



Teacher's Notes – Independent learning tasks: Creative writing homework project

Timing Homework tasks for learners: at least eight 30-minute tasks over a term.

Teacher preparation: up to 60 minutes to explore Storybird, set up usernames, print invitations and set the assignment.

In-class preparation task: 15 minutes

Materials An interactive whiteboard, or class computer plus projector; internet access in class and at home for learners; the link to <https://storybird.com>; Storybird invitations for learners; handout: *Independent learning tasks: Creative writing homework project*; guide: *How to set creative writing assignments in Storybird*.

Rationale This longer-term homework project helps learners to use a storytelling tool to develop their creative writing skills, using beautiful pictures and staged tasks to inspire a longer, more detailed piece of writing. Learners could also practise a range of related language areas in their writing: past tenses, different kinds of adjectives and adverbs, linking words, etc.

Teacher preparation

1. Familiarise yourself with Storybird, <https://storybird.com>. (See guide: *How to set creative writing assignments in Storybird*, and the handout: *Independent learning tasks: Creative writing homework project*.)
2. Set up a free teacher account at <https://storybird.com/accounts/login>.
3. Go to 'Studio', 'Add Students'. Create usernames for your learners and 'Generate invitations' so that they can sign in and do the homework project. (E.g. use the name of your class and numbers: *Class4B01*, *Class4B02*, etc.)



4. Go to 'Studio', 'Assignments', 'Create Assignment' and fill in the required information.

You can add this title and description:

Creative writing homework project

You're going to use Storybird to write a story and publish a book. You'll choose a set of images that show the characters and key moments in the story and create a story map to help you write either a picture book or a chapter story. Each week you'll do a new task to help you write and improve your story. When your story is finished we'll add it to our class library and give a prize to the best three picture books and chapter stories.

You might like to use a spare student account to create and submit an example assignment; then review and comment on the assignment in your teacher account to help you feel confident.

5. Go to 'Read' (<https://storybird.com/read>) and choose a suitable short story to show your class as an example.

In-class preparation task

1. In class, ask learners what makes a good story and note their ideas on the board.

For example:

- a good opening scene
- interesting characters
- linking ideas
- problems and solutions
- suspense
- conversations
- imagining thoughts, feelings, smells, etc.
- a good ending
- good use of language: verbs, adjectives, etc.

2. Use an interactive whiteboard or projector to show your learners the example story, stopping on individual pages and asking learners to spot any of the features they mentioned.
3. Explain that learners are going to use Storybird to do a creative writing project for homework over a number of weeks. Explain that you'll set one task each week.



4. Show learners how to:
 - access Storybird from their invitations
 - search for and choose pictures (search for learners' suggestions to make it fun)
 - choose a Picture Book or Longform Book
 - add pages and start writing.
5. Give out the Storybird invitations and set Task 1 for homework.

Monitoring and reviewing

1. Each week monitor progress, add comments to encourage learners and set the next task for learners to complete at home. You can also discuss the project in class or do some 10-minute, class-based tasks to generate and share ideas.

For example:

Task 1	Learners share and discuss their pictures and ideas with a partner/group/the class.
Any task	Learners look at pictures and brainstorm language for describing them.
Task 5	Learners discuss different options for endings before they write the best one.
Task 6	Learners try out any conversation with a partner, and discuss how to improve it.
Task 7	Learners create a class checklist for editing their work

2. When marking:
 - focus on learners' approach to the writing task and praise any independent learning skills demonstrated such as use of a dictionary, improvement in problem areas, extensive, imaginative or detailed writing
 - engage with the content: respond as a reader, ask questions and give advice focused on helping learners develop their ideas
 - if you can, leave error correction for another time.
3. When learners have reviewed each other's work, let them vote for the best stories and have an award ceremony for the best work. You could also invite parents to view their projects.