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Write Away

**Writing Practice Activities
for the Student of English
as a Foreign Language**

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

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Writing Practice Activities
for the Student of English
as a Foreign Language

Revised Edition

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TO THE TEACHER

This booklet of writing activities for the student of English as a foreign language is intended to provide supplementary, non-structured material which may be used in various ways to introduce writing practice in the EFL classroom at intermediate and advanced levels. Rather than a conventional type of textbook to teach composition, it is a teacher's aid, designed to be used to implement and augment writing practice that is suggested or needed in the basic curriculum.

The collection of illustrations upon which these writing activities are based have been selected for their range of interesting topics and universal appeal, in the hope that they will spark interest, stimulate conversation, and ultimately motivate the student to *want* to write, to express his or her reactions or thoughts on paper.

The types of writing practice include exposition, explanation, narration—all of which may help reinforce the other language skills. In one instance the student is asked to compose a poem and in another to describe a technical process based on a diagram. Thus, a variety of “stimulator” devices has been used in an effort to provide material that will appeal to a wide range of interests.

While experimental in nature, WRITE AWAY has been prepared in the hope that it will prove helpful to EFL teachers looking for additional, new material to enliven and enrich their teaching of writing skills in English.

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HOW MUCH DO YOU
WEIGH?

WEIGHT AND FORTUNE

PATENT
APPLIED
FOR

NO SPRINGS

DROP
COIN
HERE

NO SPRINGS
THIS SCALE IS TESTED WITH
U.S. STANDARD WEIGHTS

TURN KNOB AT RIGHT
UNTIL RED LINE
IS BETWEEN RED LINES
THEN DROP COIN

HOW MUCH DO YOU WEIGH?

This automatic weighing scale tells your weight for a penny (one cent). It also tells your fortune. The instructions ask you to turn the knob until you reach the desired question before you insert the penny.

Exercises

- I Make up a question about your future which you would like to have answered. (Don't be too serious!) Write the question on a small piece of paper. The teacher will collect all the questions and redistribute them so that each student receives a question written by another student. When you receive the question of another student, write a one- or two-sentence reply to the question. When all the students have finished writing their replies, the teacher will have each student read aloud the question and then the reply he has written.

Examples: Question: Should I change jobs?
Answer: Be patient. Things will improve.

Question: Does he (she) love me?
Answer: Only time will tell!

- II As in Exercise I above, make up a question about your future. On a separate piece of paper, make up a general answer not specifically related to your own question. (See the two sample answers in Exercise I.) The teacher will collect the questions and distribute them among the members of the class. Then, the teacher will instruct each class member to read his question and the answer he has written. The results should be amusing!
- III Make up a general answer such as you did in Exercise II above. Read your answer aloud. The teacher will then ask each member of the class to write three questions that could fit your reply.

Examples: Answer: You will know before long.
Question: Will I get lucky?
Question: Should my son study abroad?
Question: Can I trust my uncle?



CHECKMATE

I Select the sentences that might apply to the photograph. Copy them.

- (a) The old man is playing chess.
- (b) He is thinking about the game.
- (c) The old man is sleeping.
- (d) He is winning.
- (e) He is losing the game.
- (f) He is talking to his friend.
- (g) The man is wearing a hat.
- (h) The old man is playing a game.
- (i) He is wearing a sweater.
- (j) He is resting his head in his hand.

II Using the -ing form, create other sentences of your own about the scene in the photograph.

III Combine appropriate sentences in Parts I & II to form a descriptive paragraph, using such connectives as *and*, *or*, *but*, *however*.

IV Rewrite the paragraph of Part III by changing the verbs to the past progressive form or the simple past form as usage dictates.

V Fill in the blanks using words from the sentences in part I. Copy the complete sentence.

- 1. He is _____ a watch.
- 2. Another _____ is watching the game.
- 3. _____ is wearing sunglasses.
- 4. The old _____ is wearing a tie.
- 5. They are playing _____.
- 6. _____ are taking their time.
- 7. He is _____ about his next move.



