

# Quick Guide to ELL Literacy Strategies

This guide is meant to provide only general recommendations. You may find that other ways of carrying out a strategy fit your context and needs better.

STRATEGY <sup>1</sup> & LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY	DESCRIPTION	GRADE LEVEL	SUGGESTED TIME FRAME/LIMIT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	POTENTIAL FOR HOME/COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (IF PARENTS ARE ALSO ELLS)	COMPATIBLE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES
<b>BOOTSTRAPPING FROM HOME LANGUAGE LITERACY</b>						
B, BI, IA, AS <sup>2</sup>	Use of knowledge and skills in home language literacy to develop literacy in English (p. 96) <sup>3</sup>	K–8	Every opportunity you get	Individual or same home language groups	Extensive	Observation; writing sample analysis
<b>COLLABORATIVE TEXT WRITING</b>						
B, BI	A text produced by ELLs collaboratively based on a story that was read or a topic that was studied (pp. 63–64)	K–3	Once every week or two	Group	Extensive	Dialogue journals; learning logs; writing sample analysis
<b>DIALOGUE JOURNALS</b>						
BI, IA	A written conversation that goes back and forth, usually between teacher and student (p. 171)	3–8	5 minutes, every two days	Individual	Extensive	Observation during the journal writing; process writing conference; writing sample analysis
<b>EDITING OWN WORK</b>						
BI, IA, AS	Students use traits of good writing as guidelines to edit their own writing (p. 177)	1–8	Any time students complete a writing assignment	Individual or small group	Limited	Writing conferences; observation
<b>FOCUSING ON THE WRITING OF OTHERS</b>						
BI, IA, AS	Students use traits of good writing as guidelines to analyze published works (p. 178)	2–8	15–30 minutes, once every two to four weeks	Small group	Depends on texts selected	Class discussion; dialogue journals

<sup>1</sup>The list here is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it includes strategies that are most prominently discussed in this book. Some of these strategies, such as dialogue journals, are particular to teaching students for whom English is a second language. Others, such as guided reading, are used with the general population; however, the way they are used with ELLs differs slightly from the way they are used with the mainstream population.

<sup>2</sup>English Proficiency Levels, as described in our framework: B = Beginning, BI = Beginning Intermediate, IA = Intermediate Advanced, AS = Advanced Supported, LFS = Limited Formal Schooling

<sup>3</sup>Page numbers where the strategy is discussed in this book.

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<b>FRONTLOADING (VOCABULARY, GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES THROUGH CLASS ACTIVITIES, SONGS, CHANTS, POEMS)</b>							
B, BI	Teaching vocabulary and grammatical structures specific to text that will be read or written (p. 45)	1–8	Every time text to be taught contains language that is unfamiliar to ELLs	Group	Limited	Observation; writing samples analysis; reading/writing conferences	
<b>GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS &amp; SIGNAL WORDS</b>							
B, BI, IA	Visual summaries of important information in a text using key words (p. 140–42)	K–8	Whenever a text contains concepts and words unknown to ELLs	Whole class	Limited	Observation; writing sample analysis; learning logs	
<b>GUIDED READING</b>							
BI	Modeling efficient reading behaviors for ELLs, introducing and practicing helpful decoding and text comprehension strategies, showing how language and text features function (pp. 61 and 143)	3–8	One to three times per week during reading workshop	Small groups	Not an appropriate home activity	Running records; observation	
<b>GUIDED WRITING</b>							
BI	Introducing writing strategies to ELLs, showing how known strategies apply to English (pp. 63 and 142–43)	3–8	Two to three times a week during writer's workshop	Individual or small groups	Not an appropriate home activity	Writing sample analysis	
<b>HANDWRITING PRACTICE</b>							
B, LFS (only needed for beginning students and students new to English orthography)	Practice in forming letters and writing words and phrases (pp. 41 and 50)	K–8	Limit to 5 minutes (combined with mimic writing), once or twice a week unless student is in kindergarten or grade 1	Individual	Limited	Dialogue journals; writing samples analysis; observation	

