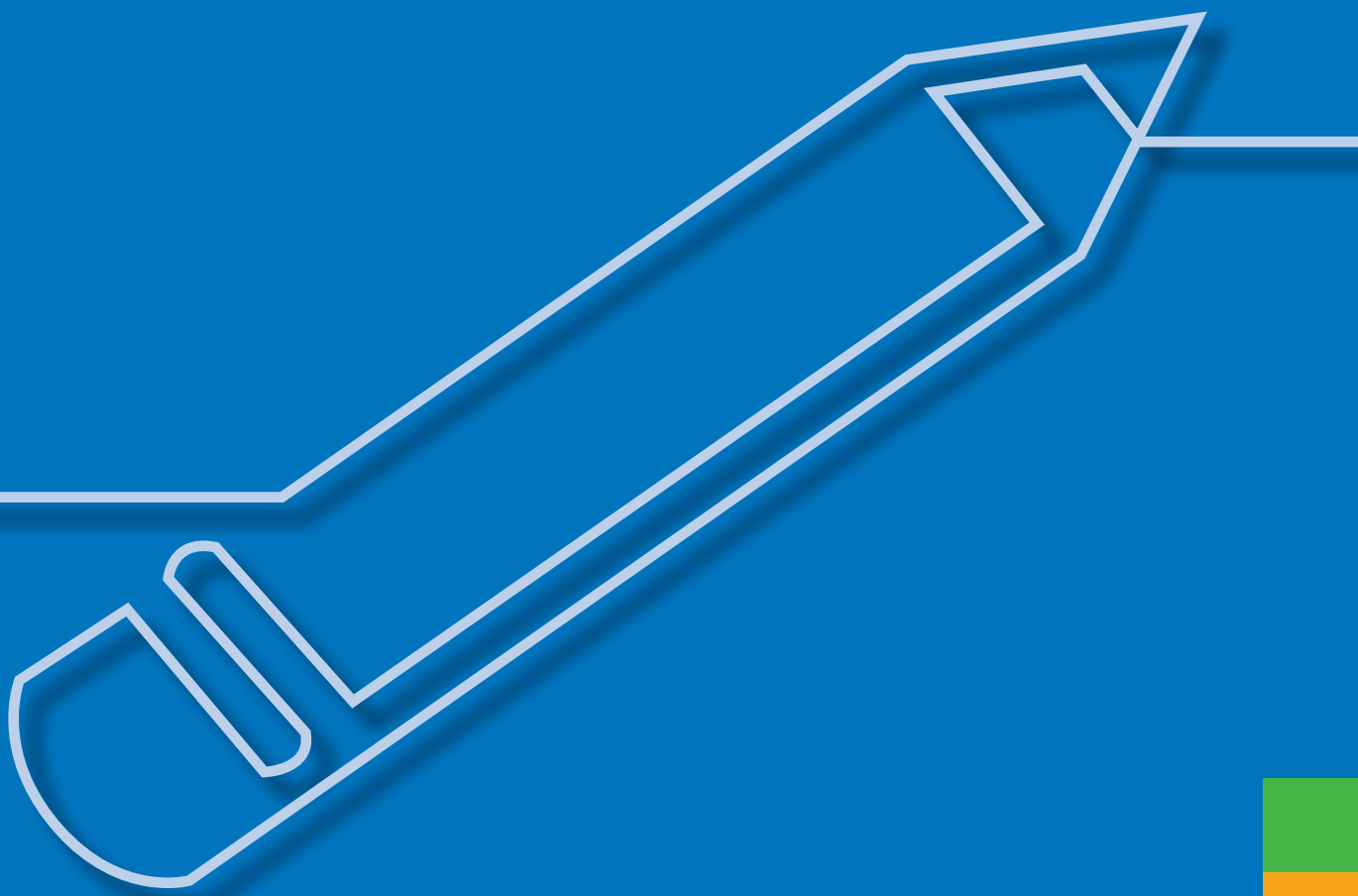


Promoting writing in the first language



Materials for heritage language teaching

Didactic suggestions

1



Promoting writing in the first language

Basil Schader

Nexhat Maloku

Materials for heritage language teaching

Didactic suggestions

1

Series "Materials for heritage language teaching"
(HLT; in Switzerland HSK: Instruction in native language and culture); Didactic suggestions 1.

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Lifelong
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Explanations, abbreviations

First language: Also mother tongue or family language: the first language a child has learned and speaks at home. Some children have two first languages.

School language: The language that is spoken in the schools of the host country. In addition, the local dialect may count as an environment language.

Abbreviations: S = student
T = teacher (instructor)

Legend

for indications referencing organizational form, class, time requirements concerning teaching proposals:



IW = individual work



WP = working with a partner



SG = small group



WC = whole class

1st–9th grade

Suitable for... to... (e. g. 2nd– 4th grade).
Keeping in mind that this designation may vary according to the requirements of the individual students.

10–15 minutes

Approximate time requirement, e. g. 20 minutes.
(Estimated time varies, must be determined by the instructor according to the level and the requirements of the class).

Preface to the series “Materials for heritage language teaching”

Heritage language teaching (HLT), or mother-tongue teaching, known mostly as “Herkunftssprachlicher Unterricht (HSU)” in Germany and Austria and “Unterricht in Heimatlicher Sprache und Kultur (HSK)” in Switzerland, plays an important role in the development of a child’s identity and language. It promotes multilingualism and serves as a valuable personal and social resource. The awareness of this fact has long been borne out by research and framework guidelines, such as the recommendations of the Council of Europe R(82)18 and R(98)6. Nevertheless, this kind of instruction for the most part still takes place under more difficult conditions than regular curriculum classes. Various factors are responsible:

- Heritage language education is on an insecure footing institutionally and financially in many places. In Switzerland, for instance, heritage language teachers almost everywhere are paid by the country of origin or even the parents.
- Heritage language education classes are often poorly coordinated with regular classroom instruction; contact and cooperation with regular curriculum teaching staff is often very poorly developed.
- Heritage language education classes often occur only two hours per week, which makes constructive, uninterrupted learning more difficult.
- Heritage language education classes are mostly optional, and the commitment on the part of the students is not very strong.
- Heritage language education classes involve multiclass teaching as a rule, with students from the 1st to the 9th grade joined into a single class. This requires a great deal of internal differentiation and didactical skill on the part of the instructor.
- The heterogeneity of the student body in heritage language classrooms is extremely high in terms of the students’ linguistic competence as well. While some have acquired at home good proficiency in both dialect and standard use of their native language, others may speak only dialect. For second or third generation heritage speakers who have already resided for many years in the new country, the language spoken there (e.g. German) has become the dominant language, while their command of the first language is limited to dialect, transmitted exclusively orally, and with a vocabulary reduced to familiar issues.

- The heritage language instructors have generally received a good basic education in their countries of origin, but they are not at all prepared for the realities and the challenges of teaching in a multiclass environment in the migration destination countries. Professional development opportunities in the host countries exist for the most part only to an insufficient extent.

The series “Materials for heritage language teaching” supports the teachers of native language education classes in their important and demanding task and thereby hopes to contribute to the optimal quality of this kind of learning. The review of the backgrounds and principles of the current pedagogy and didactics in western and northern European immigration countries (c.f. the volume Foundations...) furthers this goal, supported with concrete practical suggestions and models for the classroom in the workbooks “didactic suggestions”. Their main emphasis is the promotion of linguistic competence. The didactical suggestions purposely revert to the pedagogical principles and procedures that are familiar to the students from the regular curriculum and its teaching materials. This familiarity brings heritage language education and regular curriculum instruction in close contact and ensures the greatest possible coherence between the two. As the teachers of the heritage language education programs familiarize themselves with the didactic approaches and specific proceedings that are currently used in the regular curricula, they receive further training and, it is hoped, a strengthening of their stature as partners of equal value in the educational process of the students who are growing up bilingually and bi-culturally.

The series “Materials for heritage language teaching” is published by the Center for International Projects in Education (IPE) at the Zurich University of Teacher Education. It is developed in close collaboration between Swiss and other West European specialists on the one hand, as well as experts and practicing instructors of heritage language programs. This ensures that the offered information and suggestions reflect the real circumstances, needs and possibilities of heritage language programs and meet the objective of functionality and practicality.

Introduction

1. Writing in the native language: not easy, but important

To write in their first language or mother tongue is very difficult or even impossible for many children and adolescents whose parents or grandparents have emigrated. If these writing skills are not developed in school, the children concerned remain illiterate in their first language. While speaking in their heritage language only in a broken, mostly dialectal form, they lose the connection with their written culture. This increases the danger that, sooner or later, they might lose their first language altogether – and with it, an important special competence and an integral part of their bicultural identity. Furthering the biliteracy competences (the ability to read and write in one's own first language) is therefore a significant concern also in the sense of a balanced integral development of the bicultural-bilingual identity.

Heritage language education (in Switzerland: HSK courses) can make a decisive contribution to the development of these competences. For children from educationally disadvantaged families, it represents the only opportunity to also learn their native language in its standard form and written version, and to acquire an integral bilingualism that includes the written culture as well.

2. Goals and structure of this publication

This publication supports the teachers and students of heritage language education in developing writing competences in the first language in an educationally current, enjoyable and motivating manner. The introduction to didactic key aspects of writing texts is followed by an abundance of specific teaching proposals and suggestions.

This current volume begins with a collection of simple, playful forms of developing the motivation to write at all age levels while recognizing that many students experience significant blockages, at least initially. Pursuant to the insight that strategic knowledge is as important as knowledge of facts, part II offers techniques and strategies to help students in the various phases of the writing process. Part III comprises numerous concrete suggestions of partial aspects, such as vocabulary development, developing text structure, or style. The last part includes an array of suggestions and ideas that are thematically particularly appropriate for the context of heritage language education and cooperation with regular classroom instruction or artistic-creative projects.

For quick orientation, each suggestion lists a recommendation about the arrangement (from individual work to class work), about the age-appropriate level for this exercise (e.g. 3rd – 7th grade) and for the approximate time requirement. Each suggestion also describes the goals and the specific approach, clearly and comprehensibly formulated. All of the teaching suggestions were critically examined and, for the most part, practically tested by different heritage language instructors.

3. Key aspects of current didactics of writing texts

The following remarks pertain to the current writing didactics in the German-speaking areas, but naturally also reflect international developments. The new conception of the last 30 years is already evident in the term "Didactics of writing texts", which replaces the former term "essay writing instruction". This includes a broader understanding of the term that goes beyond the classic school essay. Among the key aspects of contemporary didactics of writing (which may differ from what many heritage language teachers acquired in their own training) are the following five points. These will be discussed below in the context of heritage language education, and complemented in chapter 4 with additional relevant points for this kind of instruction.

a) Writing as a social activity: clarify for whom and for what purpose you write!

Writing is essentially a communicative process, with a few exceptions (e.g. a diary, shopping list), by means of which one addresses other persons in order to communicate or to achieve something. Therefore, the students must consciously experience writing as a social practice and activity. In other words, if students are asked to write something, they should know from the beginning for whom and why they are writing, i.e., what is going to happen with the texts after they are written. To write just for the instructors and their red pens is definitely not sufficient in terms of an intended reader reference. Instead, the instructors (perhaps with the students) need to determine for each writing event what the text will be used for (reading out loud or displayed in class, bound in a book, used as a form of correspondence, etc.). Ideas for target audiences can be found in chapter 12. These can, of course, be applied to a wide variety of writing situations and events.

b) Connecting to daily life and the fantasy world of the students, motivating writing assignments

The topics of writing assignments should be closely connected with the students' living environment, as well as to their desires, dreams and fantasies. In order to establish this connection requires first and foremost appropriately motivating writing assignments. The following teaching suggestions offer a wealth of examples, from simple low-level writing tasks to larger projects. Secondly, it is necessary to prepare the students mentally for the task. This initial preparation is generally mostly oral and includes clear and unequivocal guidelines, expectations and criteria on which students can orient themselves. The accurate planning of writing assignments in terms of topic and intended reader reference is unquestionably part of the professionalism of today's instructors.

c) Expanded concept of text types, media and function of writing

Whereas in earlier times the writing tasks in the schools consisted mostly of experience essays or renarrations, today's students are being prepared for a much broader range of text types, consistent with real contemporary life. Depending on the situation, this may involve the writing of reports, forms, sms, letters, posters, simple poems, applications, fantasy texts, picture stories, etc. This should also include using new media, such as a computer or hand-held devices with all their applications (word processing, e-mail, sms, blogs, chats). This applies to regular classroom instruction as well and leads to a large variety of exciting writing projects, as described in the teaching suggestions in the practice section.

d) Directed ("guided") and free ("inspired") writing

Meaningful assignments should include directed and free writing opportunities, consistent with an effective writing promotion.

The main emphasis of directed writing is building and expanding linguistic partial competences (e.g. vocabulary, sentence beginnings, different syntactical patterns, textual structures). In focusing on each of these areas, students receive more detailed guidelines and objectives to implement. A particularly highly didactic form is so-called scaffolding, whereby students rely closely on a prescribed structure in writing their own content and thus expand their text competence with a new facet. Example: the variation of a letter by way of a new recipient, "parallel stories", where a figure, a place, or an object has been changed relative to the template. In light of the value of this approach, particularly for weaker heritage language students, chapter 4 offers further details; see also various practical suggestions in Part III.

Free or inspired writing signifies such writing occasions where students are prepared for a particular topic or writing project (e.g. through an oral warm-up for a fantastical theme or through a preliminary discussion in case of a non-fiction text), without having to follow a prescribed model. Clearly communicated expectations and possible criteria are also part of this type of writing. Totally free writing projects without prior preparations ("you have now half an hour to write something") tends to overwhelm many students. It is important to recognize that free writing encourages students to write in their own language even outside of the school setting (e.g. letters, diary, mails, etc.).

e) Process orientation and explicit mediation of writing strategies

If students only think about the required final product, many of them may feel overwhelmed. It is therefore useful to focus on the process instead. The students should learn strategies about how to subdivide a writing process into manageable steps and how to solve them in a logical sequence. Some of these important steps are: finding ideas, activating previous knowledge – planning and setting up of the text structure -writing the text – revising the text -presenting the text. In order for students to acquire and use these writing strategies efficiently and sustainably, the mediation of these strategies must be followed explicitly. The techniques and learning strategies in part II facilitate this goal. The two worksheets that summarize the most important points are intended for students from about the 4th grade on.

