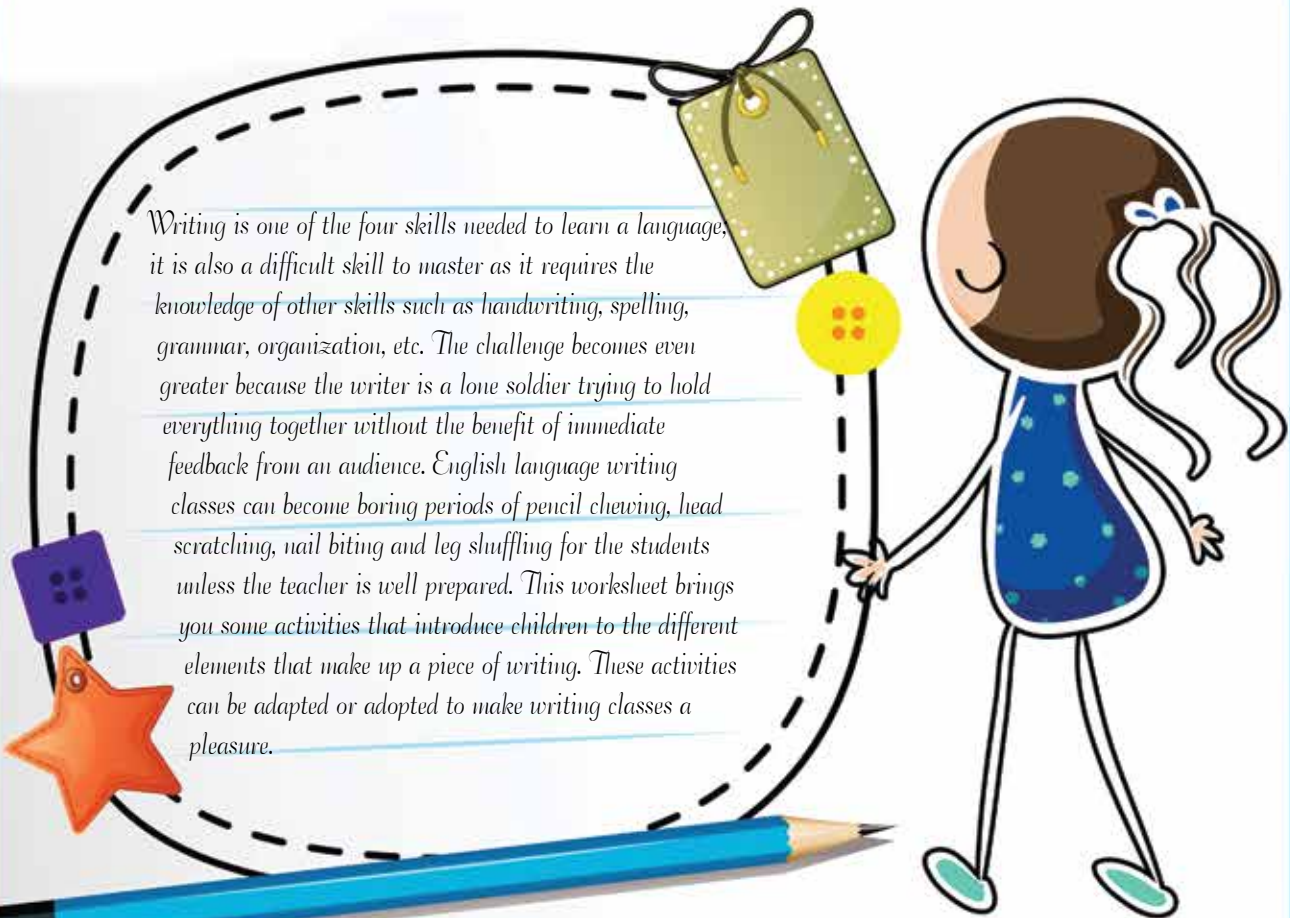


To write and write some more

Ratna Rao

Writing is one of the four skills needed to learn a language, it is also a difficult skill to master as it requires the knowledge of other skills such as handwriting, spelling, grammar, organization, etc. The challenge becomes even greater because the writer is a lone soldier trying to hold everything together without the benefit of immediate feedback from an audience. English language writing classes can become boring periods of pencil chewing, head scratching, nail biting and leg shuffling for the students unless the teacher is well prepared. This worksheet brings you some activities that introduce children to the different elements that make up a piece of writing. These activities can be adapted or adopted to make writing classes a pleasure.



Activity 1

Brainstorming is an important and foremost step of writing. It can be done individually or in groups according to the level of the class. Brainstorm to write a personal narrative on 'A memorable experience'.

a) What is it about the experience that makes it so memorable?

b) What senses did it touch? Think of suitable vocabulary to express how you felt. E.g., numb, tangy, blurred, bland, aromatic.

