

TEACHING EFFECTIVE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION by Ingrid Freebairn

Ingrid Freebairn is a well-known and highly-respected author with years of experience in ELT. Together with Brian Abbs, Ingrid has written many of our most successful courses, including Sky, Snapshot, Blueprint, Flying Start, Discoveries and Strategies. As well as teaching, teacher-training and writing, Ingrid has also worked as an examiner for The University of Cambridge and an inspector of private language schools for the British Council. In the course of her work, she has travelled widely in Europe, the US and Latin America.

Learning English for most students is about being able to speak it. Writing rarely gets the attention it deserves.

Why writing is unpopular

- Unnatural
- Difficult skill in own language
- Numerous occasions for errors
- Demoralizing
- No relation to real life

Why writing is important

1. for everyday communication:
 - texting, tweeting, emailing
 - posting on Facebook
 - contributing to an online forum
 - writing and commenting on blogs
 - writing a review
2. for consolidation
3. for exams

Traditional types of writing tasks

- informal letter
- email
- semi-formal /formal letter
- narrative text
- review of a book or film
- report

How to develop effective writing skills

- 1 **Model:** a good model text that is simple and displays the important features of that text type.
- 2 **Focus:** narrow the focus to one or two elements so not confusing.
- 3 **Guidance:** give clear instructions and guidance regarding the purpose of the writing, the information they need to give, and the internal structure if relevant.
- 4 **Outcomes:** e.g. a collaborative poster or blog for others to read.

Writing tips

- Link writing to real life communication, e.g. get students to write texts, emails, comments, blogs.
- Keep the topics and issues within their range of interest and experience.
- Give time to prepare orally. Let students brainstorm ideas in pairs or groups first.
- Help students by writing the beginning of the task together in class, with different students contributing different parts.
- Make sure students read through their work before handing it in: checking in turn for spelling, punctuation, grammar, choice of words.
- When marking, try to encourage self-correction by using symbols to indicate the type of error.
- If the written task is a project, get students to work collaboratively so that they share responsibility for different parts of it.
- Display finished work in class or in a class magazine.
- Praise as much as possible. Remind students: you don't have to be perfect to earn praise. You just have to work to the best of your ability.

For more teacher training videos and expert tips go to:
www.PearsonELT.com/upbeat

MOTIVATING TEENAGE LEARNERS

Come back regularly for our latest updates!

PEARSON