

WriteWays is a series of template-based lessons for developing writing skills. Teachers are granted full permission to download, adapt and apply the templates and lesson suggestions in whatever way they see fit, so long as the materials are not used or distributed for commercial purposes.

Each unit follows a similar approach and progression of activities:

1. **A pre-lesson writing task** for learners to complete, which will provide learner-generated content and learning goals for the teacher to use in the unit that follows;
2. **A writing skills lesson** working from discovery and noticing towards specific skills at sentence, paragraph or whole-text level, with opportunities to do targeted practice and re-writes;
3. **Opportunities to integrate writing** with other language skills and facilitate sharing of written work with other classmates.

This forms the “core” of the templates and lesson sequencing. The following teacher’s guide demonstrates how I personally would use the materials and approach in a majority of teaching situations. However, the templates are designed in a way that allows teachers to pick and choose what they like or want the lessons to focus on, by adding to and adapting anything in the Microsoft Word or (editable) PDF versions of the lessons.

Unit 3 Introduction

This unit presents a template for:

- Continuing the theme from Units 1 and 2 of students **writing about things relevant to their own lives**, and sharing this information with others;
- Addressing a text-level writing skill (in this case: **writing a simple introductory email about oneself**).

Page 11:

A Pre-lesson task

This page is designed to be applied **before** the main lesson itself, one or more days prior to using pages 12-15 so that teachers can look at, think about and use parts of the learners’ own written

production for the main lesson that follows.

It could be applied immediately following completion of **Unit 2** (an option is also provided in the TG for that unit to merge the pre-task onto the end of the lesson materials), or according to whatever schedule the teacher has decided on for writing skills.

The template asks the learners to **write an email to introduce themselves to a new e-pal** (as in, like a digital version of the pen-pal).

It is important to let the learners tackle this on their own, using whatever writing ability they currently have at their disposal.

Given that the “e-pal” is presumably fictional (at least at this point), the teacher might like to point out that this is like a rehearsal for the real deal. It might even be an alternative to have the learners ‘create’ e-pal personalities from other countries as the addressee for their mail.

Other teachers might use this unit as a follow up to actually securing e-pals for the students in other countries, by connecting with other classroom teachers through things like Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Note also that there is a chance to do the e-pal style introduction for real with other classmates towards the end of the unit.

When learners have completed the task, gather them up and examine them to see:

- (a) How well the learners can write a simple but informative self-introduction about themselves in e-mail format (with **appropriate style and greetings** and **content gathered into main ideas in paragraph form**);
- (b) How well the learners are continuing to apply the **basic punctuation rules** from Unit 1 (and whether this needs some additional review or practice);
- (c) How well the learners are continuing to apply basic paragraphs skills from Unit 2 (with **run on sentences** and **breaks between separate paragraphs**).

If the learners do exhibit some problems or gaps with **(a)**, then the skill focus for the rest of the template will be fine to apply. If, on the other hand, these aspects of basic e-mails do not appear to represent an area of learning need, you might like to come up with a different text-level writing skill to work with.

Whichever way the teacher chooses to go with this, from here he/she can look through the learners’ initial writing and use it to generate content for **Part C** on page 12 (calling for a model e-mail sample for students to apply noticing and discovery skills). See the previous units in terms of taking care to protect the identities of students in any samples used (if this could appear to be an issue).

Page 12

A New E-pal UNIT 3

B Try to remember what you wrote in your e-mail from (A). Share the information with a partner.

C Read the email.

To: -> Insert fictional email address here
From: -> Insert fictional email address here
Insert example e-mail text here...

D Try to figure it out...

1. How many paragraphs are there in the email?
2. What is the main idea or topic for each paragraph?

WriteWays Level 1 Design by Jason Renshaw <http://jasonrenshaw.typepad.com>

aspects of basic e-mail style as well as the ideas involved in **grouping details into separate paragraphs**.

Here is an example of such an input/sample text for this e-mail:

To: -> tony@brasil.netwiz
From: -> gloria@ukmailglom.net

Hi Tony.

My name is Gloria. I'm 13 years old. I live in Geelong in Australia. There are four people in my family: my parents, younger brother, and me. We're pretty close.

My favourite book is Artemis Fowl. My favourite movie is Avatar. I like to play basketball and soccer.

My school is called Newtown Primary School. It's in the central part of Geelong, close to where I live. My favourite subject is Science.

My neighbourhood is called Newtown. It's a nice place to live. There are a lot of trees and nice shops to visit. The people are quite friendly there.

I hope you'll mail me back and tell me about yourself!

Sincerely,
Gloria

B Discussion/sharing

This asks students to talk in pairs or small groups and share (through casual discussion) what they can recall writing about in (A). In some ways it is schema-activation, but given it may have been a day or more since the pre-lesson task was completed, this creates a good opportunity to connect and recall before doing the targeted lesson that follows.

C Input/Sample Text

This part of the lesson requires preparation and editing in advance by the teacher, as previewed in the TG section for (A) above. We want a single example of an e-mail here which showcases

The idea here is to work with some of the content samples provided by the students in (A) above, then use them to generate a good example of an email that uses proper style and some of the content foci that have already been worked on with units 1 and 2.