4. Additional observations concerning text writing in the heritage language

One of the characteristics of heritage language teaching is the students' heterogeneity and the fact that many of them experience considerable difficulty with the more demanding literacy aspects of their first language. The challenges for writing in the heritage language that arise from this are reflected in the following observations.

a) Introduction to the writing system of the first language

The students who learned the alphabet in the immigration country instead of their country of origin, must first be carefully introduced to the phonemes and graphemes of their first language. For the languages that are based on the Latin writing system, this involves primarily those letters that do not exist in their school language (e.g. ð, ç, ı). Thus, many teachers only introduce these letters at the end of the first or the beginning of the second grade, in order to

avoid confusing the children who are learning the alphabet in their school language. With non-Latin based alphabets there is less danger of confusion with the local language; however, the entire alphabet must be learned in the first language.

b) Acquiring and expanding a differentiated vocabulary in the first language

Many of the migrant students have considerable vocabulary gaps in their first language. Moreover, their vocabulary and language skills consist of expressing family-related themes in dialect. For everything else – in particular school-related situations or more challenging topics – they use the school language or the language of the country in which they reside. Thus, the vocabulary of these children and adolescents is divided into two parts, which runs counter to the efforts of developing comprehensive bilingual competences. Therefore, an important goal of heritage language teaching must be the development and build-up of a differentiated vocabulary which also includes standard language forms. A distinction should be made between the vocabulary which the students should actively master (active or productive vocabulary) and therefore must practice intensively. This should include, most of all, commonly used words, as well as words which the students have to understand but not necessarily use themselves (receptive or understanding vocabulary). The importance of vocabulary building exercises is underscored in the wealth of suggestions and exercises provided in chapters 14 and 15 of this manual.

c) Introduction (guide) to the standard language

In addition to a limited vocabulary, another characteristic of many migrant students is that their mastery of the first language is (almost) always limited to a dialectal variant and that they lack a command of its written language or standard form. One of the tasks of heritage language teaching, therefore, is a careful introduction of the standard language, the command of which is a prerequisite and the key to the written language and students' ability to write correctly. The important principles for this introduction (which begins in the first school year) comprise:

1) Careful teaching: the children's enjoyment of writing is the priority goal and must not be compromised by excessive norm orientation.

2) A comparative and exploratory approach: instead of a purely normative approach to teaching, the differences between standard language and dialect should, whenever possible, be mediated by an approach that favors student discovery and comparative learning.

3) Many appropriate practice opportunities: students' acquired vocabulary and language skills in the standard language must be practiced repeatedly and with appropriate writing tasks until they are fully internalized.

d) Scaffolding: providing support structures "scaffolds" for linguistically weaker students

The school language used in the classroom is more complex in terms of vocabulary and formal structures than everyday language. Acquiring this "classroom language" and, connected with it, textual competence (the competence of interacting with a written text, both productively or receptively) is a daunting task. A currently used, successful approach to support students in German classes and German as a second language classrooms is the aforementioned scaffolding method. This approach is also ideally suited for teaching heritage languages. Students receive supportive scaffolding for certain aspects (e.g., vocabulary, sentence construction, textual structure) in form of a sample or a structure which they can use for orientation. For instance, this could be in form of an outline as in the "Eleven-poems" (see # 21.1), which can be filled in with the students' own words. Another example is providing building blocks or elements for certain parts of a text (e.g. beginnings of sentences of appropriate verbs for a picture story) which the students may use to write their own texts. Specific steps for a simple text can also be provided (e.g. a recipe or an instruction) for how to accomplish a particular task. In all of these instances, the use of the "scaffold" to accomplish parts of the language task (e.g. text building) helps to reduce the burden on the students in the creation of a text. In adopting and applying correct examples of words and phrases, they are actively broadening their language repertoire. Many of the teaching suggestions, particularly in Part III (Suggestions for promoting particular aspects of writing), present simple variations of scaffolding (see 14.1: word fields, 15.2: alternative word test, 16.3: parallel texts).

For further information about scaffolding, see among others <https://www.uni-due.de/imperia/md/content/prodaz/scaffolding.pdf>

e) Observations about orthography

Since grammatical and spelling rules and problems are at least partially language-specific, they will not be addressed in detail in this publication. Nevertheless, the following should be observed as a general principle for effective grammar training:

- 1) *Basic vocabulary orientation*: the acquisition of a grammatically correct vocabulary as well as the correction of mistakes should be oriented towards frequently used vocabulary. The more often a word is used, the more important is knowing and applying its correct spelling.
- 2) *Selective correction*: marking all mistakes leads primarily to discouragement. It is more useful to point out the three to five most important types of mistakes or individual errors and to plan an effective, multi-stage training to correct them.
- 3) *Useful improvements, long-term training*: the traditional method of repeatedly re-writing an incorrectly spelled word is of no benefit in terms of educational psychology. Useful and effective training leads to improvement if the words in question are practiced in various different sequences over a period of 2–3 weeks.
- 4) *Help with self-help*: a thorough introduction to the usage and handling of dictionaries is a prerequisite for students' ability to effectively avail themselves of these tools.

5. Evaluation and assessment of written work: important considerations

• **Assessment function:**

The assessment of students' written products should not only be the job of the teacher. A communicative writing concept that involves the target group (see above 3.a), considers the feedback of other readers as equally important and useful, and should already be implemented during the writing process. Also useful in this context are writing conferences (see chapter 11.1), with which the students are already familiar from their regular classroom lessons. The instructor fulfills primarily the role of a final corrective authority who can and should provide constructive criticism for further improvement.

• **Criteria orientation:**

One of the major problems with the traditional method of essay correction is the great subjectivity and lack of transparency. In order to avoid this pitfall, clear guidelines should be provided, at least before larger writing assignments. The expectations should be outlined according to 4–5 criteria, which are best formulated in conjunction with the students. (Example: the text should be minimally 1 page in length, with a clear structure, comprised of introduction/main text/conclusion, and should contain at least 4 important pieces of information, etc.). The reference to these criteria in the discussions with the students and in assessing and grading the texts promotes transparency and motivation.

• **Promotional orientation in correcting and evaluating:**

This signifies that the instructor's focus is less deficit-oriented in terms of «what is wrong, what is missing?» and more guided by the question «what is present, what can be built upon and expanded?». As a subsequent step, the instructor will consider how to best plan and achieve improvements (with targeted exercises, deeper reflection, own usage and implementation) in an effective fashion. This is the only method that leads to long-term success and applies to heritage language teaching as well.

• **Evaluating the process:**

Traditionally, only a finished text is assessed. However, this method often fails to show particularly where the weaker writers experienced difficulties. This would require a closer look at the previous writing process. For instance, if a particular writing strategy has been practiced, it becomes evident if someone simply begins to write, or actually makes an attempt to follow the prescribed strategy.

• **Providing feedback:**

Simply returning a corrected and graded piece of writing is no longer acceptable by today's methodological standards. Promotion oriented teaching means providing the students with a constructive written or oral commentary about their texts, as well as specific suggestions and guidance towards further development and improvement of their work.

- **Competence orientation:**

The orientation towards defined competences (often differentiated as minimal, normal, or expanded competences) is a current topic in education debate. This would have to be considered in a broader context for the teaching of heritage languages. Linguistically, this would have to include, among other things, reference to the Common European Framework, cf. <http://www.goethe.de/z/50/commeuro/303.htm>

For their valuable contributions to this introductory part, I would like to thank Claudia Neugebauer, Claudio Nodari, Stefan Mächler and Peter Sieber.

**Introduction: low-threshold level
writing examples and activities to
promote motivation**



1

Preliminary exercise: shared story telling by turns, sequels or chain stories

Goal

To promote the enjoyment of storytelling in a playful and easy manner; this preliminary exercise also serves as an initial step to the written form of story telling (see below #2). At the same time, this story-telling exercise also furthers students' oral expression in the heritage language.

Shared storytelling by turns, sequels, or chain stories

1st–6th grade

10–15 minutes



Procedure:

a) The students sit in a circle (if possible). The instructor or a student relates the beginning of a story in one or several sentences (Example: "It was 3 o'clock in the morning, everything was pitch dark. Very quietly, the front door of the bleak housing block opened.") Prompt: We are going to continue and make up this story together!

b) The students continue to spin the tale with one or several sentences (maximum five sentences) each. They can take turns randomly or sequentially, row by row. The important thing is that everyone contributes.

Remarks:

- Exciting story beginnings can and should also be collected and brought to class by students. Possible sources include the students' own fantasy and imagination, sentences from books or newspaper reports, pictures or photos depicting exciting or interesting situations.
- A clearly communicated task assignment is indispensable, such as: „we have 10 minutes to create this story and to conclude and round it off with an ending.“
- To ensure that all students engage in this task equally, the teacher can previously hand out two or three buttons or paper strips. Those students who have contributed a sentence can turn in a button or a piece of paper. By the end of the exercise, all students should have turned in their buttons or bits of paper.
- Further possible guideline variations: alternatingly female and male students, or a younger and older child, taking turns.
- Forego corrections as much as possible, so as not to diminish spontaneity. Reduce interventions to clear up unintelligible or inappropriate content.
- Possible continuation: the students compile in writing (alone or in pairs) the commonly created story; then the texts are compared.
- The exercise is also suitable to end a lesson or as an activity to loosen things up during the class.

Variants:

1. Instead of engaging the whole class in this exercise, it can be conducted with just one or two group levels, as long as the activity was well introduced.

2. The "common thread" variation: someone begins to tell the story while holding a ball of wool or string in his/her hands. S/he keeps the beginning of the thread while passing the ball to the next person (or selects someone) to continue the story. As this continues, each participant keeps holding on to the thread while passing the yarn on to the next student. Thus, parallel to the development of the story, a net of threads (as symbolic leitmotif) is being spread all over the class. Simultaneously, it shows which students have not yet taken a turn. (Source: Zopf (1995), p. 67.)

2

Writing collectively: alternating, continued, chain or folded stories

Goal

To stimulate students' creativity and the enjoyment of writing and telling stories in their first language in a playful and easy-access „low threshold“ manner.

Writing collectively: taking turns, continued, chain or folded stories

1st–9th grade

15–20 minutes



Materials:

One sheet of paper per student; blank or with a prepared first sentence or paragraph (from the teacher's imagination or from a collection of sentence beginnings from texts, collected by the students). If the paper is blank, the students have to create their own first sentences.

Procedure:

The basic pattern is as follows:

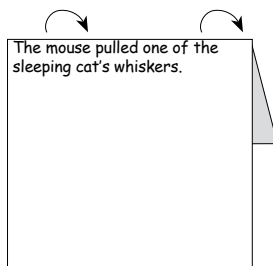
- The students receive a sentence or a small paragraph as part of the beginning of a story, or they write such a beginning at the top of the page themselves.
- They then pass on the piece of paper to the person on their right who reads what has been written, adds 1 or 2 sentences to continue the story, and passes it on to the next person on the right.
- The exercise is done when all sheets of paper have circulated through the class or group once.
- Finally, the stories are read out loud and/or hung up in the classroom.

Remarks:

- Toward the end of a sequence (when the papers have circulated through most of the class), it would be useful to advise the students that the last two or three sentences should draw the story to a conclusion, such that it does not simply end abruptly.
- With younger children, it is helpful to first create stories orally (see above #1: preliminary exercise).
- Corrections should be made carefully, so as not to diminish students' creativity. However, the teacher should certainly review the texts, as they may well evidence areas in need of support where many students may still make mistakes.

Variants:

- Instead of engaging the whole class in this exercise, it can be conducted with just one or two group levels, as long as the activity was well introduced.
- Another option would be groups of 3–4 children with each group writing a chain story. In this case, the sheets would circulate more than once through the group.
- It would also be possible to circulate just one sheet of paper. This way, a story is being created parallel to the normal lesson, which is then read out at the end of the lesson.
- Folded story: In lieu of reading what has been written before passing the paper on to the next person, it should be folded in a way that allows for reading the last sentence only, but not the previous ones. The resultant text makes the ultimate reading of the entire story more exciting and surprising.
- Word by word: this variation is for smaller groups with younger students. Instead of working sentence by sentence (1–2 sentences), it is possible to proceed word by word: Start with long paper strips (A3 size, cut horizontally into 4–5 strips). One word each is written on the paper, to be used as the beginning of the sentences. Each student then adds one word (or at most 3 words) and passes the strip on to the next person who does the same. At the end there are several paper strips with sentences.



3

Texts with a colon: picking words, and who, where, what stories

Goal

The following four suggestions promote students' creativity and the enjoyment of writing in their first language. Due to their attractive, low threshold character, these exercises are well suited for mixed-age groups, whereby the younger students can learn from the older ones.

1. Stories that follow a colon

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
Sheets of paper
with sentence beginnings
(one sheet per student)

Work cited:
Baumann-Schenker & Ernst,
2007, page 66.

a) One or two sentences serve as starters. They must end with a colon. All students receive or write such a beginning.

b) They continue the story with two sentences and then pass the paper on to the next person who continues the story. Important: each student's continuation must also end with a colon.

Example:

Once upon a time there was a little mouse. It thought to itself:
"If only I were enormously big and strong!" Then a cat came along and saw the mouse. It laughed cruelly and said:
"....."

c) Once the papers have circulated through the whole class or group, they are then read out loud. This way, the students can assess whether the task was fulfilled correctly.

2. Pick word stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



a) Each student writes a sentence at the top of a sheet of paper and passes it on to the next person.

b) The next student writes an ensuing sentence which contains at least one word that was chosen ("picked" from the previous sentence. This word will be underlined. The paper is then passed on to the next student, who repeats the process by including any one word from the previous student's sentence.

c) The process continues around the class or group until everyone has had each piece of paper.

Variant: Picked word stories can also be written alone. The important thing is to ensure that the student uses one word in each sentence that was picked from the previous sentence.

3. Choose a word stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Work cited:
Zopfi & Zopfi, 1995, p. 47
("Zettels Traum").

a) The class forms a circle. The teacher informs the students that they are going to write a story together which is made up with the students' chosen words. Each student should think of a word and write his/her selected word on a piece of paper.

b) The papers are laid out in the middle of the group so that everyone can see them.

c) Who picks a word to begin the story? Who continues with another word or paper? – Parallel to telling the story, the pieces of paper are arranged or hung up in the correct order.

d) Finally, the students write the story, either in the sequence arranged by the group in the previous round, or according to their own ideas. The important thing is that all pieces of paper are considered and used for the story.

4. Who, where, what stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
small red, blue and yellow
pieces of paper (A6 or A7).

a) Pairs of students (preferably of mixed age) receive three small pieces of paper in three different colors. Each team writes the name of a person or an animal on the red paper, the place of the action on a blue paper, and what will happen (in two or three key words) on the yellow paper.

b) The papers are then collected and shuffled.

c) Each team receives three pieces of paper of different colors and must make up a story based on the information provided.

d) Final presentation.

4

Skeleton stories, emotive word stories, scaffolding stories

Goal

To further the creativity and promote the enjoyment of writing and storytelling in the first language in a playful and easy manner. Create easy ways for comparing and assessing texts.

Skeleton stories, emotive word stories, scaffolding stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
Possibly a dictionary,
or another book or publication
from which to “pick” words.

Procedure (basic scaffold):

a) In the first step, five words are selected (see below) and written on the board or on a piece of paper.

b) These five words represent the scaffold or skeleton, around which each student writes a story. These five words must be used in every story (possibly highlighted).

c) Finally, the texts are read out loud, discussed and/or hung on the wall. It is exciting to see how many different “story bodies” emerged from the same “skeleton”. It will be interesting to discuss and assess how the students mastered the task of including the five skeleton words into their texts.

Remarks:

The process of selecting five words:

- The teacher goes around the class with a dictionary, a book or a magazine. Five students take turns to randomly open the book and point to a word with a pencil.
- All students note down a few words on pieces of paper. These are then collected and shuffled; different students pick five pieces of paper, these are used as the scaffolding or skeleton.

