

# Being Creative with a Word Processor

Ideas for using a Word Processor with Children

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These are ideas built up over the years. Some ideas were developed while teaching, others have been suggested by teachers attending courses or workshops.

## **Interrupted Shared Story**

With a single computer in the room, start with two children at the computer and give them a topic to write about. The person on the right is typing while the person on the left reads and suggests ideas. At a random time stop them writing. The person typing returns to other activities, the 'reader' takes over the job as 'typer' and a new student becomes the 'reader'. All the time the students are trying to maintain story sequence. Keep interrupting until all children have contributed.

To use the same exercise in a computer lab, when you interrupt, get the 'typers' to move to the next computer and become the 'readers', each 'reader' stays at the computer but becomes the typer.

Lets say the topic was "How does the heart work?". What you end up with is a fun activity with each child actively reading another's viewpoint on the topic and yet taking ownership of the final document.

## **Preformatted Pages and Stationery**

For example, a pre-formatted page for news articles ( masthead and narrow columns ). Extend to having the headlines and the students fill in the story. Letters, centred poetry, meeting minutes, etc. pre typed headings to instil structure.

## **Science Labels**

Objects / experiments needing descriptive labels. Text boxes can be placed over images and when the student is confident of their labels that can be printed or save as a permanent record.

## Prompted Writing

Instructions for a piece of writing are typed in, double spaced into a word processor document and then saved as a template. The students load the file and fill in the gaps. The instructions are removed before printing or saving. For example, instructions for writing a cinquain.

### Writing a Cinquain

Type your information below each instruction. When finished, delete the instructions leaving only what you have typed.

**Use one word to name a subject**

**Write two words to describe it**

**Add three action words about it**

**Put in a four or five word phrase describing the subject (a thought, not a complete sentence)**

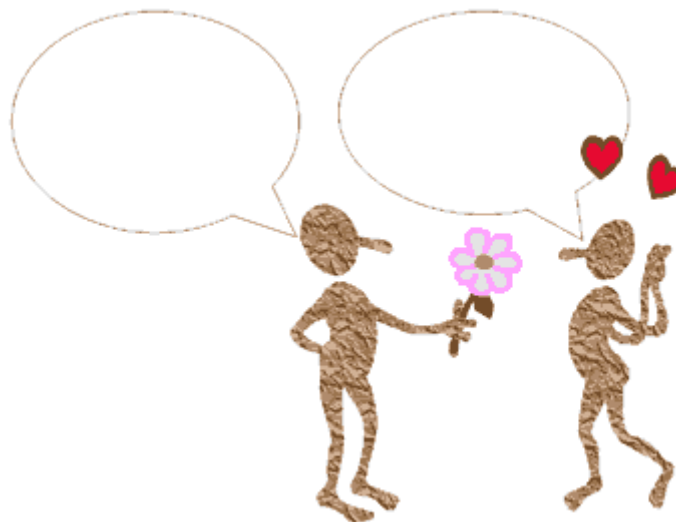
**Add one word that means the same thing as the first word, or a word that sums it all up.**

## Map of Ideas

As for prompted writing, the students write a sentence beneath one word headings. For example the 5 senses. Cut and paste to form the basis of a story or poem. Put the ideas on separate lines and delete / edit until a story sequence is formed.

## Cartoon Captions or Speech Bubbles

Cartoon drawings waiting for captions or with empty speech bubbles ready for text.



## Font Codes

Students write a sentence including pictures from an icon/symbol based font. Another student deciphers it.

I heard the 🕒✓ it was dark,  
the 🌙 and ★ were out. I put on  
my 🕶️ turned on the 📺 and  
began to 📺. Suddenly 🚪  
opened, a ✈️ flew past and the  
📞🔔 all at the same moment.

## Styled Writing

Let students go overboard with the style menu to add emphasis to match what they have written. For example: the **tall** tree *bent* in the **strong** wind.

## Cloze Activities

Put "\*\*\*\*\*" in place of several words - get the students to put in words that work in those places. Extend to using the search / replace feature of the word processor

## Pick-A-Path Find

Using the find feature to create a pick-a-path story. Students use a code for each page. The reader is instructed to find the code if they say 'yes' etc. For example: **Do you open the door? Yes \*\*\* , No...**

## Story Beginnings / Endings

Story beginnings and/or endings pre-typed. The children themselves can create these.

## Punctuation Passage

This can be a passage requiring punctuation or with incorrect punctuation. The advantage with this compared to paper based proofing is that the corrections replace the mistake without leaving marks all over the page.

## Thesaurus Passage

Underline words or phrases and get the students to replace them with their own. This is similar to a cloze activity only the meaning of the sentence has already been established. For example: A big bus turned in front of the fast car.

## Sequencing

A set of sentences that have been jumbled - the students move them around using cut and paste (or highlight and drag) until the sentences are in the correct sequence.

## Words in words

Students change the style of any words they find inside other words.

For example: **information**

## Acrostics

Written

Oral

Read

Descriptive

## Tense Activities

Students change the tense of a sentence from past to present etc. Take a whole paragraph and convert it to a different tense. This does not have to be a language exercise. By changing the tense of a paragraph about a scientific topic there has to be real understanding of the content.

## TXT

Students convert a descriptive sentence about a topic into TXT form and another student or group of students convert it back again. Build up a library of these as a game.

## Other possible activities

Palindromes, changing an advertising jingle, song writing.....