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TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING AT SCHOOL (EXERCISES TO PROVOKE INTEREST TO LEARNING)

Summary. The article offers a set of particular tasks and exercises which help a teacher of English as a foreign language to inspire the learners for effective creative writing.

Key words: creativity, writing, limerick, listed poem, herring-bone associations technique, creative visualization.

Teachers are aware that their pupils have different learning abilities and they are to find a balance which helps and encourages both gifted and average children. Moreover we should keep in mind that rather a big group of pupils are slow enough, accordingly, they need and deserve teachers' attention. We'd like to share some exercises on developing writing activities, both in poetry and essay writing, which encourages pupils' participation through creativity, imagination and writing. At all ages people want to know as much as possible about themselves and the way others percept them. Creative writing helps us all discover the world we live in.

Life proved that students need to be exposed to activities, which give them independence & autonomy, help them to increase their awareness of how to study more effectively, thus raising their motivation & improving or strengthening their friendship relations with classmates & native speakers. We bring up pupils & students through asking for their emotions, arguments & opinions in order to stimulate skills necessary to brainstorm topics, debate issues, express views & comment on the opinions of others, etc., to love Nature & Human Beings, encouraging their desire and ability to protect both. That is why we focus on socio-political, historical, cultural and moral aspects of English-speaking countries through debates, creative writing, making translations of the best samples of the of English-speaking countries poetry into the pupils' mother tongue.

The following exercises, which are described and analyzed below, will inspire every pupil or student in your class to actively participate in creative writing and have fun doing it. Just try these types of exercise and activities, and find that your students will, surely, like them.

Creative writing has been mentioned above as one of the crucial points of the teaching-learning process. To begin with, we should keep in mind certain levels in writing skills. They are: *controlled writing (elementary level), guided writing (descriptions, completing ,gap filling, substitutions, writing to model tasks)* and at last *free writing (letter, story, description writing tasks, etc.)* the highest point, that is independent or free writing is the top of creative work. We can suggest some exercises and share the experience on successful creative writing. It is very important to attract students' attention and to motivate them so various extraordinary tasks are suggested.

Poets are known to use images (an image is a mental picture in words) when they write poems. The five kinds of images are based on sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. If you want to write a good poem and "eat" it, don't forget to both compare and discuss the similarities and differences between the humans and nonhumans.

Comparisons add special flavour to the poem on the topic "Cooking". Do you remember them?

- as hungry as a bear
- as free as a bird
- as weak as a kitten
- as flat as a pancake
- as pretty as a picture
- as old as the hills
- as wise as an owl
- as strong as an ox
- as high as the moon
- as high as a kite

Your own comparisons will attract special attention.

In your topic sentence you usually begin with the theme of the poem. In the rest of the paragraphs you suggest details about each element of the theme. The title is of special importance. It tells us that the theme (the fruit) is symbolic. It makes a hint that we're going to enjoy a juicy, ripe, nutritious piece of fruit. You may for instance invite the reader to lick it. When you do it, you're sure there's nothing to throw away — no stem or core, or rind or pit, or seed or skin. In other words, every word in your poem is important and necessary.

Writing tasks

Step 1

Controlled Writing (copying)	
copy (letters, words, sentences)	find words in one word
look and write	make up as many words as you can using the letters of one word
label	crosswords

Step 2

Guided Writing (a lot of input from the teacher)	
describe a picture using key words	reorder words
complete sentences	substitution
fill in	altering writing to model
answer the questions	correct the facts
dictation	gap filling
find words in a puzzle , write them in columns according to categories	making plans to stories

Step 3

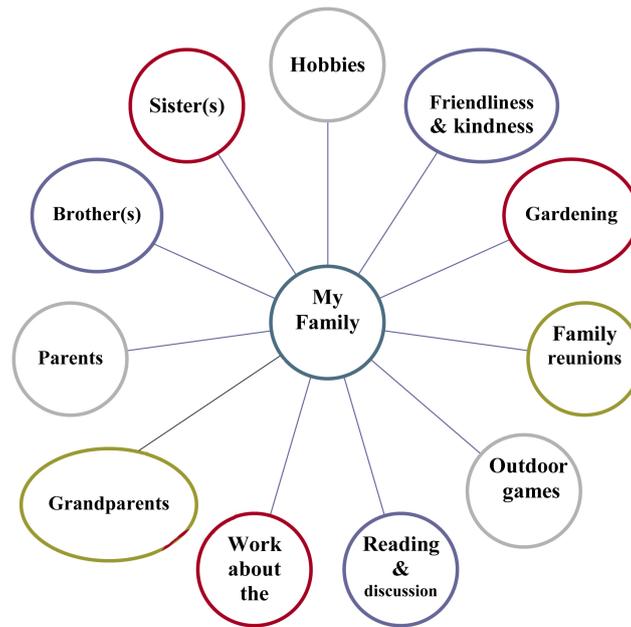
Independent (Free) Writing	
a letter to a pen friend	greeting cards
a shopping list	composing riddles
puzzles	writing paragraphs
games	acrostics
stories	instructions
recipes	descriptions
invitations	writing articles