Variants:

1. Instead of involving the whole class in this activity, it is also suitable for just one or two level groups if the students are well acquainted with the procedure.
2. Instead of five words, it is also possible to select just three or four words. It is not recommended to use more than five words.
3. Phrases or short sentences can also be used as the skeleton or scaffold instead of individual words.
4. Christa and Emil Zopfi (1995, p. 49) suggest a nice variation of this exercise: each student can request a story in which three to five things or words occur. S/he writes these words on a piece of paper and passes it

on to another student. The second student then writes a story based on the particular words requested and returns it to the first student as a gift. (Variation: the “wish lists” are placed in a basket, each child picks a list and writes a story based on it). Extension: parents or family members are asked to provide such a list, and then receive the story as a gift. (see also 3, “wishing-word stories”).

5 Imaginative writing in different social forms

Goal

To further the creativity and promote the enjoyment of writing and storytelling in the first language in a playful and easy manner. Create easy ways for comparing and assessing texts.

1. Partner stories

2nd–6th grade

30 minutes



Work cited:
Büchel & Isler, 2006, p. 146.

a) Students work together in pairs (they can also be from different age groups). Student 1 thinks about the beginning of a story (one sentence) and dictates this sentence to his/her partner (student 2).

b) Student 2 writes down the sentence and imagines how the story could continue, then dictates the next sentence to his/her partner (student 1).

c) In the end, the different pairs read their stories to the other teams. Variation (students of similar abilities paired): this exercise is carried out in silence. Student 1 writes down one or two sentences (the beginning of the story). Student 2 continues with one or two sentences, etc.

2. One title – many texts

3rd–6th grade

30–40 minutes



a) The teacher provides the class with an attractive title to stimulate the imagination. Examples: “If I could do magic” / “I myself in ten years” / “If I were a King/Queen (or: President/Prime Minister)” / “Wishes for my family’s native country”.

b) Each student writes a text based on one of the titles or creates an A3 poster with text and illustrations about it.

c) Exhibiting, presenting and discussing the texts in groups or as a whole class.

3. Writing an adventure book together

4th–9th grade

60–120 minutes



Materials:
a ring binder.

a) The assignment to the students (in groups or as a class project): Together, think about and imagine two protagonists who experience all sorts of adventures – in your country of origin, or where you live now; or anywhere else in the world or in space – in fact, anywhere you want! Determine the names of the characters (ideally a boy and a girl), how old they are, and if they have any special skills or abilities (e. g. perform magic, ability to travel through space and time at the speed of light...). Together, create a profile for each character (name, age, hobbies, special abilities, etc.) which will be featured at the beginning of your adventure book.

b) Each student writes and describes one or several adventures that the main characters experience.

c) Read your adventure stories to one another and then collect them in a binder.

d) Students continue to write new adventures regularly and to collect them. In time the class will have created their own book of adventure stories!

4. Creating other text collections together

3rd–9th grade 30–120 minutes



Materials:
a ring binder.

Similar to creating a book of adventure stories (see above), other collections can be created. Generally, this is done by first deciding on a theme or a topic and preparing a file for collection. Each student contributes to the collection by writing one or more texts over a given period of time. This occurs parallel to normal lessons (with voluntary contributions or homework assignments).

Possible topics for such collections:

- jokes, amusing episodes
- stories/adventures from the country of origin
- animal stories
- recipes
- instructions for handicraft activities.

6

Short artistic and creative tasks with language (see also # 23)

Goal

Furthering the enjoyment of writing through easy, creative tasks, which work well also with mixed age teams.

1. Word pictures with one's own name

2nd–9th grade 15 minutes



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a) On piece of paper (A3 or A4, preferably thicker), each student writes his/her first name (or first and last name) vertically, placing one letter below the other. Each letter is then nicely decorated and colored.

b) A word is created that begins with one of the vertical letters. If possible, the word should be relevant to the particular child (e. g. express a characteristic, or name something that the students likes).

2. Word ladders

2nd–9th grade 20 minutes



Note:
This exercise can be difficult, depending on the language used. Definitely try it out before!

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a) Each student or pair receives a sheet of paper (A4) and thinks of a word with 4–7 letters. This word is written vertically on the left side of the page from top to bottom. Then, the same word is written in the right hand margin, but from the bottom to the top.

b) The spaces in between the letters must then be filled with words that begin and end with the letter on each side of the page.

3. ABC stories

2nd–9th grade 30 minutes



Variant 1:

On a large piece of paper (A3 or A2) write the letter of the alphabet clearly and in color (vertically one below the other, if needed in two separate columns, making sure that there is enough space to write next to each letter). Then, write a word or a short sentence that begins with that particular letter.

Variant 2:

The student groups receive 2–3 long slips of paper (A3 size, cut horizontally into four strips), which they glue together to create long strips. They then make up (nonsense) sentences or a story, where each word in the sentence begins with a letter of the alphabet – in alphabetical order! Example: Addle brained cows dancing erstwhile for grassy hay, illgotten juicy kelp, laughing moo...

4. Self-portrait, profile

2nd – 9th grade

45 minutes



a) The teacher and students discuss what should be included in a portrait: Last name, first name, age, hobbies, favorite food or meal, favorite music, school subject, book and teacher, country of origin, address, etc.

b) Subsequently, students create their own self portrait on a piece of paper (A3 or A4, preferably thicker paper). This can also be decorated with a drawing, a photo, pictures and other objects.

c) Finally, the posters are presented to the class and students decide what turned out particularly well on which poster.

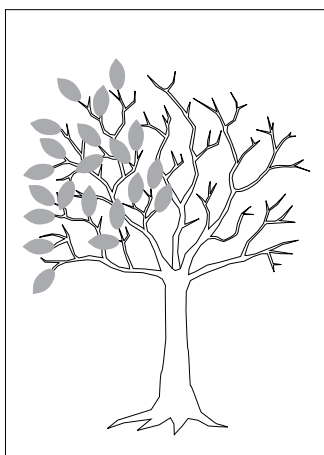
5. Working together: a story tree or tree of wishes

2nd – 9th grade

70 minutes



Materials:
large paper A1,
green papers A4.



a) On a large piece of paper (wrapping paper or 2 flipchart pages), students draw a large tree with lots of branches and twigs. There should be ample space left for leaves to be added.

b) Each student receives a green piece of paper and cuts out two leaves for the tree. Students write a short story or a wish on each leaf. (If it is a tree of wishes, write a wish for the new school year, for example).

c) The leaves are affixed to the tree and the students read them to one another.

7

Language riddles

Goal

Fostering the motivation to write by way of attractive writing assignments, which are used in subsequent classes as puzzles or riddles.

1. Answer sentences

1st – 3rd grade

20 minutes



a) The teacher plays a word game with the class. A couple of examples are written on the board in which the solutions are hidden. Example: Helen operates under special engagement. The answer: "house". The students should understand the rule that the solution is found by picking the first letter of the words in the sentence and putting them together to spell the answer word).

b) Together the students come up with 1–2 sentences – then they work alone or in pairs. They receive strips of paper on which they write the riddle sentence on the front and the answer on the back side of the paper.

c) To finish, the strips of paper are swapped among the pairs and the students solve the riddles.

2. Description riddle

4th – 9th grade

40 minutes



Materials:
magazines with pictures
to cut out

a) Students bring objects to class (i. e. wool socks), then draw a picture of the object, or select a picture or photo from the magazines, provided by the students or the teacher. The object, the drawing, or the picture/photo is then glued to a piece of paper.

b) The students describe their object or picture in a few sentences, without actually naming the object or the subject of the picture or photo. Instead, they refer to it as "my item" or "my picture". (Example: "my thing is warm and made of wool. In winter it keeps your feet warm" (Solution: wool

sock). "My picture shows water that cascades down from a high mountain" (Answer: waterfall)

c) The pictures are hung on the left side of the classroom and the texts are posted on the right side. The teacher assigns a number to each picture and a letter to each text.

d) Task: read the texts, try to find the matching picture or object. Write down the solutions (e.g. 2 – D, 4 – B).

3. Creating crossword puzzles

5th–9th grade

60 minutes



Materials:
crossword puzzles

a) The teacher and the students analyze crossword puzzles together, either in the first language or the second language, and discuss the procedures or "recipe" to create a crossword puzzle themselves.

b) Following this method, the students create their own crosswords and exchange them among each other to solve the puzzles.

Hint: crossword puzzles based on the Latin alphabet can be easily created, using suitable tools available on the internet. Example: see <http://www.xwords-generator.de> or: <http://www.armoredpenguin.com/crossword>

4. Stories or story telling with traps, "false tales"

2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
stories or other texts as templates

The basic pattern is as follows: a template (story or factual text , etc.) will be related to the class (first the correct version) and then again with some of the details changed. The task of the listeners or readers is to determine what changes were made.

Variants:

- Oral preliminary exercise: the teacher reads a story twice. The second time around, some of the details are changed. The students must listen closely to determine and write down the inconsistencies in the story.
- The students themselves write a re-narration of a well-known story as precisely as possible (or a text about a topic from the history and civilization of their country of origin, e.g. a personality, historical event, or a city). In this text, they purposely weave in 2–3 minor discrepancies. Finally, the texts are read out loud, and the other students must find the inconsistencies.
- For other variations, see #18.3.

**Techniques and strategies
for the various phases of the
writing process**

8

Finding ideas, pre-structuring the text

Goal

To support the students in developing and ordering ideas in an associative manner before writing (and still unencumbered by language requirements). It is of great importance that the teacher carefully explain and go through the procedure with the class.

Three procedures for finding and ordering ideas:

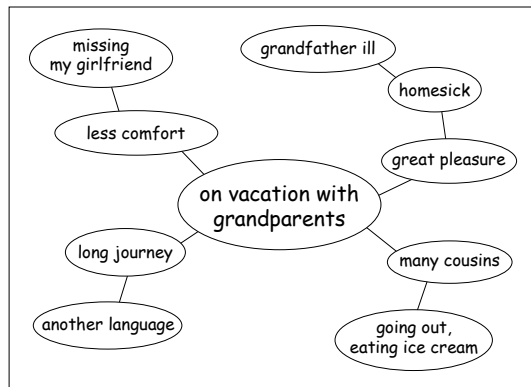
1. Cluster

2nd – 9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
A3 or A4 paper.



This method works well for trying to find ideas for imaginative texts associatively, e.g. for a story or an imaginative text. The instructor provides an example, similar to the one above, with the following instructions: take a sheet of A4 or

A3 paper sideways. In the middle of the page, write the title or topic you will write about. Circle the title. Around this, jot down your ideas and circle them. Some of the ideas lead to other thoughts, lines and circles and whole chains of ideas. If you have difficulties doing the cluster in the first language, you may use the school language. After about 5 minutes you should look at your collection of ideas and mark in color and numbers the ones you want to use in writing your text and in which order to use them.

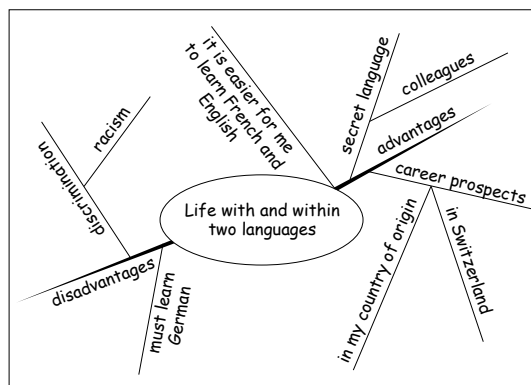
2. Mind-Map

4th – 9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
A3 or A4 paper.



This approach is particularly suitable for the structuring of factual texts.

Instructions: Draw a couple of main branches (thick lines) and write on them the most important aspects or ideas related

to the topic that come to mind. Smaller branches with connected ideas are then added to the main branches. If you have problems with writing in your first language, you may use the school language. After a few minutes, review the mind map, and using numbers and colors, mark the sequence of the sub-topics or aspects, e.g., what you want to address first and what will be dealt with subsequently.

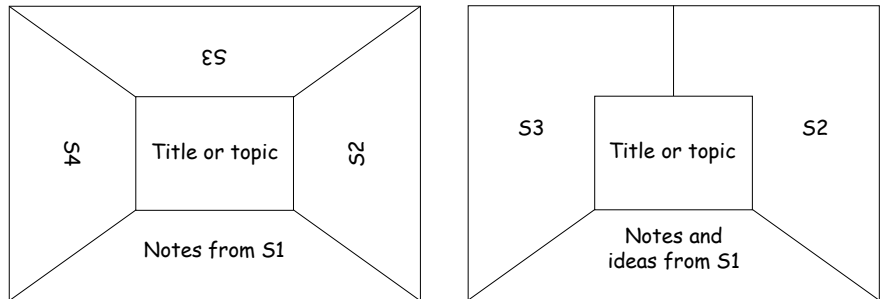
3. Placemat

4th–9th grade 25 minutes



Materials:
A3 or A4 paper.

This is a good approach for small groups of three or four students – for example, when trying to find ideas for a presentation, or another collective text writing assignment. Instructions: groups of 3–4 students, seated at tables, receive an A3 paper. The paper is then subdivided into sections, as shown below. The title, or topic, is written in the center field.



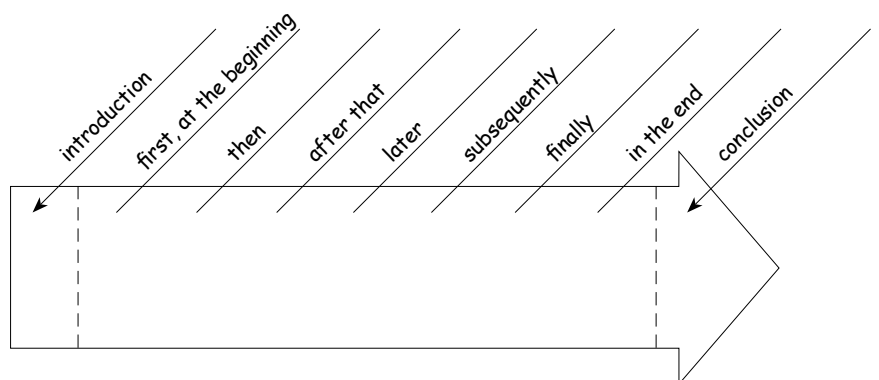
For about 5 minutes, each student makes notes in their section of the paper, writing down ideas and important points about the common topic. They then present their ideas to the other members of the group, and, using colors and numbers, mark everything they wish to use in their text or presentation. In the next step, they write down the order of the different chapters or main ideas for their presentation or text on a different piece of paper. This way, the groups have established a solid structure for the development of the rest of the text.

9 Planning the structure of the text (see also #16, Suggestions for text building)

Goal *The students learn two techniques which can help them to better structure a text (broken down into introduction/main body/ending, in chronologically correct order). This complements the techniques referenced in part #8 (clusters, mind maps and placemats).*

1. Working with a time line

2nd–7th grade 20 minutes

- The instructor draws (or projects) a timeline (a long arrow; see above) on the board, and explains to the class that it will help them understand how to clearly structure a text.
- For visualization purposes and clarity, the class will go through a detailed example. A theme with a clear series of events should be chosen, for example: "My summer vacation", "Last weekend", "The life of mother Theresa". Descriptive or reflective topics, such as "My thoughts about Peace", etc., are less suitable for this method (see the following three-part scheme).
- The instructor works with the class in deciding and marking which words

and phrases are most suitable for structuring and marking different subsequent steps in a text: "At the beginning, then, after that, thereafter, the next day, finally, in the end" etc. This exercise also serves to help students build up an appropriate vocabulary in the heritage language.

d) The students receive a simple action-oriented topic (e. g. "My daily routine") and A3 paper. On this they draw a timeline and write down the different parts of the action. The pages are then reviewed and discussed by the class as a whole.

e) Finally, the students write their text in prose, thereby orienting themselves on the stages of the timeline.

