

Kernal Essays

ELL students can be intimidated by the idea of writing. They are often afraid they don't have any ideas or think that they can't put them together. One idea that can help is by providing them with structure for writing - the Kernel Essay. Kernel essays are short mini-essays or rehearsals or starting points for an essay. Students answer questions in complete sentences and then discover that they have not only the format for an essay, but also a lot more to say! A good beginning format is used for a memory essay. A memory essay recreates a moment of time in written format. (when you got a scar, a time you laughed so hard, when you were very proud of someone, a moment when someone put money in your hand, etc.)

The boxes are a graphic reminder and mental map to let them know to write what is asked for.

What happened last? (what was the final event?)

What happened next?

How did it start (What happened 1st?)

Where were you when it happened?

What did you think?

Where were you when it happened?	How did it start? What happened first?	What happened next?	What happened last? What was the final result?	What did you think?
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Another box can be added after they have written this much, asking what the lesson learned from that event was (after all, out of the billions of moments in their lives they chose this one to write about). They can then decide if this statement of the lesson learned belongs at the beginning or end. After writing this much, students can come back the next day and easily add more about each of the original sentences by adding additional details or sensory information.