

Session Guide: Collaborative writing

Session Outline

Description

This session will both provide learners with a potential conflict situation where they have to reach an agreement, and give them the opportunity to work collaboratively in a creative writing project. The session starts with a warmup language memory game, later, building on with a similar writing exercise. Learners will have to decide on a topic and plan for their story through a group discussion in which they will have to reach group decisions. They will write the start of the story collaboratively and have an opportunity to complete it independently.

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Develop team working skills.
- Make decisions and compromises collaboratively.
- Improve language and writing skills.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session learners will have:

- Engaged in a language game.
- Discussed the topic, plot and plan for a short story.
- Decided together on the plan for the story.
- Started writing the story collaboratively.
- Had an opportunity to complete their story.

Areas involved

- Language
 - Language games
 - Writing
- Life skills
 - Making decisions
 - Leadership



- Communication
- Conflict resolution

Activity: Memory Game

Objectives

- To have fun with a language game.
- To exercise their memory.

Expected Outcomes

Learners will have played a memory language game.

Teaching Instructions

Organise the learners so that there is a clear order they will follow in the game. The first learner starts by choosing a word that could be the start of a sentence. The next learner should repeat the first word and add a second word to the sentence. The next one repeats both words and extends the sentence with a third word. Each following learner has to recite the sentence and add a word to it until someone repeats the sentence incorrectly or is unable to add a word. Writing is not allowed and the sentence has to make sense in English. When a learner loses the game, the next learner simply starts again with another sentence.

Suggested Guidelines

- Discourage competition. This is meant to be a fun warmup for the next activity.
- Repeat the game enough times for every learner to have at least 3 attempts.

Activity: Selecting a Topic and Plot

Objectives

- To propose topics and possible plots for a story.
- To collaboratively select a topic and plot for a collaborative story.

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have discussed topics and plots for a collaborative writing exercise.



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- Learners will have found ways to decide on the topic and plot for the story.

Teaching Instructions

Explain the activity to the learners: They will collaboratively write a short story, in which groups will write a sentence or short paragraph each in order to write a collaborative short story. They first need to decide a topic for the story. Learners should discuss with each other and decide what the general story will be about.

Once the learners have agreed on a topic they should start thinking about smaller details. What will the plot be? Where and when will the story take place? How many and what type of characters will the story have (short story should not have many characters)? Will the characters have a specific type of personality? Pose these questions to the learners and as before let them make the decisions and define the plan for the story.

Suggested Guidelines

- Decision making and conflict resolution is a key objective of this activity. Try to minimally interfere with the discussion and decision making. It would be best to only come into the discussion if it's taking too long to encourage learners to make a decision.

Activity: Starting the Story

Objectives

- To collaboratively start writing a story.
- To be able to follow an agreed plan.
- To be adjustable and compromise if decisions are not what they hoped.

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have started to write a story as a group activity.

Teaching Instructions

Split the learners into groups of 3 or 4. One team should write the starting sentence for the story and share it with the group. The rest of the learners should be given the chance to propose small changes but ultimately it is the team's decision on what the starting sentence is. The next team then writes the next sentence or two, or even a short paragraph, and shares it with the group. Once again the rest of the learners should be given a chance to offer small



improvements but it is the suggesting team who holds the final decision. Continue until each team makes at least two suggestions.

Suggested Guidelines

- Provide some thinking time to each group before they share.
- Encourage changes so that the story is correctly written, follows the agreed plan or shows a clear improvement.
- Discourage changes for negative reasons.

Activity: Finishing the Story

Objectives

- To complete the story started as a group.
- To develop creative writing skills.

Expected Outcomes

- Learners will have completed the story.

Teaching Instructions

After having an agreed start to the story, learners should complete the story, sticking as much as possible to the agreed plot. There may not be much time for this, encourage learners to complete it independently and share it if they don't complete it within the session or if they would like to write an ending they are proud of.