2. Working with a scheme to structure and develop a text

4th – 9th grade

20 minutes



a) The instructor first explains that most texts are structured in three parts: introduction/overview – main body (actual content) – ending/summary/outlook. This should be explained to the students with one or several text examples, if possible (newspaper article, short literary texts, exemplary writing by other students).

Introduction
Main part
Ending

Introduc- tion	Main part	Ending
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b) The instructor writes (or projects) the structure on the board (see illustration), and with a theme, practices the planning stage with the entire class. Possible appropriate themes: A description of my parents' place of origin; Report about a journey to...; My thoughts about "Life in two cultures and languages".

c) The students receive paper and a theme (see above) or select their own topic. They divide the paper into the three areas: introduction – main part – ending. They then write key words into the appropriate fields. It would be ideal if the students would first apply one of the procedures learned in # 8 (cluster, mind-map, placemat), which would help them to generate first ideas.

d) Discussion with the students about their experiences of applying the scheme in structuring and planning their text. How could it continue? The writing task should then be completed, if at all possible.

10

Using titles, subtitles and paragraphs to structure and design a text

Goal

The students should learn how to write clear and appropriate titles and how to create paragraphs for clarity in their writing. Titles, subtitles and paragraphs all contribute to the attractiveness and enhance the readability of a text. Illustrations and presentation (layout) serve the same purpose, and the students should also gain experience with these elements.

1. Creating precise and attractive titles: didactic ideas

3rd–9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
Picture book stories, newspaper reports or similar (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor reads a short story to the class and then asks what kind of title would be suitable for the text. Each student writes one or two title suggestions on a strip of paper. The suggestions are then discussed: which titles are attractive and why? Which ones are rather boring, and why?
- The instructor then presents a (fictitious) project of creating a poster or flyer for tourism in their native country (its capital city or areas of natural beauty, etc.). What would be an attractive title or eye-catching slogan for this poster? (If there is time to complete the task, the idea should naturally be implemented.)
- The instructor distributes a picture story, a newspaper report, or a short story without a title to the class. The students should consider clear, attractive titles for the story, either in pairs or as individuals. The suggestions are then written on strips of paper and discussed.
- Discussions (whole class or at group level) of the question: to which given title would you like to write a text? Think about exciting titles and topics! The suggestions are then discussed, collected, and put into practice, if possible.
- From the 4th grade on: the instructor collects examples of attractive book titles (with the class, if at all possible), and invents a few boring titles, such as ("Susi, the lovely girl", "Flower poems"). The titles are then discussed and the students try to determine what makes a title boring or exciting.

2. Structuring a text with subtitles and paragraphs

3rd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
Prepared texts (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor prepares two texts that are photocopied (A4 size each): Text A lacks the title and subtitles, and has no paragraphs either (or hardly any). Text B (e. g. a factual text about a country or an animal) is structured with a clear title, paragraphs and subtitles. Discussion: why is text B easier to read and what is the purpose of the subtitles and paragraphs? How could this be improved still (e. g. with illustrations)?

	<p>Trip to the old ghost castle.</p> <p>Picnic at the prison tower.</p>	<p>Scared by a feathery "ghost"</p> <p>Return journey with a surprise</p>
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- The instructor distributes a picture story (4–5 pictures). Task: in pairs, the students are to find an attractive title for the whole story as well as a subtitle for each picture.
- The instructor randomly distributes a text without paragraphs or titles (max. 2/3 page). Task: find a title for the text, organize it into paragraphs and formulate subtitles!
- The instructor distributes a story which has been cut into strips (one paragraph on each strip of paper). Task: find the right sequence and put the story development in the right order, decide on subtitles. Then, glue the strip on a piece of paper and write the titles and subtitles on it!
- The instructor provides the class with a topic, e.g. “A presentation about our capital city”, “An important personality from our culture” or “My life in two cultures”. Task: if you had to write a text, or give a presentation about one of the topics, what kind of a title and subtitles would you choose?
- Task (possibly in conjunction with the previous suggestion): write a text, structure it with appropriate subtitles and at least four paragraphs!

3. Illustrations and layout as means of design

3rd–9th grade

30 minutes



- The above suggestions can be easily expanded with further questions: how could we make the text clearer and easier to read with illustrations? Which design and layout would enhance the text?
- Self-experimentation and tryouts (also on the computer) should most certainly be encouraged. In addition to the above ideas, worksheets which students create for one another in conjunction with non-fiction texts and presentations may be suitable for this purpose.

11 Techniques for revision and self-correction

Goal

The students should learn how to review and revise their texts to improve them. This pertains to content on the one hand (clarity, logical structure, attractive presentation to the reader), and formal aspects of the text (grammar, syntax, correct forms) on the other hand. The careful revision and optimization of the texts furthers students' competence in the written and standard form of their first language as well as the general awareness of the written form. Working with others in this process is preferable to revising text independently, as it promotes language awareness through interactive communication and, parallel to this, the linguistic resources of two or three students are being used to advantage.

1. Writing conference: editing texts together

2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
reference books and dictionaries.

This interactive process of text editing is known to many students from their regular classes. Moreover, it is particularly well suited for teaching in the heritage language, as it promotes awareness of, and competence in, the standard language.

a) As a prerequisite for this task, the students must have composed a text (preferably not more than one page). Those who are finished with their text, practice reading it out loud. Then they seek out one or two partners with whom to practice and improve the drafts. (Variant: the instructor creates editorial teams.)

b) The students take turns, slowly reading the whole text to the others in the group and posing the following three questions (they can be written on the board, on pieces of paper, or provided as copies): Did you understand

the text? What do I need to clarify? What is good, what is not so good? The reader then makes notes about the feedback received.

c) Next, the text is reviewed sentence by sentence. The questions at this stage are: is the sentence clear and understandable? Is it linguistically correct (form and structure)? Are there better words to describe a certain concept? Is the grammar and spelling correct? (use a dictionary to verify!)

d) Then it is the turn of another student.

e) When all the texts in the group have been discussed, the students write an improved version of their text. These final versions will be corrected with comments by the instructor. Ultimately, the texts should be made available to all students in the class. (See # 12 below: target reader reference).

2. Editing a text alone (and discussing it later with the instructor)

2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
reference books and dictionaries

Individually editing a text is necessary when there are no possibilities of a collective discussion of the text with other students (e. g. when dealing with homework writing assignments). Whenever possible, the student should receive external feedback (from parents, siblings, teacher, etc.), however.

In order for students to edit their own texts when working alone, it is important to provide them with clear guidelines and a list of helpful questions and suggestions, such as:

- Could I reformulate the title of my text to make it more interesting and exciting, or to provide a clearer indication of the content?
- Does my text have a clear structure (introduction/overview, main body, ending/summary); is the progression logical? Have I kept to the topic?
- Does the text begin with an interesting and informative sentence which captures the reader's interest, or could it be improved?
- Have I chosen clear and concise words without repeating them too often?
- Are there grammar forms (tenses, verb forms) that I am not sure of, and whom can I ask for advice? (Mark these passages and ask the instructor for help).
- Is my text free of spelling mistakes, did I clear up uncertainties with the help of dictionaries? (Students should have access to dictionaries, etc., and know how to use them, of course. This includes techniques for looking up words as well as awareness of the order of letters in the heritage language as opposed to the alphabet of the school language, etc.)

12

Writing for the target audience; designing and presenting attractive texts

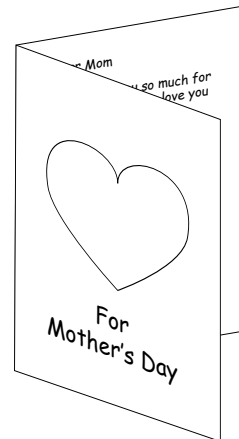
Goal

Writing is a communicative act, and students in the native language classroom should learn and understand this as well. They should learn how to attractively design and present their written heritage language texts in various forms. The instructor should, therefore, clearly indicate who the target reader is for the assigned writing task, and specify the format or the proposed product, if at all possible (i. e., a book, poster or video clip). Knowing the intended target audience, and the goal and product orientation, increases the students' motivation for the writing task and enhances their efforts to create formal and attractively designed texts. The students therefore know that they are not just writing for the teacher, but that their texts will actually have a real audience.

1. For whom to write: possible target readers

Materials: depending on the variation (see right).

- For one's own class or group: the texts (e. g. stories, poems) are read aloud to the class or distributed to 2–3 reading groups.
- For the student's own class or group in form of presentations (e. g. on a specific topic about the country of origin, possibly with powerpoint support or posters).
- For younger students: older students write a story or create a book for younger classmates or siblings at home.
- For real target readers outside of the school setting: Mother's Day cards, greeting cards (Christmas, New Year, etc.), letters to relatives or acquaintances in the country of origin; letters of inquiry (e-mail or letter) to the home country's embassy or companies based there.
- Corresponding as pen pals with another class (letter or e-mail) in the country of origin or another heritage language class abroad.
- For other students in the same school: suggest a multilingual notice board. Attach contributions written in the heritage language (with a short summary in the local or school language). Variants: multilingual book of recipes or adventures. See also suggestions in #21.
- For cultural events with adults from the students' own culture (parents' or cultural evening, etc.): students write and present poems, very short stories or sketches, jokes, etc.).



2. Methods and media for presenting written texts

Materials: depending on the variation (see right).

- Traditional form of presentation: the text is written in an exercise book. This is not very motivating, as it lacks the target audience.
- Theme-based collection of texts, such a holiday stories, jokes and recipes. A student designs a title page, the texts are stapled or bound into a book, which students can borrow (like a library book). See also # 5.3 and 5.4.
- Presentation in the form of a poster or collage (A3 format or larger), suitable for topics (and oral presentations) about nature and civilization.
- Artistic illustrations of texts, such as poems: on colored paper, possibly cut into shapes and decorated. This could be turned into a design contest and competition for the best decorated text.
- Using electronic media: experimenting with sms and e-mails in the first language.

- Participation in discussion forums, blogs, chat rooms etc., in your own language. Designing a website that allows other students and classes to post texts.

3. Other forms of converting and presenting a text

- Media-supported conversion as radio play, audio file, report, video clip, podcast, power point presentation, etc.
- Converting written text into scenes for poetry readings, theatre, sketch, dance, rap performances, etc.

13 Guidelines for the students: worksheets WS 1 + 2

Goal

Both worksheets WS1 and 2 are designed to be given directly to the students. They aim to help them in writing their own texts and further their independent writing with useful tips and suggestions. The worksheets are closely connected to the learning strategies and processes that are familiar to the students from their regular classroom instruction, and thereby contribute to bringing mainstream education and heritage language teaching closer together. These worksheets supplement the teaching suggestions provided in #8–12, but they do not replace them in any way.

General introduction:

In terms of language proficiency, the two worksheets should be suitable for students from the 4th grade on. For younger students, it is recommended to use only certain selected parts which are previously further clarified and explained. Depending on the competence level, this may apply to older students as well (limitation to certain points and previous explanation), at least during the initial sequence.

When introducing the worksheet, it is of great importance to be as clear as possible. Only assignments which the students have truly understood and practiced specifically will help them in their independent work. Pursuant to the introducer's explanation of the procedures on worksheets, the students should be given their own copy so that they can work with them at home. It would be advisable not to provide them with both copies at the same time, but separately, after a 2–3 week interval, in order to allow the students time to learn and practice with the methods.

Many aspects which are briefly outlined on the worksheets are followed up with more concrete and in-depth suggestions and exercises in other chapters of this publication (#8–12). If these suggestions and exercises were previously explained and practiced in class, it will naturally facilitate the introduction of the worksheets and the students' understanding of them.

Worksheet WS 1

“Step by step guide to planning, structuring, creating and editing a text”

It is best to practice the six different steps of the worksheet more than once, using actual writing tasks. First, the task should deal with factual texts, i. e. an assignment such as “collect information about a certain city or region (or a person) from our country of origin. Write a text of about 1½ pages in length, then give a 5–10 minute presentation about it”.

The six steps are practiced by means of a theme from literature or an imaginative topic (“we are going to invent a story about our country”, “my most exciting vacation adventure”, “a story of lies”). It is essential that each of the six steps be discussed and practiced. This requires a lot of time, but is well worthwhile as the students learn valuable skills which will help them in future writing assignments.

To simplify the first round, discuss only the titles and subtitles of the six steps in bold. The subsequent bullet points can be reviewed during the second round of practice with the worksheet.

Worksheet WS 2

“Dealing with problems when writing”

This worksheet is intended as an addition to WS 1. Before distributing the worksheet to the students, it is a good idea to review with them any problems they might have encountered when writing, and how to best address them. Then, worksheet WS 2 is read and discussed.

Here too, it is a good idea to practice some of the suggestions with actual examples, and then to discuss the students’ experiences with them. This deepens and consolidates learning and contributes to the students’ ability to use the worksheets completely and independently later on.

WS1 Planning, drafting and editing a text step by step

Worksheet for students

Step 1

Find good ideas for your topic!

Possibilities:

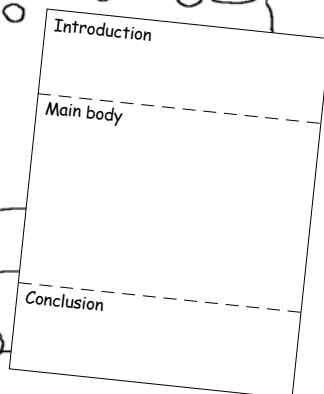
- Take a sheet of paper or several small pieces. Write down anything that comes to mind about the topic. You may write the notes in the school language if it is easier for you.
- If you have time, discuss the topic with several people, and write down their ideas.
- Create a mind map or a cluster, if you are already familiar with these methods.



Step 2

Organize your ideas, plan the structure of your text.

- Look through your notes and pieces of paper. Cross out the ideas you cannot use.
- Take a sheet of paper and divide it into three sections: introduction/overview – main part (large field!) – conclusion/summary.
- Write your ideas in the appropriate area. Consider what might have been omitted and include it!
- Continue working on this step until you know more or less what your text/story will include.
- Think also about illustrating the text (on paper, illustrated, by computer ...)



Step 3

Write a first draft of the text.

- Write the text
- Read through your text. Is the structure ok? Do you already want to improve or change any words, forms or sentences?

Step 4

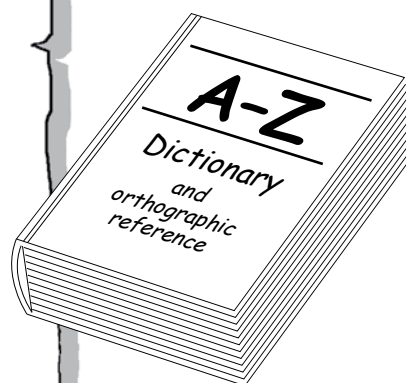
Find an attractive title and beginning.

