

Introduction

The following activities are designed as a two-week review to familiarize a class with effective cooperative group practice and to establish writing routines. Teaching students to write and establishing a positive and supportive learning environment are extremely important. The teacher must foster trust to gain willingness from the young writer. Below is a list of tips to keep in mind as you begin to use cooperative writing activities that will lead to the gradual release of independent essay writing skills.

1. Communicate high expectations for respect and establish strong classroom management.

There will be many times where talking and sharing will be necessary, so gaining control early is critical.

2. The teacher is a member of every group.

Teachers must **ALWAYS** facilitate by walking around and participating with the groups. Keep a pencil in hand at all times; allow the students to “see” you writing as a group member. Either on a sticky note or directly on the group paper, ~~the teacher participates every time with every group~~.

3. Define the roles and expectations for each member.

Choose the names of the group roles to meet your needs. See the cooperative group roles used by Fisher Reyna Education and supportive resources.

4. Explain to students that at any time, you as the teacher, have the sole authority to change a role, rename a group, or override previous directions for a group.

There will be times when things don't work quite right. At these times, students need to know that you are the decision maker for the best learning outcomes.

5. Rotate the roles of group members frequently... preferable daily.

It is important that the teacher monitors that each student participates comfortably at their comfort level of writing before they place the necessary trust in the teacher or other group members; therefore, rotate carefully so to support struggling writers.

6. Foster positivity and kindness with all comments.

At times, a student may get their feelings hurt by another student. Encourage students to share fairly and express comments with kind words. Redirect as necessary.

7. There are many collaborative writing techniques. Do what works best for your class.

Teachers should ensure: 1. Some form of collaborative writing is done weekly. 2. There is an explicit plan, time, and expectation for gradual release to independent writing. Test grade levels should aim for October.

8. The power of collaborative experiences in Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, and Peer-conferences are dependent on the involvement of the teacher.

Collaborative writing practices allow you to effectively teach as much as you can to as many as you can. Share expertise, give suggestions, get comfortable with "in-the-moment corrections."

9. Groups may not always complete the assigned writing in one class session.

Allow a second class period the following day. Quality teaching leads to quality independent essays and supports "practice without punishment."

10. Have FUN! ENJOY, ENJOY, ENJOY! Show the students how writing can be challenging yet fun and rewarding!

The teacher establishes the learning environment in the class.

Activity 1: Mix and Match

Directions:

Look at the sentence fragments. Some are subjects without verbs, while others are verb phrases with no subject. Before the activity, allow students time to cut apart the sentence fragments.

To start the activity, the “speaker” reads each fragment on the strip of paper to the group and hands them to the “manager,” who turns the strips face down and mixes them up. Each person in the group will take a turn and play a mix and match game to form complete sentences.

When the group begins to play, students should read the fragments aloud. If one contains a subject and the other contains a predicate (verb phrase), students should put them together to form a sentence. (It’s okay if the sentence is silly!) Once the strips are used, students may turn the strips back over and mix up the again. The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups.

If two fragments cannot be put together to form a sentence, students should just turn the strips back over. Continue to play for fifteen minutes. At the end of the time, the group “writer” must have at least five sentences from the group activity. The “speaker” will share the group sentences with the class.

Teacher note: Enjoy the collaborative experience by laughing at silly sentences and providing positive feedback for well-chosen combinations.

Activity 1: Mix and Match

Student Activity

Subjects



My dog Spike
Her teacher
Mari's sister
A sweet kitten
Our teacher
My class at school
The basketball
The librarian
Fletcher's friend
My computer
Mr. Bitela
Our scout leader
A big firetruck

Verb Phrases



helped her with her homework.
can be extremely messy.
had six puppies.
helped me complete a research report.
went for a swim at the beach.
has interesting stories.
is always on time.
flew over the fence.
enjoys helping students learn.
curled up on the chair.
cried for help.
bounced out of control.
is excited about the field trip.

Activity 2: Sam's Runaway Sentences

Student Activity

Directions:

Sam has tried to write a story about a special summer vacation, but his story is difficult to read because he has used run-on sentences. Group members should read the story silently, while the speaker reads it aloud to the group. Discuss as a group and advise the “writer” about where the sentences begin and end. Next, have the “writer” use a colored pen or pencil to mark where one sentence should end and a new one should begin by editing with periods and capital letters.

Last summer, my family and I took a trip to the beach we stayed in a hotel right next to the ocean. Every morning, my parents and I woke up early to walk on the sandy shoreline then, we went back to the room and cooked scrambled eggs and pancakes. After breakfast, all of us would walk down to swim and play in the ocean water we usually took sandwiches with us, that way we didn't have to go the hotel room for lunch. At night, we went out for hamburgers or pizza mom would take food back to our room and we played board games until midnight we had a great time on our beach vacation I hope we can go back again soon, while the weather is warm.