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<b>JIGSAW AND PAIRED READING (COOPERATIVE LEARNING)</b>						
BI, IA	ELLs are divided into pairs, triads, or small groups to read different sections of a text (p. 146)	4–8	Two to three times per week	Small groups	Extensive	Observation; learning logs
<b>LABELS, CAPTIONS, LISTS</b>						
B, LFS	ELLs create labels, make captions and write lists—all with a functional purpose (pp. 54 and 158)	1–8	Combined with Mimic Writing	Individual or small groups	Extensive for messages sent home; otherwise limited	Limited assessment potential
<b>LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH</b>						
B, BI	Based on an activity that students shared, a group story is dictated to the teacher or written by the students; this story is then used for reading and editing (p. 66)	1–8	40 minutes to weeks	More group in beginning level, more individual in intermediate	Extensive	Writing sample analysis; observation; learning logs
<b>LEARNING LOGS</b>						
BI, IA, AS	Written text that summarizes the most important things being learned in class (pp. 142 and 146)	1–8	5–10 minutes every two or three days	Individual	Limited	Analysis of learning logs
<b>MIMIC WRITING</b>						
B, LFS (only earliest stage)	ELLs copy a short message; lists, or labels that they can read, for aspecific functional purpose (p. 158)	1–8	No more than 5 minutes; twice or three times a week	Individual	Extensive	Writing sample analysis
<b>MINI SHARED READING</b>						
B	Teacher does shared reading in small groups of 3–5 ELLs for at least 30 minutes (p. 61)	K–3	30 minutes, at least once a week	Small groups	Extensive	Observation; running records

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					DEPENDENT UPON TEXTS SELECTED	WRITING CONFERENCES; WRITING SAMPLE ANALYSIS; DIALOGUE JOURNALS	
<b>MODELING AFTER PUBLISHED BOOKS</b>							
B, IA	ELLs use a book they have read as a model for a text they write themselves (p. 168)	1–6	Spread over days, as long as it takes to complete writing	Individual or small group	Dependent upon texts selected	Writing conferences; writing sample analysis; dialogue journals	
<b>READ-ALOUD</b>							
B, BI	Books are read by a proficient reader, either in person or on tape/DVD (p. 45)	K–8	Once or twice a week; more frequently in lower grades	Individual or group	Extensive	Observation	
<b>STORYTELLING AND RETELLING</b>							
B, BI	ELLs tell stories of wordless books or after picture books are read (p. 45)	K–8	Once or twice a week; more frequently in lower grades	Individual or group	Extensive	Observation	
<b>SUPPORTING HOME LANGUAGE LITERACY AT HOME</b>							
B, BI, IA, AS	Actively encouraging family members to keep literacy in the home language alive (p. 94)	K–8	On a regular basis	Group	Extensive	Reading logs; dialogue journals	
<b>USING BILINGUAL TEXT</b>							
B, BI, IA, AS	Reading bilingual books or books in the home language; writing bilingual texts (p. 98)	K–8	Once a week	Individual or small group	Extensive	Observation; reading logs (list of books read)	
<b>USING MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE (READ-ALOUD; MODEL FOR WRITING, ETC.)</b>							
B, BI, IA, AS	Using books that revolve around cultures other than those of the mainstream population (p. 106)	K–8	Every other book that is read in class	Individual or group	Dependent upon books and activities selected	Observation	

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**WRITING STORIES BASED ON PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

B, BI	Use of digital pictures and captions to stimulate earliest writing and genuine communication (p. 164)	K-8	Once a month	Individual or group	Limited; dependent upon photographs available	Writing sample analysis; observation
<b>WORD STUDY</b>						
B, BI, IA, AS	Cognates, Word Walls, word sorts, and word notebooks (pp. 50 and 136)	1-8	Whenever the opportunity arises, in context	Group	Except for cognates; not appropriate	Observation; written products
<b>WRITING SCRIPTS; WRITING FRAMES</b>						
IA, AS	Useful phrasing for introductions, conclusions, transitions; templates for planning a piece of writing (p. 171)	3-8	Once a week	Individual	Limited	Observation during the journal writing process; writing conference; writing sample analysis