- With a good title, you can capture the attention of your readers or listeners. "Help, I am drowning!" sounds more exciting than "My vacation adventure".
- The same applies for the first sentence or paragraph of the text: here you can create interest and intrigue. In a story, this can be effected with a surprising and interesting beginning; with factual texts, it requires clear and factual information.
- With longer texts and presentations, it is important to use clear and informative subtitles. These help the reader retain an overview.

Step 5

Edit the first draft.

- Ideally, this occurs in pairs or in groups of three in a "writing conference". This way you can help and advise each other. However, you can also edit the text by yourself. The following questions should help you with your editing efforts:
 - As a whole, is my text interesting and understandable? What do I need to make it clearer? What is good or not so good? Did I keep to the topic?
 - Does my text have a clear structure (introduction/overview, main body, conclusion/summary); is the structure clear? Did I avoid straying from the theme?
 - Could I rewrite the title of my text to make it more interesting and exciting, or so that it provides clearer information about the content?
 - Does the text begin with an interesting and informative sentence that makes the reader want to keep reading, or could it be improved?
 - Are the sentences understandable and grammatically correct (word use, syntax, tense)? Underline any uncertainties and discuss them with the teacher or someone else who would know.
 - Have I used clear, concise vocabulary without excessive repetition, and checked the spelling with a dictionary?



Step 6

Design your final draft of the text.

- Make sure that the design of your text appeals to the readers or the listeners!
- Also experiment with new visual forms (pictures, or as a collage; on the computer; as an audio text/script, etc).

WS2 Dealing with problems when writing

Worksheet for students

This page shows you how you can solve some of the most frequent problems when writing a text.

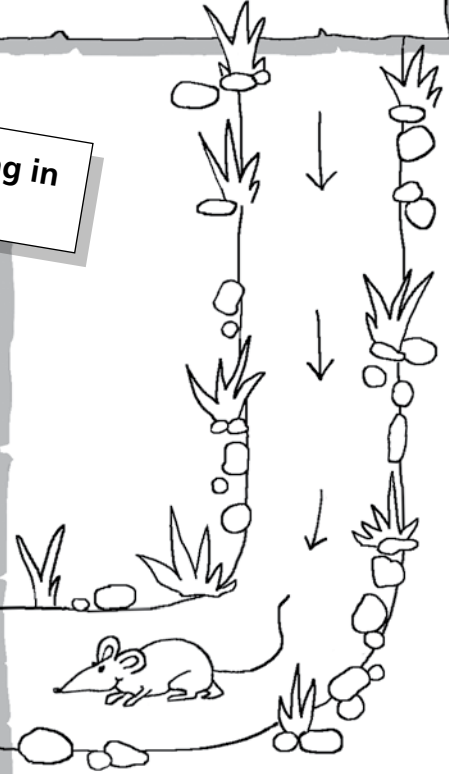
- ▶ When you have no ideas about what to write, or you have difficulties with planning and organizing your text, then look at worksheet WS 1 again!



Problem 1

I have difficulties writing in my mother-tongue

- ▶ When collecting ideas and planning your text, you may also use words in the school language (i. e. German), if that makes it easier for you.
- ▶ When you have trouble with the dialect and correct form of the written language in your mother-tongue, write the first draft as best you can. Then discuss your draft with your teacher or someone else who is good at writing the language. Have them explain to you what changes are needed and why.
- ▶ Perhaps you can get the teacher to allow you to write a short text (which should be as correct as possible) or, for example, you can rewrite the first five sentences as perfectly as possible.
- ▶ You should definitely use a dictionary to check the spelling in your language.



Problem 2

I'm unable to find an exciting or attractive beginning for my text.

- ▶ It is important that you have an interesting title even before you write the first sentence. Presentations and longer texts should be structured with subtitles.
- ▶ There should be a short content overview with factual texts or presentations. This helps the readers or listeners better orient themselves.
- ▶ A story or a presentation of an experience can also begin with a short overview: "I am going to tell you how I ...", "My story is about ...".
- ▶ A story can also start "in the middle", which can sometimes be very exciting: "I lay on the floor, as if dead. What could have occurred? Slowly, I began to remember...".
- ▶ A question posed to the reader or listener can also be a very good way to begin a story: "Would you like to know what happened to me last summer? Listen to this one! It was on a ...".

Problem 3

I don't know what else to write and how to write.

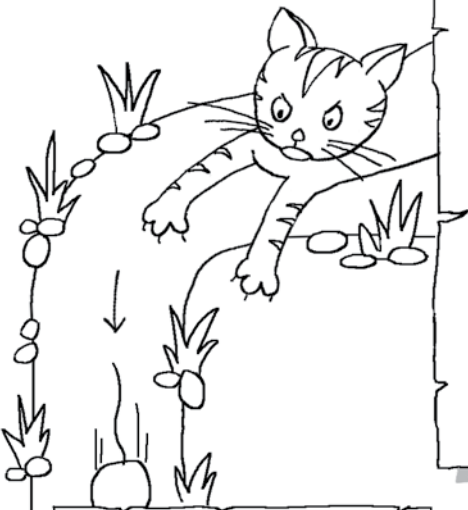
- ▶ Read to someone, or just tell someone what you have already written. Then, discuss with this person how your text could continue.
- ▶ With a factual text or a presentation, think about a new aspect of the theme, or a different or new sub-topic that you have not dealt with.
- ▶ With a story: consider what the readers might want to know in detail, then write something about it. ("Tom went to bed and fell asleep" → "You probably want to know what Tom's bed and room looked like? I am happy to tell you:...".)
- ▶ Read the last sentence of your text. Write another sentence, based on a word from the previous sentence. ("Tom went to bed and fell asleep." → "He was fast asleep, until he suddenly woke up and remembered that...".)



Problem 4

I cannot come up with a good ending for my text.

- ▶ With a factual text, it is often a good idea to end with a short summary ("The most salient aspects of this topic...").
- ▶ Often, it is good to provide your own opinion at the end of the text: "What I like about this story is/about this topic is...", "In my opinion...".
- ▶ It is also possible to address the readers directly right until the end: "I hope that you clearly understood what I wanted to say", "How would you have reacted in this case?".

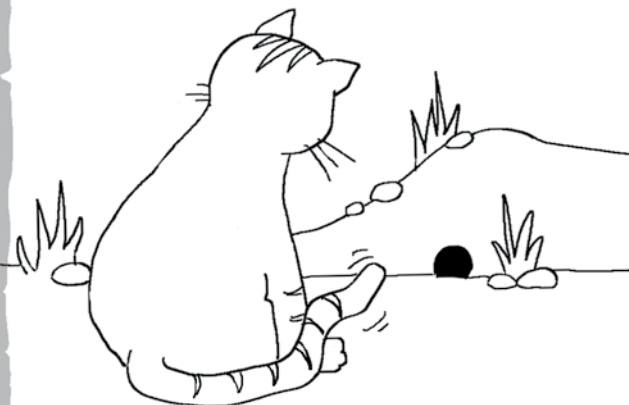


Problem 5

Help, my text is too short!

(See also Problem 3 above)

- ▶ For stories: create a new character (i. e. a naughty cat) that appears repeatedly.
- ▶ Extend some of the sentences in your text with additional details, or write an extra sentence. (Example: "I was still very small at that time" → "At that time, about five years ago, I was still very small. I was at most six years old, and had just started going to kindergarten.")
- ▶ Expand the ending of the story. With a factual text, you could provide a good summary of the main points; with a story, you could offer your personal view or opinion to the readers.



Ideas to further partial aspects of writing



14

Suggestions for vocabulary building I: working with word fields and expanded language tools

Goal

For many students in the migration, the vocabulary in the mother-tongue is very much limited to informal, family-related aspects and dialect. The challenge, therefore, for heritage language education, is to build and develop the vocabulary competence of students and adolescents (to also include school-related and differentiated facets) in the standard form. In so doing, it is important to decide which words and phrases the students should actively master (active or productive vocabulary) and the vocabulary which they should be able to understand but not necessarily use themselves (receptive or understanding vocabulary). The former must be practiced intensively, whereas it suffices if the latter is understood. The following suggestions and exercises support vocabulary building and working with expanded tools for this purpose on various levels.

1. Working with topic-based vocabulary and word fields

1st – 9th grade

20 minutes

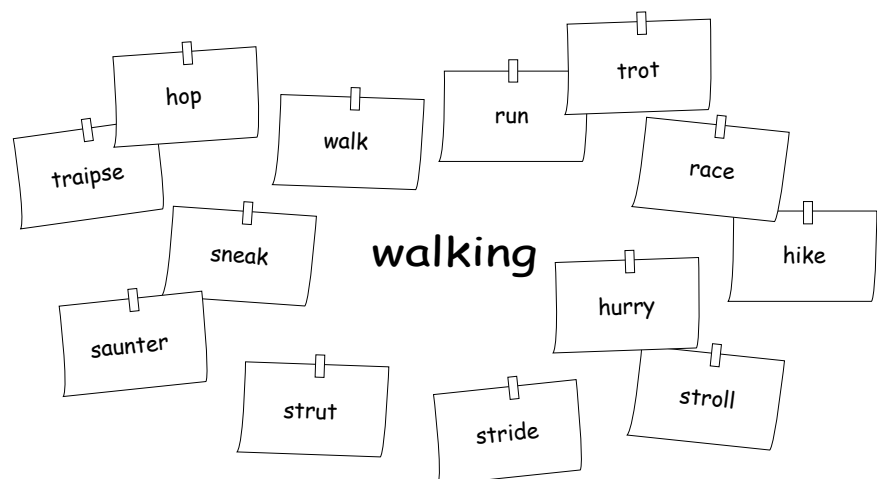


Materials:
Possibly A2 paper
and small post-it stickers.

Collecting and writing down words concerning a theme or topic is a good method for utilizing the collective knowledge and resources of students and instructors. The process is appropriate for all age groups and for different methods. It offers the ideal opportunity for highlighting and explaining the differences in vocabulary between dialect and standard/written form. The most commonly used words in conjunction with a theme can also be used for spelling exercises and improvement. A further stage in this development would involve collecting other language tools, such as sentence beginnings or text-specific phrases (see also #15).

Important: If students know a word only in the school language, but not in the mother-tongue, they may naturally say or write it down in this form. This provides an authentic learning opportunity to involve other students for help with the translation, or to consult a dictionary.

Example:



• Vocabulary collections (“What I know already”)

(kindergarten and above):

Under the guidance of the instructor, the students collect and record all the words they know in their mother tongue for topics like animals, plants, homes, school, etc. The instructor provides the correct standard form of the word and/or writes the most important words on the board. It is important to include not just nouns, but also verbs and adjectives.

Extension activity: a) using these words, create short sentences, and possibly write them down. b) write a text comprising at least 5 or more words from this collection. Mark the words in red (this is a variation of the skeleton stories in #4).

- **Word collections related to a picture**

(kindergarten – upper level):

As a starting point, the picture must have many details. It could relate to a theme which is currently dealt with in class, i. e. a poster about the country of origin or a picture of a playground. For middle and advanced levels, it could involve a picture or photograph which requires specific vocabulary. As a class or in groups, the students describe the picture (using nouns, verbs, adjectives), writing them on post-it strips which are attached to the picture or board. Variant: first, students label and write down individually what they know, and then compare and exchange their labels with others. In order to assimilate the new terms, a writing assignment should follow. Example: describe the picture in as much detail as possible/ write a story to accompany the picture/ put yourself into the role of someone in the picture and describe the picture from their perspective (“I am the woman in the yellow sweater. I am standing in the centre. Behind me is...”).

- **Word field connected to the topic of a writing assignment**

(middle – upper level):

When students have writing assignments with a clearly defined theme, such as “If I were a farmer”, “the political system of our country” etc.), it is a good idea to work previously (in class or in groups) and apply in practice the collected important vocabulary, phrases and expressions (nouns, verbs, adjectives) before they actually begin to write. This collection of relevant words and phrases for the topic also reduces the pressure on students in terms of content and orthography. Students can create and then compare these word fields individually, in pairs or groups. Clusters and mind-maps are ideal for this assignment. See #8.

2. Expanded language tools (sentence beginnings, text-specific phrases, etc.)

2nd–9th grade

20 minutes



The method of collecting with the students not only words, but also expanded language elements orally and in writing in preparation for certain writing assignments is a valuable contribution for the expansion of their expressive competence. The establishment of such a list is mainly known from speaking assignments (i. e. useful phrases for discussions) , but is equally useful in connection with writing tasks. The selection of language elements depends on the actual writing assignment, as seen in the following examples:

- Before reporting about an experience (vacation, trip, adventure, etc.): find various beginnings of sentences, in order to avoid the common overuse of “and then” ...:



Before writing the text, it is a good idea to orally practice concrete examples. In the writing assignments, students are then instructed to use at least three of the sentence beginnings from the list.

- Before beginning a descriptive task (describing a picture or a landscape), students should collect location identifiers, places, positions, with the appropriate prepositions (“in front of the house stands...”, “in the background I can see...”, “above the mountains...”, or possibilities to express one’s feelings (“I like particularly...”, “I think it is nice that...”, “I don’t quite understand why...”, “I could imagine that the artist...” etc.
- Before writing a text in which, for instance, the advantages and disadvantages of life as an immigrant are considered, a great variety of phrases should be collected to express one’s feelings in a more nuanced way than just “I think...”, such as: “I believe that...”, “In my experience...”, “In my view...”, “In my perspective...”, “I am convinced that...”, “I doubt that...” etc. Here as well, it is recommended that students first practice these expressions orally. In their subsequent writing assignments, they should then have to apply at least three of the phrases from the collected list.

15 Suggestions for vocabulary building II: working with gap-fill exercises and alternative word tests, etc.

Goal

In contrast to the suggestions referenced in #14, the following are more structured with very clear guidelines.

1. Texts with gap-fill exercises

1st – 9th grade

15 minutes



Materials:
Prepared gap-fill exercises.

Working with gap-fill exercises is a more traditional, rather passive-reproductive type of approach, which can also be used to assess how much learning has taken place. This type of exercise contributes to increasing students’ active vocabulary only with additional practice of the target words in an applied context.

Procedure: The instructor prepares a worksheet with a text that has some gaps, which must be filled with the missing words. (“Tina picks _____ in the garden”; “Madrid is the _____ of Spain”). It is also possible to use illustrations which must be labelled.

Tina picks _____ in the garden.
 Madrid is the _____ of Spain.
 Mother buys bread at the _____.
 I like to _____ a glass of milk.
 An exciting film is being shown at the _____.
 The doctor _____ some medicine.
 In the _____ we are going to the beach.
 A knight wears _____.
 The flag _____ in the wind

bakery	prescribes	cinema
drink	capital	raspberries
armour	summer	flutters

- Simplified variant: fill in the gaps with the appropriate word from the list below. This approach is suitable for 1st–2nd graders (simple sentences and words), as well as for factual topics where a specific vocabulary word is required. Example: a factual text about farming, or a diagram of

the human body; a map of rivers where the correct word can be written in the correct place. Prerequisite: the materials must have been previously discussed in class.

Follow-up: the students then write their own sentences, using the words from the exercises.

