

Writing Exercise #2

Here is another no prep, easy writing exercise to keep up your children's writing skills. Originally posted at <https://kellybagdanov.com/2020/04/06/another-no-prep-writing-exercise>

Collect 10 Mystery Items

Take a bag and walk around your house picking up 10 random items. Use what you have. A good mix of toys, familiar objects, and a couple of odd items will make this more fun.

Have a conversation

All writing exercises should begin with a conversation to get the ball rolling. For this exercise you want to have a discussion with your students about all of the kinds of writing we come across each day. Advertisements, letters, recipes, instruction manuals, story books, and articles online are just a few of the ideas kids will likely share.

Next tell the kids that they will be taking a 'mystery item' out of your bag and writing about it. Explain that they will have 5 options about what to write about the item they pull from the bag. These 5 options are: a description, an instruction manual, an advertisement, a poem, or a story.

Choose one of these 5 options

Let's dig into our options a bit more. Parents can choose to do one of these options each day, or let students choose which option they want to try.

Description

Basic: Students write a detailed description of the item they have pulled from the bag. They can illustrate their description if they love to draw.

Next Level: Have each student, or a student and parent, pull an item from the bag without letting anyone else see what they have chosen. Keeping their chosen item a secret, they write a detailed description without naming the item. Come back together and have each person read their description and see if anyone can guess what they were describing.



Instruction Manual

Basic: Have kids write out an instruction manual for the item they have pulled from the bag. Have them consider things like safety, inappropriate uses, and step by step instructions. Humor is always appreciated.

Next Level: Once students have written their instruction manual have the student give the item to another family member. The family member must follow the instructions to the letter. This generally leads to a lot of laughter. (You can decide what guidelines you need in place with your child to keep this activity safe, fun, and appropriate.)

Advertisement

Basic: Have kids mock-up an ad for the item they have pulled out of the bag. Have them include a picture of the item, a slogan and a few lines convincing the public that they really need this item in their lives.

Next Level: If students are old enough this is a great exercise to get in some computer practice. Have students create their ad in an online document. Any word processing program will work. They can play with fonts, clip in pictures etc.

Poetry

Basic: One of the easiest poems to do is an acrostic. Write the name of the item down the page, one letter per line. Then have the student write a word that begins with each letter that is descriptive of the item. (i.e. If I had a balloon, my first word would start with a b, second word with an a, etc.)

Next Level: If you have a book of children's poetry choose a poem to use as a model. Then start subbing out words to make the poem about the item. This also works well with songs. Take a simple song like, *The Wheels on the Bus*, and start subbing words to make the song about a balloon. Having a model to work from gives students some guidelines but allows for fun playing with language. It's far less intimidating than being told to, 'write a poem.'

Story

Basic: Have the student write a short story featuring their item. (If students are early writers have them write the beginning of the story, and then you act as scribe so that they can finish. Most early writers will give up on a story, not because they don't want to continue, but because they don't want to physically write anymore. Help them out.)

Next Level: Have the object tell the story from its point of view. Altering the point of view of a story brings new perspectives out and often provides humor. What story would a bubble wand or flash drive have to tell if they magically were given a voice?