checked it, they can run for the next error. (Not before)
- ☒ The first team to finish correcting all the errors wins