- More difficult variant: the students must find the missing words themselves to fill the gaps. Here, too, the prerequisite is that the material has been studied previously (including the terms in the standard language and orthography). If it is clear which terms have to be inserted into the gaps, this approach is suitable for learning assessment (e.g. for terms from national history). In other cases, various answers may be possible and can be discussed (e.g. "Dini _____ through the bushes, he was very frightened". Answers: hurried, sneaked, ran...).
- Variant "poems/rhyming words": filling the gaps with words that rhyme. The difficulty level can be increased, depending on the level of student proficiency. Example (for the lower levels): "In a house/ there lives a _____".
- Gap-fill exercises can fulfill special and interesting functions in language diagnostics when grammatically important elements, such as case endings, or articles are left out and must be filled into the gaps. Example: "Toni is afraid __ the dog"; "I am going to give ____ mother a kiss". For this exercise, the base form of a verb may be given in brackets, which then has to be changed into the correct form: "Zuza was in Italy. She (to spend)_____ her vacation there"). The results provide valuable information about the students' grammatical competence in their first language.

2. Working with alternative word tests

2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:

Prepared exercises (see right).

With alternative word tests, certain words must be replaced by others (often synonyms). This provides an active vocabulary extension – whereby all students are included and the vocabulary is repeated and practiced.

Variants (appropriate for lower level and above, depending on the complexity):

- The instructor provides a sheet of paper with a table and a sentence on top, which reads, for example "it is snowing heavily today" or "my mother often drinks water from the blue glass". There is a column for each word or sentence. In the next column of the table, the students should write similar sentences or sentence parts (or the opposite), such as: "it rained a little yesterday", "your sister never slurps her tea from a red bottle" etc.
- The instructor provides a short text (½ page; wide linespacing) with the following instructions: "replace all underlined words (or: all nouns, verbs, adjectives) with words that have approximately the same meaning!"
- As above, but with instructions to replace all words with their opposites, example: "the tiny dog" → "the giant cat"; "the man ran through the woods" → "the woman crawled across the meadow"). An entertaining extension, which is ideal for working in pairs, is writing "opposite texts" i.e. re-writing an entire story or newspaper article in the opposite sense).
- As above, but grammatically oriented: change all nouns from the singular to plural form and make the verbs agree!", "change all verbs from the present to the past tense", "replace all adjectives with their comparative forms (good → better)" etc.
- Teaching stylistics: The students receive a text (prepared by the instructor) which comprises many repetitions of the same words and other flaws (e.g. each sentence begins with "and then" and there are too many



general words like “go” and “make”. The students work on the text in pairs; the improved texts are then compared.

- A much expanded form of the alternative word exercise is the classic re-narration of a story or text. In this exercise, the students re-tell a text (story, factual text, episode, short fairy tale) in their own words after listening to the original 1–3 times. This form is not very attractive as an exercise, owing to its somewhat artificial nature, but it can be very beneficial for vocabulary building. Communicative and motivating variants: each student receives a short text, i. e., a newspaper article. They read the text twice and then repeat the content in their own words. The original articles are then numbered and displayed on the right side of the classroom. The re-narrated versions are labelled with letters (a, b, ...) and hung up on the left side. The students read the re-narrated texts and try to match them up with the original texts. They also take notes of anything missing or inaccurately re-narrated. The exercise concludes with a group discussion.
- See also #16.3: parallel texts/generative writing.

3. Other suggestions

- For playful vocabulary building, see the ABC-stories in #6.3 above (example: All bears climb down, elephants follow giraffes).

city	profession	verb	animal	adjective	points
Bern	baker	breed	bear	blue	5
Geneva	gardener	give	giraffe	great	5
London	lawyer	-	lion	lazy	4

- The same applies for the classic “geography-game”, in which for each letter of the alphabet, the players must write down a city, country, river, etc. (Rules: all players receive a chart with the rubrics, e. g. city, country, etc.. As a student calls out the letters of the alphabet, another one shouts “stop!”, and a word is chosen that begins with that chosen letter. The charts can be modified, of course, to include a noun, a verb, an adjective, a feeling, etc.

16

Suggestions for text building and structuring (see also # 9)

Goal

In addition to the strategies described in "timeline" and "scheme /introduction/main body/ conclusion" in Nr. 9, the following procedures focus on the planning and practice of text building and structuring. They aim to provide students with opportunities to practice the strategies with attractive contexts.

1. Working with cut-up texts

2nd–6th grade

20 minutes



The instructor distributes texts (5–10 age-appropriate sentences), which have been cut up into strips (one sentence per strip). The selected text should be action-oriented with a clear sequence structure. Task: sort the sentences and paste the text back together correctly. Possible additional task: expand the text with extra sentences and strips, or mark the strips according to whether they are part of the introduction/main body/ending of the text.

2. Working with picture stories

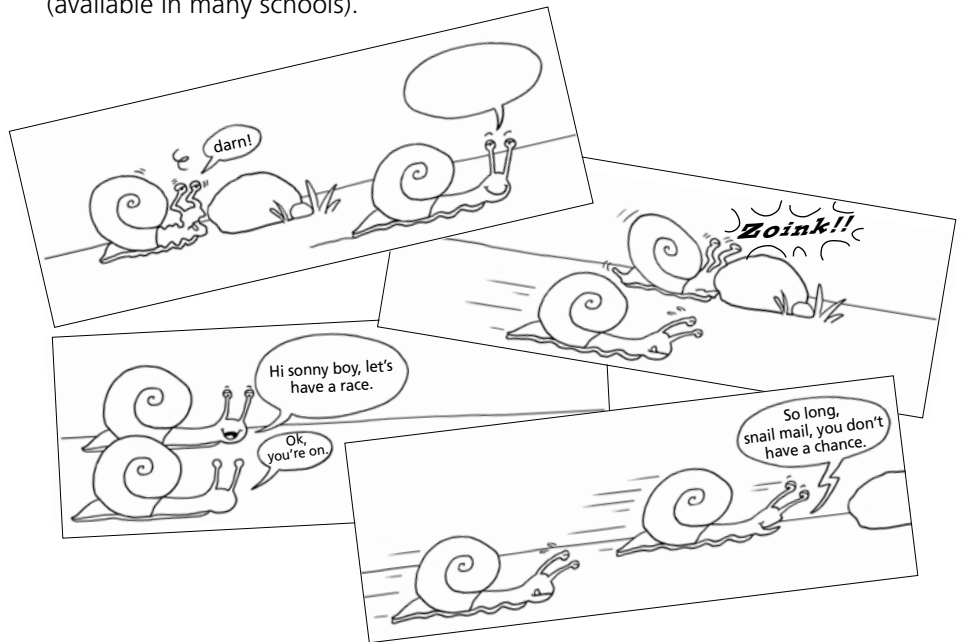
2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
cut-up picture stories

Individually or in pairs, the students receive a cut up picture story (4–8 pictures). They are tasked to order the pictures in the correct sequence, paste them onto a sheet of paper, and describe the events with 1–2 sentences per picture. Possible additional task: write an introduction and an ending. Sources for picture stories: magazines, newspapers, comics, internet, picture story cards (e. g. Schubi learning media publisher, Schaffhausen (available in many schools).



3. Parallel texts, generative writing

2nd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
text template (see right)

The students receive a text template (e. g. a short story or a poem). They then write a variation of it, based on this template. The variation might consist of a changed protagonist (instead of a barking dog, a meowing cat). Other good applications include letters, apologies, applications, etc., which are changed according to a template. Working with parallel texts is particularly suitable for weaker students, as the difficulty level for language production is considerably lower. See also example 15.2 above: alternative word test, as well as M. Lüth's excellent article on generative writing under http://www.kompetenzzentrum-sprachfoerderung.de/fileadmin/user_upload/didacta-Version.pdf



4. Analyzing text structure

4th – 9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
texts (see right)

Variant 1: Students receive one or more texts (with a clearly structured chronological order), as well as a sheet of paper on which they draw a timeline (see #9). They then write key words from the text in chronological order at different points along the timeline.

Variant 2: The students receive more challenging texts of different kinds. They must divide the texts into at least three parts and mark with different colors the introduction, main body and the ending.

5. Finding a beginning to an end and vice versa; “sandwich-stories”

2nd – 9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
sheets of paper with
text beginnings

The students receive the beginning of a text (e.g. the first sentences of a story or the opening paragraph of a newspaper article). Working individually, in pairs or groups of three, they are to write the rest of the text and clearly highlight the main part and the ending or summary. Subtitles should be added if the text is longer. In the end, they present their text versions. The presentation of these often very different versions is exciting, since they all emerged from a common beginning.

Variant 1: students receive the ending of a text and must write the beginning and main body of the text.

Variant 2: “sandwich stories”: students receive the beginning and the ending of a text (story, joke, factual document) and must invent/write the main body of the text.

6. Writing and collecting game rules, instructions for handicrafts, recipes

2nd – 9th grade

40 minutes



Writing action-oriented instructions with clear sequences, like the rules of a game, building sequences, instructions for handicrafts, recipes, etc., requires a particularly clear, sequenced formulation and text construction, as the text might otherwise confuse rather than serve the reader. The quality of such a text can be measured by its functionality or how well it “works”. Collecting texts, such as recipes and assembly instructions as a class, is a particularly enjoyable project, as the texts are useful and practical. Other effective projects are bilingual collections in cooperation with the teachers from the regular, mainstream classes. (Also see #21 below).

17

Suggestions for improving writing style I: practice with acting and discovering style

Goal

Many aspects of stylistics and writing style are an implicit part of numerous writing assignments. The following suggestions provide opportunities for explicit training of linguistic and stylistic variants, i. e., on the level of a sentence, a whole text, or a text type. The aim is to make students aware of the different facets and types of writing in their first language.

1. Working with expanding or condensing texts

2nd–9th grade

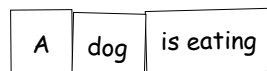
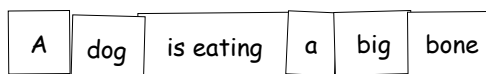
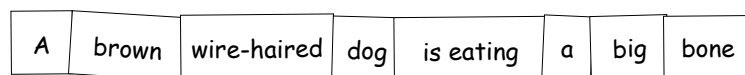
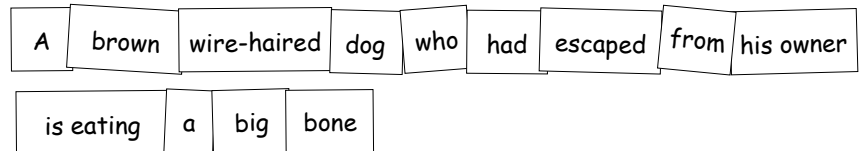
30 minutes



Materials:

Prepared cards with words written on them (long sentences of 8–10 words). Blank cards or strips of paper for students' own sentences.

The expansion exercise aims to further elaborate a sentence by adding additional elements (adjectives, phrases, clauses) to it. For example: "The woman sings" → "The young, well-dressed woman, who studied voice in Rome to become a professional singer, sings beautiful songs in the fabulously decorated concert hall". The opposite occurs when condensing texts, i. e., stripping sentences to their essential core. Example: "A brown, wire-haired dog, who had escaped from its owner, is eating a big bone" → "A dog is eating".



By working with expanding and condensing texts in a playful manner, students develop a "feel" for the possibilities of experimenting with language and style at the sentence level.

Variants:

- The instructor first goes through one or several examples with the class or group. Then, each student (or pair) receives a short sentence and some strips of paper with the instruction to expand on it and write the longest possible sentence. (expansion probe).
- The students are then given a short sentence, such as "the dog is barking." They must add an element to the sentence (adjective, phrases, etc.), such as: "the hungry dog is barking", "the hungry dog is barking all day long", "the hungry dog is barking all day long because he has no food" etc. This would be practiced orally and then in written form.
- Sentences from stories, etc., may also be chosen for the condensing exercise, whereby all non-essential elements are being omitted.
- The expansion exercise can be used to create an entire text consisting of only short sentences. Task: increase the length of the text to at least twice the original length.

2. Exercises for linking and unlinking of sentences

3rd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
Prepared handouts with short sentences (see right).

Exercises of linking and taking sentences apart further the students' linguistic competence in terms of syntax, stylistics and language repertoire. These exercises should be conducted repeatedly to further understanding and consolidation. The terms "conjunction/combining words" or "subordinate clauses" need not be introduced at this time, as only the practical application is important.

Variants:

The instructor distributes a piece of paper with several pairs of shorter sentences. Example: "I am hungry. I would like to eat something."; "I am tired. I have not slept in a long time."; "He promised me. He goes to the movies with me."; "I am intrigued. Did you really understand it?"; "You have to be fast. You win the race."; "It was late. We arrived in our home country." After an initial discussion, the class collects possible conjunctions that can be used to link the sentences together, such as: and, then, also, because, so, that, before, during, since, in case, in spite of, although, etc. The students then join the sentence pairs together with an appropriate conjunction and write them down. Extension: the students write their own sentences with the conjunctions (underlined in red color) from the list they created in class. Alternatively: individual students write pairs of sentences for each other, which then must be linked and joined together.

Taking sentences apart: in this exercise, the students receive longer sentences which they have to separate into two individual sentences. Example: "I was unable to swallow a bite, because I can't stand spinach" → "I was unable to swallow a bite. I can't stand spinach".

3. Integrated stylistic exercises with paper strips

3rd–6th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
3–4 paper strips per student.

The following training exercises combine different aspects of style with action-oriented intensive learning.

Procedure:

- The instructor displays a picture. Each student receives 3–4 paper strips (A3 paper cut horizontally into 4–5 strips) and writes a sentence onto each strip about an aspect of the picture.
- The strips of paper are then collected and thoroughly shuffled. The students separate into groups of three. Each group receives 9–12 strips. With these strips, they have to create a text about the picture. In doing so, they must work intensively on their writing style: cut out or replace repeated sentences and sentence beginnings and vocabulary. Text development will have to be considered very carefully. If needed, the group can obtain more blank strips of paper and add sentences so that their text turns out well.
- After the strips are pasted together in their final order, the groups then present their texts to the class. They discuss all texts produced by the rest of the class.

4. Experimenting with formal styles and text types

5th–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
Depending on variant (see right).

Attractive and witty stylistic exercises involving whole texts are possible in various forms. However, these types of experiments require a certain level of feeling for the first language and its stylistic facets. Where this feeling is lacking, the necessary information and guidance is required. The same holds true for knowledge about different text types (poems, factual texts, fairy tales, sms, comics, etc.).

Style and tone, Variants:

- Variation of a suitable short text in various levels of formality and tone. Possible tasks: "You received a book as a new year's present from a friend/your grand parents/the embassy in your country of origin. Write a thank you note to them with the appropriate level of formality." (The

tone will vary accordingly from informal language to very formal, possibly involving dialect, to very formal standard language).

- Choose five traffic signs (e. g. Stop, One-way, No U-turn, etc.) Express in writing what the signs are actually communicating (e. g. “you must stop here”, “Here, you are only allowed to drive in one direction” etc.). Now formulate these statements in different degrees of formality/politeness. You may use dialect and slang in this case. (Stop sign: Would you be as kind as to stop here? thank you! as opposed to the highly informal: “step on your brakes, dude!”). Design a funny poster to go with it! (size A3 or A2)
- Take a short newspaper article, a poem or some other kind of short text. In groups of three or four, decide who will rewrite the text and in which style (e. g. dialect, slang, comic language, elegant language, “crazy” language). Write your versions and then read them to each other!