Steps of Independent (free) Writing

1. Choose a topic (e.g. My Family).
2. List words on the topic.
e.g.: **Words on the topic**

My Family		
Parents	Devotion	Picnicing
Sister(s)	Friendliness & kindness	Outdoor games
Grandparents	Hobbies	Work about the house
Watching TV	Happiness	Family traditions
Brother(s)	Family reunions	Computer games
Reading & discussion	Gardening	Jokes

- List or group important facts.
Use your list or group of facts to help you write.
5. Write sentences on the topic.
Spell words the best you can.
Revise.
Read aloud.
Does it sound?
Make changes.
 8. Check.
 - Capitals
 - Punctuation
 - Spelling
 9. Publish
 - Make a neat copy.
 - **Share it with others.**



a) Training exercises:

Don't be afraid to make rhymes to the words, like:

- Fun– run
- Wall-hall-fall
- Cloud –loud
- Fight –night
- Park -dark
- Goose – loose
- Where –hair, etc.

An ode to an object

You may ask the students to write short answers, one below the other, to the following questions or prompts.

- Name an object you'd like to write about.
- Write two adjectives to describe it.
- Where it is.
- Repeat its name.
- What is it doing?
- How is it doing?
- Repeat where it is.
- Repeat two adjectives.
- Add two more adjectives.
- Repeat the name again.

Example:

The Moon

Bright and silver

In the night sky.

The moon

Spinning through space

Silently, slowly

In the night sky.

Bright, silver

Shinning but lost

The moon.

Guided poems

Calendar colours – Images can create moods and impressions about the seasons, e.g. August is yellow. Butter's melting on sweet corn.

Write a brief image of your own for each month of the year.

(Month) is (colour)
(an idea for the colour and the season)

When you have images for all twelve months, use them to make a poetry calendar or, as a group, combine images about the same months or seasons.

List Poems

Use single words to create a picture about a topic. Students brainstorm words about a topic. The board is filled with words and then the class selects the 7 best words which are written under each other to form the list poem.

Example:

- Green
- Warm
- Butterflies
- Swing set
- Biker
- No snow
- Rain

The "herring-bone" of associations

This exercise allows activating quickly words taken from several associative fields. The exercise begins with a starting word the function of which can be performed by any noun. Below the starting

word one should write down in a column other nouns produced from it by random association. After 20–30 seconds a testee has to “switch” over to a new column: from the first column one takes a word, for example the third one, and, uses it as a starting word, write down the word derived from it by association. Then, using the second column, one should make a new switch, and this should be done 5–6 times within 2–3 minutes. Commands for switching are to be given by the teacher.

Example:

The starting word is **LAMP**.

lamp flat master task flowers
 glass furniture paint need rendezvous
 light house novelty gift gladness
 room repair money idea friend
 evening guest time work shop
 comfort meeting dirt patent queue

Younger children can perform this task orally by answering questions asked by their teacher. The questions can be as follows: what words are you recalling when you hear the word “wind”? Perhaps, a “snowflake”. Who or what are the friends of these words? The same exercise can be performed as a pictorial “dictation”.

The process of generating associations allows understanding the essence of an object better, since it reveals connections and relations of the object with its surroundings.

At considering associative complexes, we can distinguish two trends, which are: relations according to **metonymic type** (such as location, contiguity) and **metaphoric** ones (similarity) [1].

The analysis of associative fields form the exercise. **The herring-bone** shows where the word “comes from”:

- by contiguity (elements of supper systems, parts of the system);
- by similarity (according to different features);
- by emotional significance.

Using consciously the mechanism of search for associative ties, one can set the task to control associations and perform this exercise more completely and “volumetrically”.

A story with words from the “herring-bone”

Naturally, one can add other words, too, as the **herring-bone** consists exclusively of nouns. The words from the **herring-bone** can be arranged in any sequence; one can also freely change their grammatical form. As regards genre, it can be a sketch, a detective or a fantastic story, a tragedy, or any synthetic genre. One can, having acquired certain experience in writing such stories (one should remember that a story should be written within 3-5 minutes), set a purposeful task,

for example to invent a tale to the whole group. To develop speaking habits and skills of establishing associations among objects and phenomena, the task can be complicated: invent a story based upon words from the **herring-bone** trying to use as many words as possible.

Working with the word is an important factor of developing personality as well as emotional and conscious attitude to the language.

Writing poetry is a technique which combines poetry with speaking and listening skills. Students interview one another and then put the information into the form of a poem.