Touch: _____ Smell: _____ Taste: _____
Sight: _____ Sound: _____

The problem/conflict: Was there a problem or conflict that you had to resolve?

The Setting: Time: _____ Place: _____

Describe your experience. Give it a beginning and end. Turn it into a short story.

Activity 2



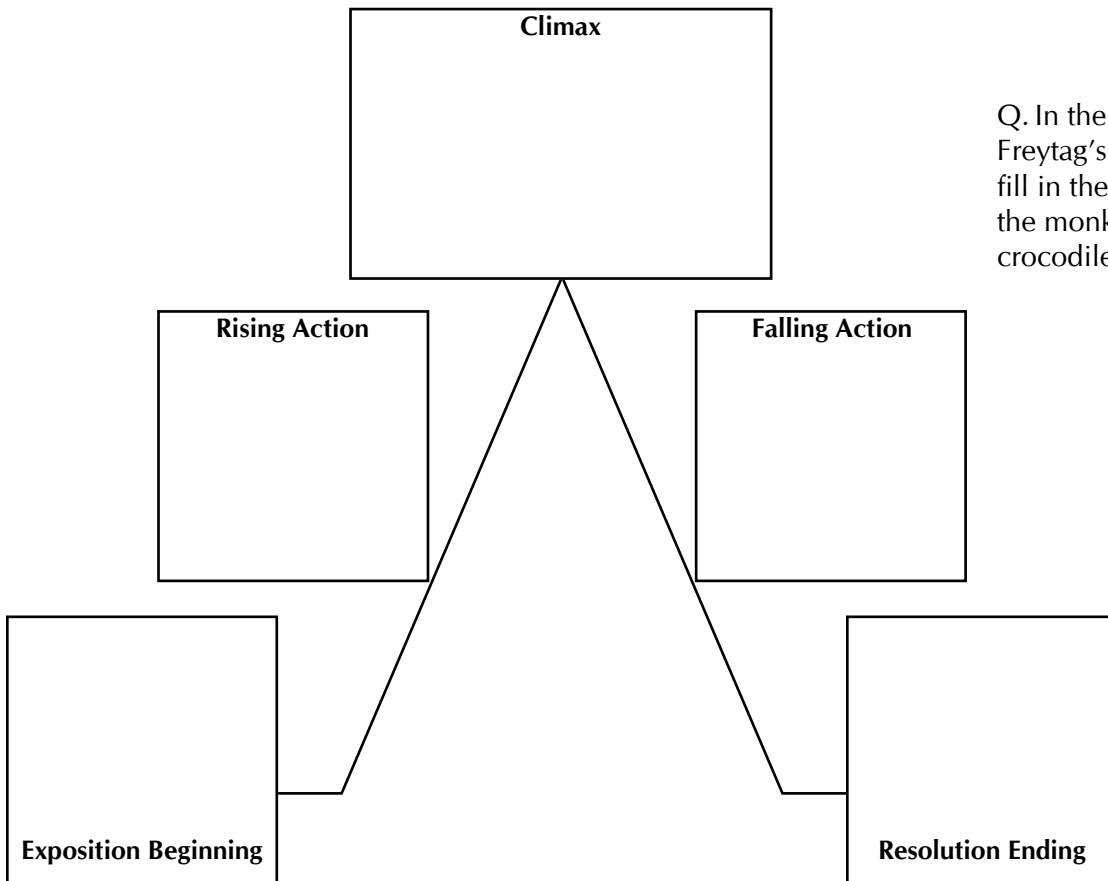
Editing is another important part of writing. Let your students practice editing. Find short passages for editing from the internet or other sources that your students can edit. They can also edit each other's writing.

Given below is a paragraph on the cow. Edit it. While editing you may delete or combine sentences. Take care of the pronouns, subject-verb agreement and appropriacy of the vocabulary chosen.

The cow is a successful animal. Also, he is quadruped, and because he is female, he give milk, but will do so when he is got child. He is same like God, sacred to Hindus and useful to man. But he has got four legs together. Two are forward and two are afterwards. His whole body can be utilised for use. More so the milk. What can it do? Various ghee, butter, cream, curd, why and the condensed milk and so forth. Also he is useful to cobbler, watermans and mankind generally He is incessantly in the meadows in the grass." His only attacking and defending organ is the horn, specially so when he is got child. This is done by knowing his head whereby he causes the weapons to be paralleled to the ground of the earth and instantly proceed with great velocity forwards. "This is the cow."