D Skill Discovery Prompts

The prompts here encourage students to examine and engage with the sample email to see what they can notice about it. The prompts here may need changing if you have decided to feature a different text-level skill for the materials to focus on.

E Writing Skill: Writing e-mails to new friends.

E-mail is a great way to introduce yourself to people in other countries. Your e-mail should have a friendly **greeting** (start) and **goodbye** (end). It can use paragraphs to show different kinds of information about you.

F Writing Preparation: Make three questions to go with each main idea:

- Personal/Family** Q1: _____ Q2: _____ Q3: _____
- Favourite things** Q1: _____ Q2: _____ Q3: _____
- School stuff** Q1: _____ Q2: _____ Q3: _____
- Neighbourhood** Q1: _____ Q2: _____ Q3: _____

G Writing Tip: Information Questions

- To ask for information, try using questions that start with **What / Where / Who / How**
- Look at the example e-mail in (C). What questions are answered there?

WriteWays Level 1 Design by Jason Renshaw <http://jasonrenshaw.typepad.com>

E Writing Skill

This is a brief (and hopefully clear) explanation of the lesson’s central skill or learning objective – in this case writing a basic e-mail with appropriate greetings and sign-offs, as well as paragraphs to cover separate ideas. As with (D) on page 12, it can be adapted to describe or demonstrate whatever writing skill you decide fits best here according to level of and the texts students generated in Part (A) in the pre-lesson activity.

This can serve as a reference point for the unit’s main skill. To help the learners ensure they understand it, have them refer back to the discovery activity in (D), input texts in (C), and original effort in (A) to make relevant connections and conclusions.

F Writing Preparation

The learners are given four general ‘bubbles’ here covering different sorts of personal information (note that three of them have already been practised to some degree in the previous two units, albeit only really at sentence and general paragraph level). Next to each topic/idea bubble are three open question slots. The general idea here is that students will try to come up with questions that could go with each main idea – questions they could ask to somebody to find out specific information related to those broad ideas.

The point of having these questions here serves three purposes:

- It encourages them to start thinking in an ‘interactive’ or ‘get to know’ mood;
- It gives them important practice with forming questions in English (in terms of grammar/vocabulary);
- These questions can later be applied to themselves to help them generate a more informative e-mail for the re-write in (H), and by extension, the learners are exposed to the simple strategy of asking themselves questions to help them come up with good/interesting content in their writing.

G Writing Tip: Info Questions

These are some additional tips and reminders about choosing and building good questions for this sort of activity.

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Writing lines have been provided in a way that helps signify paragraph breaks. It is important that the learners incorporate what they have learned about basic sentence-level punctuation and the basics of paragraph formation when composing this email rewrite.

The way this unit has been set up, learners can recycle the topics and sentences they used in previous units (and previous parts of this unit), but put them together in a cohesive way to create a full e-mail based around the idea of introducing oneself.

The example e-mail in (C) follows the same structure and approach, including a range of sentence patterns the learners may wish to incorporate into their own writing.

H Rewrite

The learners now have a chance to rewrite their initial e-mail of introduction to a prospective e-pal.

In addition to the greeting, they can draw on the topically organised questions they generated in (F) and basically answer their own questions in order to build paragraphs oriented around certain main ideas.

The writing page here also features small tags alongside each paragraph allocation, to remind students of the main idea they might write about in a particular paragraph (and as a reference to the relevant section of questions in (F) above).

However, being an adaptable template, teachers should feel free to adapt the main ideas proposed in whatever way best suits the levels and interests of their students.

For classrooms with access to computers and Internet/e-mail, it may be a preferable option to make this an actual e-mail task at this point (instead of a paper-based one). Teachers might like to have students type out their e-mails, using the pages here as a basic visual guideline, and send them in to the teacher for checking.

I Classroom Connection 1

This activity connects to the work done in (F) above. If students have used the questions they generated in (F) to help them write better introductory e-mails in (H), now they can use those same questions to find out things about their classmates.

This is an interview-style activity, with students asking the questions they made in (F) to a classmate, then writing down the relevant information they hear in response.

In addition to being much more communicative, this activity brings more in the way of integrated skills into the overall lesson.

J Paragraph Composition

This is a follow up to the work completed in (I) and (F) above, and involves each learner choosing one of the main ideas (hence three questions) from (I), looking at the responses they jotted down for a classmate, then slotting that information together into a basic cohesive paragraph (with run-on sentences).

These paragraphs could then be read out loud to the class, possibly with student names removed so that the class could try to guess who the paragraph refers to.

K Classroom Connection 2

The suggestion here is for the learners to review the work they completed in (H), then type out and send their introduction to a classmate as an actual e-mail.

Alternatively, if the appropriate connections have been made with teachers and learners in other contexts, this could involve sending the introductory e-mails to actual prospective e-pals in other places.

*For tips and ideas on how to address spelling and grammar/vocabulary issues in learners' writing efforts, please refer to the separate Writing Ways resource title (plus adaptable materials) **Spelling and Language Development**.*