Portraits in Poetry

Example:

Title – name the person

Line 1 – 2 adjectives linked by a conjunction (and, or, but);

Line 2 – gerund that describes what the person does;

Line 3 – another gerund that describes what the person does;

Line 4 – still another gerund that describes what the person does;

Line 5 – 2 adverbs describing how the person does the things mentioned;

Line 6 – participle(s) (gerund) describing your attitude to the person;

My Granny

Tender and thoughtful

Bringing up her grandchildren

Helping them to suit this great world

Cooking pies and cakes that are so tasty and nutritious

Doing it with all her love and devotion

Doing it with all her heart and kisses back.

This structure has a variety of uses from practicing vocabulary and grammar to expressing opinions. This activity is popular with intermediate and advanced pupils. Pupils make choice of a person who is significant in their life and bring them to life on paper.

Limericks

Another type of poetry that is of British origin is a limerick, which is a humorous poem with five lines, the first two lines having the same final sound as the last line (AA BBA rhyme structure). They have 8-10 syllables per line. It is useful to work with rhyming words (or even the use of a rhyming dictionary) to help pupils find connections between words and ideas. Limericks are very good to start speaking about Ireland, the country this kind of a poem originates from. (Limerick, by the way, is one of the four most important cities of Ireland). This activity reinforces imagination skills

of pupils preparing them for a society that values creative ideas.

Edward Lear (1812-1888) is considered to be the founder of Limericks. The following limericks are the creation of Sir Edward Lear.

*There was an Old Man with beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!, -
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"*

*There was a Young Lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.
They returned from the ride
With the lade inside
And the smile on the face of the tiger.*

Acrostics

These are the poems in which a person, a place or a thing is chosen and for each letter of the word a horizontal or vertical word is created. This structure is a great way to promote restudying of the new vocabulary that is based on the unit or the topic they have been discussing. This kind of task can both be done in class or at home.

Christmas

*C – is for Candy to please boys and girls
H – is for Holly with red berries bright
R – is for Reindeer that gallop and prance
I – is for Ice, so shining and clear
S – is for Snow that falls silently down
T – is for Turkey so tender and brown
M – is for Mistletoe shining like wax
A – is for Apple that hangs on the tree
S – is for Snowmen built in the gardens*

Alphabet

*A was an Apple pie M Mourned it
B Bit it N Nodded it
C Cut it O Opened it
D Dealt with it P Peeped it
E Eats it Q Quartered it
F Fought for it R Run for it
G Got it S Stole it
H Had it T Took it
I Inspected it U Upset it
J Joined it V Viewed it
K Kept it W Warned it
L Longed for it XYZ and all wished for a
piece in hand*

Ways to Exercise Creative Visualization

Teachers are aware that their pupils have different learning abilities and they are to find a balance which helps and encourages both gifted

and average children. Moreover, we should keep in mind that rather a big group of pupils is slow enough, accordingly, they need and deserve the teachers's attention. At all ages people want to know as much as possible about themselves, the way others perceive them. The suggested visualization provides a way to see oneself through other people's or peer's eyes.

Find below some guidelines and types of exercise to provoke learners' interest to creative writing in a sequence of respective tasks.

Creative Visualization: The Cube

Step one: Picture a desert. The first thing that comes to young mind may be a real desert you know, or it may be a fantasy of a desert. Either one is fine.

Step two: Now imagine a cube. Do you see it? How big is it? What color? Does it look smooth or rough to the touch? What's it made of, can you tell? Is it hollow or solid? Write down at least five vivid adjectives that describe your cube.

Step three: Now, picture a ladder. What is it made of? Is it a stepladder or a straight ladder? Does it have a lot of rungs or just a few rungs?

Step four: Imagine a horse. What kind of a horse do you see? What color is it? Is it wearing a saddle or not? Is it a race horse, or a work horse?

Step five: The fifth visualization is a storm. Where do you see it? What kind of storm is it? Does it affect the cube, the ladder, or the horse?

Step six: Finally, there are flowers. Are they clustered or scattered? Are they many, or just a few? Where are they? What colour are they, what kind are they?

The "interpretation" of your "walking dream":

- The desert is the world as you see it. Your desert's hospitality reflects your view of the world.
- The cube is you. Your list of adjectives describing you! The physical qualities of your cube correspond to your sense of self.
- The ladder represents your friends. It could be a description of a good friend, or relate to the kinds of friends you prefer.
- The horse is your ideal partner. Your horse's behavior resembles your partner's.
- The storm is trouble, (and challenge can be positive).
- The flowers are children.
- Are you ready to learn about yourself? The suggested answers might interest you.

The Cube

If your cube is... ..you are...