LEARNING ABOUT PLANTS

- I Answer the following questions that are based on what you see in the picture. A list of words to help you with your answers is given below.
- How many people do you see? What are they doing?
 - Describe what each person has in his right hand.
 - What is the teacher doing with a pencil? What do you think he is saying?
 - What is on the table?
 - Describe the boy on the right.

Word List

pointing	curly	cup
plant	spoon	leaf
sweater	holding	leaves
stripes	soil	stem
sleeve	bowl	

- II Combine the answers you have given in Part I into a descriptive paragraph of what you see in the picture.
- III Do you like to study plants? Write a paragraph of about 50-75 words explaining your reasons for liking or not liking to study plants.
- IV Write five questions of your own about the three persons in the picture, and then answer your own questions.



ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

- I This teacher is comforting one of her small pupils. Write a composition of 100-150 words in which you describe what you think caused the little girl to cry and what the teacher may have said to comfort her. You may want to use dialogue as part of your composition.
- II Describe the teacher and her pupil: physical qualities and dress.



THE HOMECOMING

The Logan family was waiting for Susan at the airport. She finally arrived at 7:00 p.m., and was greeted with affectionate hugs and kisses. Susan hugged her sister, Amy, while her brother, Larry, smiled happily. Her uncle Stephen stood in the doorway with a wide grin on his face. With pleased expressions on their faces, Susan's mother and her sister, Lucy, stood by watching her hugging Amy. Her young cousin, Alfred, peered curiously from his position in front of Larry, wondering what all the excitement was about! It was truly a happy occasion!

- I Copy the sentences above and change the verbs to the present tense.
- II Describe Larry.
- III Which of the following expressions might be heard during this scene at the airport?
 - (a) It's good to be home!
 - (b) Where have you been?
 - (c) Did you enjoy the train ride?
 - (d) How wonderful to see you!
 - (e) We certainly missed you!
 - (f) When are you leaving?
 - (g) Welcome home! It's been a long time!
 - (h) How are you?
 - (i) Do you want anything?
 - (j) How long is it?
- IV **Dialogue.** Write a dialogue of 6-8 lines in which Susan, Amy, Alfred, and Uncle Stephen speak. You may use your own expressions and combine them with some of those found in Part III above.
- V Answer the following questions in complete sentences.
 1. Who has come home? What time did she arrive?
 2. How many people are at the airport to meet Susan?
 3. Name the members of Susan's family.
 4. Who is hugging Susan?
 5. What is Susan wearing on her left wrist?
 6. Where is Alfred?
 7. What is Larry doing?



O, HOW I LIKE TO GO UP IN A SWING!

Long, sunny days and no school! What could be better for two friends to share than the thrill of flying high on a swing?

Exercise: Complete the narrative in your own words either as a descriptive essay or as a dialogue.

GLORIA AND NORMA, HAPPY TO BE TOGETHER . . . (to be completed)

Exercise: Describe each of the girls.

Exercise: Write a short poem six or eight lines long in which you speak of the joys of summertime or of swinging or of whatever inspires you! Some rhyming words you may want to use are given below.

King/flip/sing/wing	air/fair/hair/pair/stair
bright/light/sight/height	day/gay/lay/may/ray/stay/way/play
thrill/spill/fill/will/hill	glad/had/sad/bad
spend/send/friend/pretend	free/see/bee/tree/glee
sky/I/my/fly/why/try/cry	

Other expressions you might find useful are:

love to	enjoy
high in the sky	come and go
to and fro	summer breeze/leafy trees
like to	up in the blue

The following lines from a poem by William Allingham also may suggest other possibilities for your poem:

Swing, swing,
Sing, sing.
Here's my throne, and I am a king!
Swing, sing,
Swing, sing,
Farewell Earth, for I'm on the wing!

Low, high,
Here I fly,
Like a bird through sunny sky . . .