Text types, Variants:

- Take a short text, e. g. a newspaper article. As a class or same-level group, think about different types of texts that it could be changed into, such as a poem, a factual text, a fairy tale, a telegram, an sms, a comic, an audio recording or a sensational report, etc. Decide who will create which text type (alone or in pairs). Finally, discuss and compare the various text versions.
- Try the same thing with topics connected to your country of origin. For example, convert scenes from the life story of a famous person into a radio play or write a poem about a landscape, or invent a telegram or newspaper articles about historical events.
- Collect examples of different texts written in your heritage language and create an exhibition. Each student should bring a writing sample to class (ranging from a poem, to a comic, a non-fiction text, an sms or e-mail) and explain what is special about this language sample.

Other effective ways of teaching writing style:

- The suggestions described in #4 skeleton stories, story scaffolding, etc., lend themselves naturally also for teaching writing style.
- The suggestions in 15.2 for practicing with alternative word exercises provide good examples for teaching style at the lexical level.
- The work with parallel texts described in 16.3 (generative writing) is also very valuable in terms of stylistics. Using scaffolding and a template for orientation, and then selecting sentence elements from it, is less demanding for the students and provides a valuable writing style practice.
- Another popular and useful activity for teaching writing style are the so-called “oral writing hours “: the students do not actually write a text themselves; rather they talk about in detail how a text about a certain topic could be created and structured. Variant: students talk about a text which has already been written (perhaps some time ago, or by a student from another class).



18

Suggestions for improving style II: writing and summarizing in a precise, clear and exciting manner

Goal

Students should also have the opportunity to develop a broad stylistic repertoire in their first language. This includes partial or sub-skills, such as “ability to describe exactly”, “ability to tell clearly, ability to tell in an exciting way” etc. However, without appropriate clarification and practice, the terms “exactly, clearly, in an interesting manner” etc. remain abstract concepts and words that are of no help to the students. The aim of the following suggestions is to render these terms real and usable, and to provide appropriate exercises and writing opportunities for practicing them.

1. Exact descriptions: Variants

2nd–9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:

Sales slip, other items, depending on the variant (see right).

- Each student brings a store receipt (Aldi, Costco, Walmart, Publix, etc.) to class and pastes it in the middle of an A3 size paper. Around the receipt, students write as accurately as possible what can be done with the items on the receipt. The items on the receipt and the explanation/description are then connected with an arrow. (Idea from “Language Window”, Topic: writing, page 29).

Flour	1.80	Free-range eggs: can be used in many dishes. They can be eaten hard boiled, or as 3-minute soft-boiled eggs. They are also very good fried or scrambled. My favorite egg dish is omelette with mushrooms. Eggs are also used for baking cakes or biscuits.
Handkerchiefs	5.20	
Eggs (free-range)	3.60	The vegetable peeler is used to peel all sorts of vegetables, like potatoes or carrots, so that not too much is wasted.
Toast bread	2.80	
Rubber gloves	3.80	
Potato peeler	5.60	
Deodorant stick	3.85	
Sponge (3-pack)	2.45	
Grated cheese	3.60	
Total	53.95	
cash	60.-	
change	6.05	
Thank you for shopping with us		

Flour: my mother uses flour to bake a birthday cake for my brother. With the rest of the flour she will make pizza dough, and the children who are at the party can then put their favorite toppings on it.

- The teacher provides each student with an object (i. e. a cloth or a small tin can). The students then describe their objects in writing in as much detail as possible, without, however, naming the object (!), referring to it as “my XY”. The objects are then placed on the left side of the classroom, and the written descriptions on the right. The texts are numbered, the objects labelled with letters. The students then try to correctly match the descriptions to the objects (e. g. 3 = F). See also #7.2b above.
- Variants: describing pictures (postcards, etc.) of different animals (stuffed toys, pictures or the story behind “for sale” or “lost and found” advertisements.
- The instructor or a student repeats 2–3 times a small gesture or action (e. g. taking a book out of a closet). The students try to describe the action in as much detail as possible. Their descriptions are then compared and discussed. Variant (more difficult): two students enact a small scene (i. e. a greeting); the other students describe it in as much detail as possible.
- Let’s imagine that we have to explain to our great grandmother how to use a cell phone or how to use a computer and log on to the internet. In pairs, the students then try to test how useful the descriptions are.

2. Telling stories in a clear and interesting way: Variants:

2nd–9th grade

20 minutes



- The instructor provides the students with the following “recipe” for writing in a clear and interesting manner: “put yourselves into the shoes of the main character(s) in the story. Close your eyes and think about how they feel and think, their worries and hopes, etc. Now describe this in your text!” The students then practice the „recipe“ orally before writing, using different, suitable topics. Examples: “a discussion around our dinner table”, “an experience in my parents’ native country”, “my grandmother’s tales of her youth”.
- Another “recipe” that follows the same pattern is to practice with the following instructions: “close your eyes before you begin to write. Think about your story and imagine it as a film in your mind. Now write everything down in as much detail as possible.”
- A tip which often leads to more clarity is to use direct speech: “use direct speech, let the characters talk to each other!” This, too, should first be done orally and then written down.
- Texts are sometimes more “alive” and interesting when they are narrated in the first, rather than in the third person. If students follow this and the above suggestions, they should become successful.
- Picture stories provide an ideal opportunity for practicing vivid and lively writing. In this way, the students are relieved from searching for ideas and can concentrate on writing an appealing text. It is important that the written texts are then compared and discussed among the students.
- Re-narrating stories is also a valuable and effective opportunity to practice a clear and interesting writing style, as described below (18.3 and 21).

3. Exact re-telling and summarizing; Variants

3rd–9th grade

30 minutes



Materials:
Story as a template
for the re-narration
(see right).

Re-telling stories occur regularly both in school and life in general. This can be seen in many different forms, from reports about a television show or a dream, to the summary of a phone message, from paraphrasing to the most detailed reconstruction possible, whereby the stylistic aspects should also be captured. The advantage of re-telling, in terms of writing style, is that the students are freed from having to construct their own story (which has already been provided) and thus can concentrate entirely on the language aspects of writing. Examples and possibilities:

- Lead-in discussion: explore where and why re-telling of stories and summarizing texts is necessary, both in school as well as in everyday life. The students should be aware of how relevant these types of text are for everyday life (also for jokes and gossip). Then, collect examples of actual real-life re-telling of stories and summarizing of texts (from the last couple of days): who (re)told what to whom?
- The instructor reads a short (or longer) story to the class 2–3 times. The students then re-narrate the story as accurately as possible, but hide 1–2 inaccuracies. The stories are then read and the question is asked: can you find the mistakes? (see also #7.4)
- Re-narration with a change of perspective: the students read a story (e. g. a fairy tale, a legend or an episode from one’s own literature). Instead of simply re-telling the story, the students put themselves into the role of a specific character from the story and re-narrate it from their perspective. For example, the fairy tale “Little Red Riding Hood” could be narrated from the perspective of the wolf.
- The same story can be re-told in different types of text formats: see also 17.4.
- Re-telling information and summarizing in very short forms is commonly practiced with phone messages, which is something students sometimes do for their parents. This can be practiced in a playful way where the

teacher and students role play a phone conversation and then write down a short message.

- A related, special benefit derived from summarizing and understanding notes is test-taking. This should be discussed and practiced in class with specific examples, e. g., the students could write down the most important points from their last lesson and then compare and critically discuss their lecture notes. Variant: the instructor presents a lecture or shows an educational film and the students then have to summarize the most salient aspects in 10–15 points.

4. Interesting story telling; Variants:

4th–9th grade

35 minutes



Materials:

Possibly a picture story of handouts with themes/titles (see right).

- Oral preparation: discussing the terms “interesting” and “boring”. What do these categories actually mean; what is the implication for our own writing? Consolidation activity: the teacher reads (or gives in writing) to the class a (short) interesting story and also a boring text. What makes the one interesting and the other boring? Experiment: how could the boring text be made more interesting? Try to implement changes to make the text more interesting, then compare your work..
- The students receive the following “recipe” for interesting writing (as a handout):
 - Begin your text with a sentence that captures the readers’ attention (e. g. “Everything went wrong that day.”, “The frightening dog came close and closer to me.”).
 - Do not reveal everything at once. Give the readers initially just some clues that generate their interest! (“What I have experienced today, I won’t soon forget. It has something to do with more than a dangerous animal”.)
 - Describe the person’s feelings, fears and hopes in your text. (“Trembling with fear, she thought: [is there any hope of rescue for me?]”)
 - Interrupt your text with questions addressed directly to the readers. (Example: “What would you have done in this frightening situation?”)
 - Build up to the high point and most exciting part or outcome until close to the end of the story.
 - Think of an exciting title for your text that intrigues the reader, such as (“A tragedy in Turkey”, or “Is the tiger going to devour me?”).

The students are now provided with one or more outlines for stories for which they must write interesting texts, following this “recipe”. Example: An appropriate picture story; a topic like “A horrifying experience” or “Then I was really scared”.

After writing the texts, the students read and compare them and discuss how well the “recipe” was implemented.

- The students create a collection of interesting topics, titles and/or sentence starters (1–3 sentences). They write the accompanying texts in class or as a homework assignment. These collected texts can be stapled or bound to create a book (“Our horror stories”, “Exciting stories” etc.).

19

Hints for improving syntax and morphology

Goal

Many authentic opportunities for learning and reflection present themselves in the process of writing texts, including those concerning grammatical topics, such as syntax and morphology. The following suggestions illustrate how to create and use these learning opportunities to their full potential. The subject of orthography will not be discussed here, as the rules for spelling vary among the different languages.

1. Syntax

2nd–9th grade

20 minutes



Materials:

Small cards with cut-up sentences (see right).

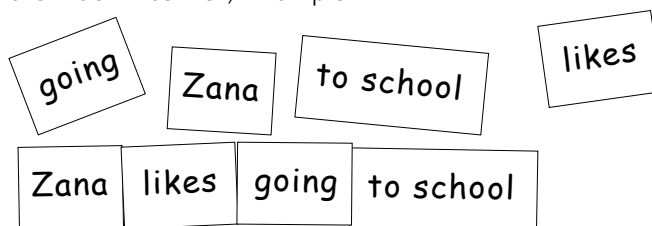
Possibly a roll of toilet paper.

Lists of nouns, verbs, etc. (see right).

Valuable opportunities for developing and teaching a feeling for sentence building and the syntactic repertoire are suggested in the exercises and experiments in #17.

The following exercises are particularly appropriate for younger students (1st–2nd grade) in that they promote the feeling for sentences and self-discovery of sentence construction. (The materials can be prepared by the teacher or older students):

- The instructor writes simple sentences on strips of paper and then cuts them up, not word for word, but by clauses. The paper pieces that belong together are held together with a paper clip. The students (alone or in pairs) receive one or more sets of the cut up sentences. Their task is to put them together to create functional sentences (and possibly write them down as well). Example:



Since, at times, there are various possibilities, they must absolutely be discussed (language feeling!). Example:



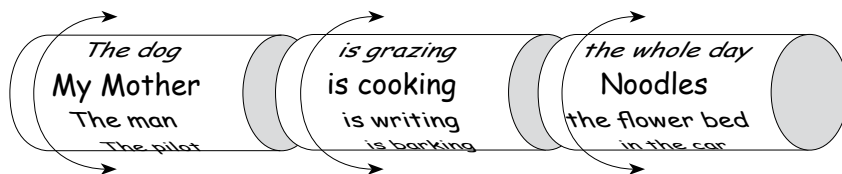
- Alone or in pairs, the students receive three lists of words: 1.) 10–12 nouns (subject), 2.) with 10–12 verbs, 3.) with 10–12 accusative objects and/or adverbs of place and time:

<p>The dog My mother The man The pilot The ball The child The clown The cow The student The owl</p>	<p>is flying is watering is grazing is cooking is writing is barking is riding is playing is sitting is hunting</p>
<p>in the notebook in the night in the meadow a unicycle the whole day noodles the flower bed in the car in the room in the water</p>	



For the “sentence computer” use the cardboard (inner) core of a roll of toilet paper and wrap the paper strips, cut from an A4 size sheet of paper, around the core like a scroll. (see below).

The students move the three lists around to align the words and write down all the sentences which make sense. Variant: the lists are wrapped around a core (a round peg, or cardboard roll) to line up the words. The students then write down all the sentences which make sense. In moving the strips around the core to create different word combinations, students can generate meaningful and meaningless sentences with this "sentence computer".



- The above exercises can be expanded for older students by adding additional sentence elements (indirect object, adverbs of place and time, etc.).

2. Morphology (correct forms)

3rd – 9th grade

25 minutes



Materials:
Text as an outline or template
(see right).

The alternative word exercises described in #15.2 are also very well suited for grammar work with 3rd-6th grade students, when appropriately adjusted.

Examples:

- The students receive a text for working in pairs. Their task is to rewrite the text and change all nouns into plural form. The questions for discussion include: What grammatical changes does it cause? (Answer: the verbs and adjectives must agree in number!).
- Variants: Change all plural forms to singular; change all verbs from the present tense to the preterite or perfect forms (or vice versa); change all adjectives from the normal form to the comparative or superlative.
- A special and interesting function of gap-fill exercises is that they are useful for assessing language competence (see #15.1 gap-fill exercises for specific grammar points). Common mistakes would suggest the need for remediation and additional practice in the areas of weakness.
- Specific grammatical issues can often be remediated and practiced in the area of writing with appropriately formulated, targeted writing assignments. Examples:
 - Subject area of training: past tenses. Task: write a story about when you were younger (Topic suggestion: What I did as a 3-year old; a fairy tale; something from history...)
 - Goal of training: adjectives. Task: describe your favorite meal (an appetizing description with as many details as possible; or a very detailed description of a picture, etc.
 - Goal of training: subjunctive. Describe contrary-to fact conditions with topics like "if I were a wizard/a witch", "if there were no more schools", "if my (grand) parents had not emigrated".

Ideas for specific writing contexts

20

Writing occasions that are particularly suitable for heritage language education

Goal

Many of the previously suggested ideas can be implemented with little difficulty in the native language education classroom. The following writing suggestions more closely focus on issues germane to heritage language teaching. As such, they are more closely related to the themes of either the country of origin or living in and between two cultures and languages, which is the typical experience of the students who attend heritage language classes in their native language.

1. Riddle texts

4th – 9th grade

30 minutes



The students receive an assignment to individually describe an event from the history, culture or geography of their country of origin, without, however, referencing the event, person or place by name. The topic should be limited to history, culture, geography or a person of significance. The task can first be practiced orally by the whole class. After the texts are written, they are collected and exchanged among the students who should solve the riddles.

2. Reports, posters, presentations

3rd – 9th grade



This larger project may extend over several lessons. The students are tasked to create a report, a poster or presentation about an event or a significant person from their country of origin. The different methods of presentation are first discussed in class (e. g. poster or presentation with a corresponding worksheet). The level of difficulty should, of course, be age-appropriate. Two or more double lessons should be dedicated to the project (including presentations). It would be a good idea to announce the project before the longer vacations so as to afford the students time to prepare and collect material.