Black stylish, mysterious, guarded, self-contained

Blue serene, cool, spiritual, distant, aloof, sad
Crystal visionary, spiritual, pure, clear
Dice a gambler in life, a risk-taker, lucky
Gold valuable, weighty, refined, desirable, rich
Ice calm, refreshing, in love, cool
Large confident, capable, healthily, egoistic
Multicolored versatile, moody, multi-ethnic
Paper vulnerable, playful, trying out an identity
Red hot-tempered, passionate, courageous,

aggressive

Small modest, realistic, keeping a low profile

Transparent candid, observant, objective

If your ladder is... ..your friends...

Brocken have let you down, are in trouble

Reaching into the sky help you grow spiritually, help you to achieve

Wood are cultured, are educated, are familiar

If your horse is... ..your partner is.....

Arabian aristocratic, elegant, proud, nervous

Black mysterious, romantic, brunet

Saddled married, hard-working, domesticated

Brown warm, earthy, ordinary, sensual

Running busy, active, energetic, athletic

White idealized, well, of high principles

Ridden by someone rational, goal-oriented

If the storm is... ..trouble is....

Electrical shocking, illuminating, enlightening

Rainstorm bringing tears, necessary for growth

Wind bringing change, energizing, renewing

If the flowers are... ..children are....

Roses passionately loved

Bouquet close to one another, close in age

Many flowers your life's work' other people's

In a vase your pride, cherished, possessed, on display

GRAMMAR AND STYLE GUIDELINES

Grammar

- Be specific.
- Make sure your sentences have a subject and a verb.
 - Be sure the subject and the verb agree in number and tense.
 - Do not overwrite or overstate.
 - Be sure the nouns and pronouns in a sentence agree.
 - Do not dangle modifiers; place them close to words they modify.
 - Adverbs modify verbs and adjectives; don't confuse them with adjectives, which modify nouns.
 - Pronouns should refer clearly to an antecedent.
 - Pronouns and antecedents should agree in number.
 - Use the correct pronoun. Equal thoughts require parallel sentence construction.

- Check for the correct tense.
- Always check spelling.

Capitalization

- Capitalize the first word in a sentence.
- Capitalize proper names. Numbers.
- Spell out numbers under 10; use figures for others.
 - Spell out a number that begins a sentence.
 - Be consistent when using numbers in a series.
 - Use figures for measurements in technical, mathematical, or scientific text; with abbreviated units of measure and symbols, with percentages and decimal fractions.
 - Use figures for money when the dollar or cent symbol is used, or if there are fractional amounts over one dollar.
 - Use figures for dates when the month precedes the day.
 - Use figures for time unless you use o'clock.

BUILDING A TIGHT PLOT, DO NOT FORGET TO:

- put the main character into the conflict and decide how the conflict will end
- map the plot events that move steadily, with possible complications, to a climax and resolution
- sketch details of main characters and settings
- decide on point of view
- think ahead about what you want readers to feel and whether you want them to reflect on an idea or theme
- keep your readers interested, the plot can't wander or change direction on him
- keep your story in line and your readers involved with the following techniques:
 - arouse **interest immediately**. Open with a sharp dialogue, a mood-setting description, a puzzle, or a fast action.
 - establish the **conflict quickly, and never forget it**. Get to the main problem as soon as possible, and make sure all events and details are important to it. This doesn't mean you can't provide background and colourful details – just make them count the plot.
 - keep the current **action clear but the future uncertain**. Create suspense or curiosity about what may happen, but don't pull tricks out of a hat. Even a surprise ending should be believable.
 - keep events in a chronological order unless you must give a **flashback**, a memory or a scene of imported past events.
 - **resolve the conflict in a satisfying, original way**. After the climax of the conflict, the reader

needs to see that the loose ends are tied up – and that's all. This is not the time to drag things out; and unless you are writing a fable, it isn't the time to announce a moral or a theme. Instead, try showing the main characters in the final moment of an action, thought, or a dialogue.

Література

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Хомякова И. П. Обучение творческому письму в школе (упражнения на стимулирование интереса к изучению предмета). — Статья.

Аннотация. Статья предлагает и анализирует эффективность использования ряда упражнений и заданий креативного характера, которые способствуют развитию творческих способностей учащихся и повышают их интерес к изучаемому иностранному языку.

Ключевые слова: креативность, творческие письменные работы, лимерик, стихотворение по заданной теме, прием использования ассоциативных связей, творческая визуализация.

Хомякова І. П. Навчання творчому письму у школі (вправи, націлені на підвищення інтересу учнів до мови, що вивчається). — Стаття.

Анотація. Стаття пропонує та аналізує ефективність низки завдань та вправ творчого характеру, що сприяють підвищенню інтересу учнів до іноземної мови, що вивчається, розвиває творчі здібності учнів.

Ключові слова: креативність, творчі письмові роботи, лімерик, вірш на задану тематику, прийом письма за технікою асоціативних зв'язків, творча візуалізація.