Activity 3

Analyzing is yet another aspect of writing, especially a story. Freytag's triangle developed by Gustav Freytag in the mid 19th century can help students analyze a story in terms of exposition, raising action, climax, falling action and denounrment. **Exposition** is the beginning where characters are introduced



Q. In the following Freytag's triangle fill in the details of the monkey and the crocodile story.

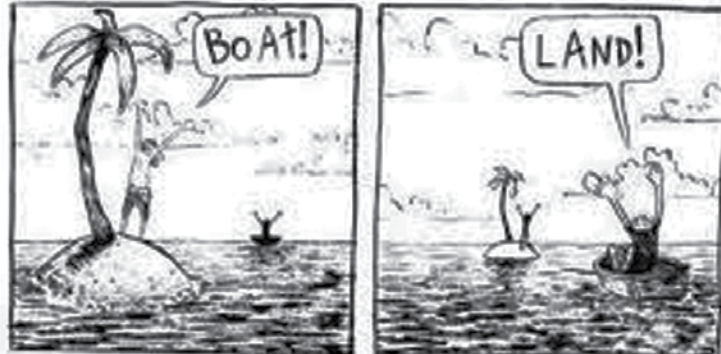
and the story is set. In the **Raising Action** stage there is often a complication. **Climax** is what occurs in the middle of the story. The story reaches the point of greatest tension. At the **Falling Action** stage, the complications in the story are ironed out leading to the **Denouement** or end. For example, in Cinderella’s story the **Exposition** is: Cinderella lives with the stepmother and sisters in a very unhappy situation. **Raising Action:** They get an invitation to the ball from the palace and the stepmother and sisters plan to go. Cinderella also decides to go and reaches the palace dressed by a fairy godmother. **Climax:** Prince falls in love with Cinderella and decides to marry her. **Falling Action:** The clock strikes twelve and Cinderella runs back home leaving her slipper behind. **Denouement:** The Prince finds Cinderella and marries her.

Activity 4

Imagination, one more element of writing a story. ‘Jack and Jill’ is a very famous rhyme that you must have recited as a child. Why do you think such young kids were sent to fetch water? Think of different reasons and write a paragraph.

Activity 5

Different people have different perspectives. In the picture below you see one such situation where there are two different perspectives. Imagine yourself in one of the positions in the picture and write your feelings. Include what your situation is, how you are feeling and how the other person's situation is better than yours.



Activity 6

Topic sentences

A topic sentence identifies the main idea of a paragraph. Every paragraph should include a topic sentence. A topic sentence also states the point the writer wishes to make about that subject. Generally, the topic sentence appears at the beginning of the paragraph. A paragraph's topic sentence must be general enough to express the overall subject, but specific enough that the reader understands the paragraph's main subject and point. A topic sentence has two parts – a topic and a controlling idea. The topic is WHAT the paragraph is going to be about and the controlling idea explains WHY the paragraph is being written.

For example: Dogs make lovely pets because they help you live longer.

The topic: Dogs make lovely pets

The controlling idea: they help you live longer.

Divide the following sentences into topic and controlling ideas.

- There are many reasons why pollution in India is the worst in the world.
- There are many possible factors to global warming.
- It is the responsibility of the police to educate children about good behaviour.
- There has been evidence that the use of modern gadgets by young people does in fact increase their creativity.

Topic	Controlling Idea
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	

Activity 7

Coherence and cohesion

A paragraph is coherent if all sentences are arranged in a clear logical order. You can make a sentence coherent by arranging ideas logically and by linking sentences together. Cohesion is the flow of sentences and paragraphs from one to another. It involves the tying together of one information to another. Arrange the following sentences in proper sequence to get a coherent paragraph.

- a. Men have the thirst to conquer the impossible.
- b. The moon is an object in space, attractive enough to be colonized.
- c. They want to turn impossible tasks into possible.
- d. The project was not attempted because of economic and technical reasons.
- e. However, many agencies are now interested and are thinking about it.
- f. But it was not so easy.
- g. It became possible in 1969.
- h. Because of its attraction, they wanted to walk on the moon.
- i. But after that it appeared to them to be achievable to construct a colony on it.
- j. So, they thought that the moon would be the first object to be colonized.

Activity 8

Self-evaluation

Evaluating one's own writing before submitting any written work is very important. Look at the following points and check whether you did all or most of the following:

1. I brainstorm ideas before writing. _____
2. I clearly write the general purpose of my written communications in the initial paragraph _____
3. I sort through and organize information to be included in my written communications (e.g., organize by topic, source, problem, or time frame). _____
4. I outline (in writing) the sequence or structure of my written communications. _____
5. I quickly and correctly choose words that clearly express the intended meaning. _____
6. I do not repeat myself needlessly in my writing. _____
7. My sentences express one main idea. _____
8. I use clear topic sentences. _____
9. I use cohesive devices to lead from one paragraph to another. _____
10. I use an outline form or subheadings to structure my written communication. _____
11. I check spelling, punctuation and grammar while editing. _____

This worksheet has been developed by Ratna Rao. She is working with the Institute of Technology, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, as Asst. Professor. She can be reached at <ratnarao25@gmail.com>.