3. Worksheets, non-fiction texts and quizzes

4th – 9th grade

45 minutes



In lieu of the instructors' preparing all the worksheets, non-fiction texts, pictures, computer presentations, etc. for the heritage language classes, the students can occasionally do this just as well. In doing so, they can learn and review a lot of material. It is very important to previously determine precisely what the task entails, however (e. g. prepare a worksheet or a quiz to finish a topic).

4. Real or fictitious interviews

5th – 9th grade



The students are tasked to conduct interviews concerning a previously discussed topic, to document it in writing and to present it to the class. Possible topics include the memories of parents and grandparents of their childhood in their native country, an interview with someone of the same age in the country of origin concerning leisure time or perspectives of the future, an interview with people in the host country on the topic of racism, foreigners and integration. It is important to previously discuss and practice with the students how to conduct an interview: asking and formulating questions (not yes/no questions, rather open/probing questions: "Tell me about, ...", and to speak as little as possible as the interviewer. Also, explain how to document the answers, not copied word for word, but rather summarized, using key words. The interview may be recorded on tape or a hand-held device.

Appealing variant: conduct and document fictitious interviews with famous people in society and politics from the students' own culture.

5. Petitions, appeals

5th–9th grade

45 minutes



Following a discussion of unsatisfactory conditions or situations in the country of origin or the host country (country of residence), students brainstorm ideas about possible suggestions to ameliorate the situation and to whose attention concrete suggestions could be directed, or what an appeal to the media would look like, respectively. They then discuss and write appropriate texts. Whether the appeal will be sent to the intended appropriate recipient or remains a fictitious text will have to be decided for each individual effort.

Examples: an appeal or letter of protest to the president or the parliament in the home country about a current crisis or situation; a letter or appeal to a party or institution that is hostile to foreigners in the students' country of residence.

6. Letters, mails and sms: class correspondence, blogs and chats

2nd–9th grade



Many of the exciting possibilities for authentic written communication with other speakers of the same language were already referenced in #12: "writing for the target audience". Aside from the classic letter writing, modern media has opened up new possibilities of written communication, such as e-mails or sms, which are also well suited for school purposes. The same holds true for using blogs and chat forums, which exist in all languages. However, it is vitally important to be vigilant that students' personal data remain strictly confidential as well as to ensure that students stay clear of questionable forums and inappropriate content.

An appealing variation for addressing a real target reader in writing is when students compose (fictitious) letters, e-mails or sms to historical persons or other well-known personalities or politicians, which are then read in class. Authentic writing assignments also include students' creating, designing and writing of greeting cards, e.g. wishes for Mother's Day, Christmas, New Year or cards to celebrate a national holiday. Other opportunities for practical writing assignments might involve students' writing and designing invitations, such as invitations to a parents' evening or a cultural event at the school, hosted by the heritage language class.

7. Problem-oriented texts

5th–9th grade

45 minutes



Growing up in, with and between two cultures not only has positive sides, but also difficult aspects. Heritage language students have the advantage of double the resources, but may possibly also be confronted with prejudices and reservations, not only in the host country but in the country of origin as well. Dealing with these issues and supporting the students in their search for identity and a sense of belonging is an important part of heritage language instruction. Discussions and written reflection can contribute to this goal. Writing assignments in conjunction with this effort would include planning a discussion around specific questions, such as, "My thoughts and feelings about the advantages and disadvantages of growing up with two languages and cultures", "Great, I am bilingual!", "How I feel at home, here and in my country of origin", etc.

8. Fantasy texts, wishes and visions

3rd–9th grade

45 minutes



Possible outlines and topics:

If I were the President of my country of origin (or the one in which I now live)/ How I imagine my life in 20 years/ My vision of a world in which everyone is happy/ Problems that I hope will no longer exist 50 years hence, etc.

9. Language comparison

3rd – 9th grade

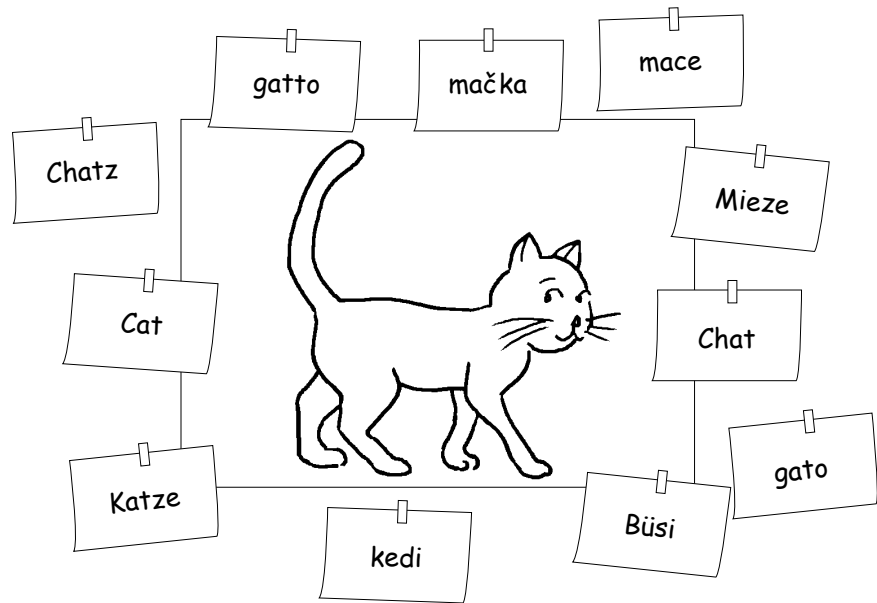
45 minutes



Comparing the students' first language with the language spoken in school (e. g. German), as well as comparisons between the standard (written) language and dialect versions of the heritage language is possible on various levels of difficulty. These exercises take advantage of the students' bilingual competences in an ideal way and can lead to very interesting learning opportunities. Naturally, this can involve any additional languages that the students may know, either from school or elsewhere.

Suggestions:

- Comparisons and vocabulary collections, i. e., the word ("cat" in various languages, words in dialect for certain things in the heritage language and the language of the school, etc..



- Look for words which are the same, or similar, but actually have a completely different meaning (e. g. German "Hund" – Albanian "hundë" (nose); Turkish "armut" – (pear) in German.)
- Comparing and collecting of phrases, such as "good morning" in many languages; word-for-word translations of phrases, such as "what time is it?", "what is your name?".
- Equivalence of proverbs, common sayings. Example: which English proverb most closely resembles a certain proverb in your own language?
- Comparing compound nouns (which are ubiquitous in German) and consist of several connected word elements (e. g. Haustür = front door, Wandtafel = wall board, grasgrün = green as grass, Autofahren = driving a car, etc.) How are the compound nouns formed in your first language?
- Comparing syntax (sentence structure). Compare how sentences are built, based on a few sentences. Write the sentences in the heritage language, leaving enough space to repeat under each one the same sentence in the school language. Then, connect with an arrow the parts which belong together. Do this with other sentences as well, compare and draw conclusions.
- Translating short texts: where do difficulties arise, and what needs to be formulated differently? (Here, two students could translate a short poem, to compare them and discuss their experiences.)
- Comparing the standard language and dialect(s) in the first language (possibly also the school language). This may require student research, involving the internet, books, and talking with their grandparents.

21

Suitable projects for cooperation with mainstream education classes

Goal

Many schools and teachers are increasingly engaged in intercultural issues in today's multilingual/multicultural environment. This provides a unique opportunity for cooperation between heritage language teaching and regular, mainstream education classes. It is therefore important that heritage language instructors seize the initiative to make this happen. The following suggestions should appeal to the teachers of regular public school classes as well.

1. Multilingual poetry collection (eleven poems, etc.)

2nd grade and above

Further information: various internet sites concerning "elfchen" and haiku.

This project has already been realized in many schools and institutions. First, students read poetry and write their own simple poems, which are then beautifully decorated and presented, either at an exhibition or as a book. This is even better if the exhibition or book includes poems in other languages and dialects (with the translation). To create one's own poems, the popular "building plan" for the "Eleven Poems" can be used. It consists of eleven words, which are distributed over five lines as follows:

blue
 ~~~~~  
 the    sea  
 ~~~~~    ~~~~~  
 it shines brightly
 ~~~~~    ~~~~~    ~~~~~  
 I    like    to swim    there  
 ~~~~~    ~~~~~    ~~~~~    ~~~~~  
 summer
 ~~~~~

- Line 1:  
1 word (adjective, possibly a noun), e. g. a color or feeling
- Line 2:  
2 words (noun with article) (what it is, what is it about...)
- Line 3:  
3 words (short description) (what is it doing?)
- Line 4:  
4 words (short I-sentence) (what are you doing?)
- Line 5:  
1 word (adjective) (the most important idea in one word)

### 2. Multilingual picture books

Lower level

#### or adventure books

middle level

References:  
Schader (2012a):  
Linguistic diversity as a chance,  
p. 188ff.

With lower level classes, picture books are often created according to the following plan:

- a) The students read or invent a story.
- b) They divide the story into separate episodes or pictures
- c) The students (alone or in pairs) draw a scene and describe underneath it the action that takes place.
- d) The pages are hung on the wall or stapled together to form a book, created by the students.

This procedure can be expanded without difficulty to include multiple languages, as long as enough space is left around the pictures to accommodate the description in various (up to four) languages. Thus, a multilingual picture book is created with a significant contribution from heritage language students.

At the middle and upper school levels, multilingual adventure story books can be created. The students would first create the main characters (e. g. 2 protagonists) who experience various adventures. The students (individually or in pairs) then describe and contribute one episode or part of the book. The result is a complete continuous adventure story. To make it a multilingual story, it was predetermined that certain episodes would take place in the students' countries of origin, and that it would include a few words written in the language spoken there (e. g. "Good morning", "Thank you" etc.).

### 3. Multilingual student papers or wall boards

3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above

Different forms of student newspapers have been popular for a long time. This may also include notice boards and, more recently, digital means of communication. These can easily expand to include different languages, just as big city newspapers may include rubrics in the popular migration languages (or publish a paper version in the great migration languages).

Variant 1: Contributions to the paper's topics which are written in other languages besides the school language are included in the paper. However, the text should at least be summarized in the school language for the benefit of all readers.

Variant 2: Special rubrics should be created for the announcements in different languages (e.g. in relation to events in the country of origin). Here, too, a short summary in the school language should be provided.

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### 4. Contributions to project weeks or exhibitions, like "our cultures", "where we come from", "great vacation destinations", "our languages" etc.

4<sup>th</sup> grade and above

The idea of arranging/hosting a special project week, or simply a project on a certain topic that involves different classes and utilizes the multilingual and multicultural resources of the students, should be eagerly welcomed in many schools.

Possible ways of cooperation between mainstream education and heritage language classes may involve supporting the creation of presentations, designing posters and flyers or advertisements for the tourist industry in different countries.

See also# 10.1 und 12.

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### 5. Multilingual recipe collections

2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and above

A multilingual collection of traditional recipes from various nations can be created, particularly in conjunction with regular education and home economics classes. This can be easily accomplished in two or more languages, whereby the recipes in the first language may be elaborated in conjunction with the parents or special language classes. Naturally, all recipes would have to be translated into the school language as well. To conclude the project, an international food and cooking event could be hosted, possibly in conjunction with a parents' evening, a school festival, or an intercultural project week.

# 22

## Artistic-creative design projects with language

### Goal

The following projects help students develop their creativity. They combine artistic and language activities and lead to attractive creations, which further encourages motivation.

### 1. Experiments with speech bubbles

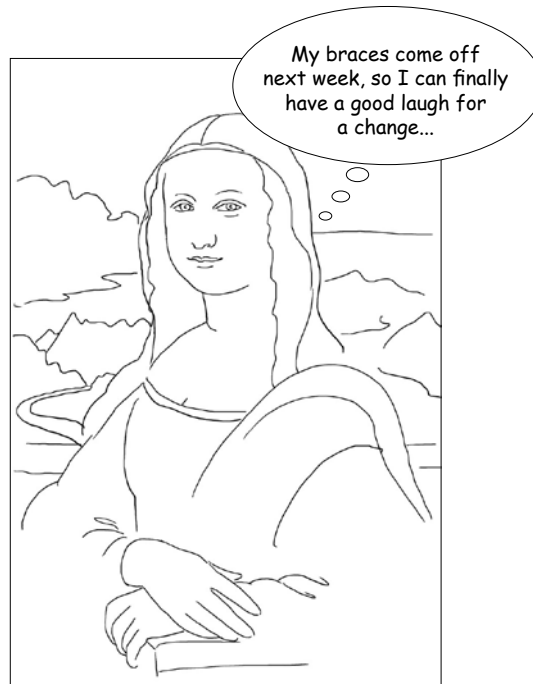
2<sup>nd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

15–20 minutes



Materials:  
Photographs of people,  
cut from newspapers or  
magazines

The students choose a picture or photograph and decide what the person may be thinking or saying. They then draw a speech bubble, cut it out and stick it onto the picture. Of course, speech bubble texts may also be witty.



Variants: speech-bubble dialogs with two or more persons / Art pictures instead of photos (Mona Lisa etc.) / smileys (emojicons e. g.: 😊 or 😞) instead of photos / copy of a Comics with the writing from the speech bubble deleted so students can create their own versions, then compare them.

### 2. Create your own comic

2<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> grade

30–60 minutes



Materials:  
ink stamp for finger prints;  
paper.

The instructor explains the procedure: in pairs, the students should think of a short story for a Comic (or picture story) in 4–6 pictures. The story must comprise at least two people so they can talk to one another; an animal/pet may also be included. Instead of drawing the figures, the bodies and heads can be created with fingerprints. The arms and legs will be drawn in later, which creates quite funny figures. The text will then be written in the speech bubbles. It will be helpful to first look at some Comics or picture stories to acquaint the students with this kind of text and its possibilities. Expanded task: a collective creation of an entire Comic booklet – which is particularly appealing if all students choose the same main characters and setting for the story (possibly on a topic from their country of origin).

### 3. Photo novels

6<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

2–3 hours



Materials:  
Paper, camera or  
cell phone camera.

“Photo novels” are well-known features in teenage magazines. They consist of a story with photographs and speech bubbles. (Other text elements may be added, such as a strip beneath the photo with a comment “a week later...”). As with creating comics, students must first decide upon a story line. To write the script, they must divide the script into different scenes. They can shoot the pictures with a cell phone or a digital camera (maybe as a homework assignment) and print them out. Students with good computer aptitude may even produce the entire story digitally.

## 4. Mini books

2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade

30 – 60 minutes



Materials:  
outlines (see right).

Mini books are small, self-created booklets, consisting of a title page and 6–7 pages of text. Ideas are needed for the text, as well as a piece of paper (A4 or A3) and instructions as to how to fold and cut the paper. Instructions can be found under <http://www.minibooks.ch/>. The teacher may either download and print them out for the class, or the students create their mini books directly on the computer, if available. The booklets look very attractive and can, of course, also be illustrated.

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## 5. Follow the path

3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Materials:  
Landscape photographs  
(post cards or pictures from  
newspapers and magazines).

Students receive a picture or a photo of a landscape (e. g. from their country of origin) which they affix to a piece of paper (A4 or A3, landscape format). Either in class, or as a homework assignment, they draw or paint a continuation of the picture to the left and to the right of the photo. Underneath the expanded picture, they write a text, describing the progress of this journey through the landscape, i. e., what they see, feel, smell and experience.

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**Comments, experiences, further ideas:**

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