Activity 2: Sam's Runaway Sentences

Answer Key

Last summer, my family and I took a trip to the beach. We stayed in a hotel right next to the ocean. Every morning, my parents and I woke up early to walk on the sandy shoreline. Then, we went back to the room and cooked scrambled eggs and pancakes. After breakfast, all of us would walk down to swim and play in the ocean water. We usually took sandwiches with us, that way we didn't have to go the hotel room for lunch. At night, we went out for hamburgers or pizza. Mom would take food back to our room and we played board games until midnight. We had a great time on our beach vacation. I hope we can go back again soon, while the weather is warm.

Activity 3: FANBOYS

Directions:

1. Learn the seven coordinating conjunctions by learning the FANBOYS acronym. FANBOYS represent each coordinating conjunction: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. Coordinating conjunctions are used to connect simple sentences to form compound sentences. Review with the students the acronym FANBOYS and the comma rule when used to combine two independent sentences. Start by generating a few simple sentences on the board with students as a shared writing activity.

Compound sentence - coordinate conjunctions

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

Independent sentence , **F** independent sentence.
(clause) (clause)


A
N
B
O
Y
S

Teachers work extremely hard, but they enjoy working with students.


Sample sentences:

She did not cheat on the test, **for** it was *not* the right thing to do.

They got to the movie early, **and** they got great seats!

We have not been to Dallas, **nor** have we visited any other Texas city.

I really wanted to go to the party, **but** I was too sick to attend.

My mom usually cooks dinner, **or** we go to a restaurant.

Kensi owned a car, **yet** he didn't know how to drive it.

She had to pass the test, **so** she got a tutor for extra help.

2. Each member can complete the chart on the following pages. After the FANBOYS paper activity is completed, each group member takes a turn aloud creating compound sentences. The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups. As an added review, collect and keep these activities for use later in the school year.



for

Connects with a solution or
explanation.
Very formal-not often used



Cut only the dotted lines

and

Connects matching ideas

nor

Negative form of "or"

but

Connects opposing ideas

or

Connects 2 choices

yet

Connects opposing ideas

so

Connects problem with
solution or effect.



Fold and cut to make a slit opening



Sentence,

Fold and cut to make a slit opening



sentence.

Activity 4: Subordinate Conjunctions

A complex sentence must have an independent clause and at least one dependent or subordinate clause. When students begin to work with complex sentences, it is helpful to learn a few major subordinate conjunctions. The following activity must be reviewed *weekly throughout the year*. Once students memorize the list, practice by saying the words aloud weekly through: pop quizzes, challenges, fast-pass methods, homework, etc. Student must know these words by memory to identify them and use them in more complex writing.

Directions:

Explain that each member of the group will be a group “writer.” Ask students to copy the list of the subordinate conjunctions into a writing journal or sheet of paper. Then, decide on the method you will use to teach the subordinate conjunctions to your class. *This will be reviewed and repeated weekly throughout the year*. 1. Use a fast-list method. Memorize the list and challenge students to say them aloud quickly. 2. Learn the “Subordinate Conjunction Song.” There are several versions of the subordinate conjunction song. The one below is sung to the tune of the “*Itsy-Bitsy Spider*.” By using the subordinating conjunctions, students begin to learn how to write complex sentences. Review the required comma rule by generating a few sentences on the board as a shared writing activity. In groups, have each member assume the role of the “speaker,” as they say or sing the subordinate conjunctions to their group. The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups.

Complex sentence - subordinate conjunctions
after, although, as, because, before, if, provided, since, unless, until, than,
whenever, wherever, while, where, when

Dependent clause, independent clause.
DC, IC = Complex

Independent clause dependent clause.
No comma → IC DC = Complex

After they ate their lunch, the students played a game.

The students played a game after they ate their lunch.

Sample sentences:

Note the comma rule.

Stay in the classroom until the bell rings.

When we called her name, she turned around.

Sara went shopping because she needed new tennis shoes.

Although the task was difficult, she was ready to face the challenge.

After I tripped on the stairs, I fell on my face.

I fell on my face after I tripped on the stairs.

Activity 4: Subordinate Conjunctions

Student Activity

Fast-List Method

Begin with A's and then B's	List of 3	List of 3	5 "W" words
after	if	unless	whenever
although	provided	until	wherever
as	since	than	while
because			where
before			when

The Subordinate Conjunction Song

Subordinate Conjunctions I love and I adore.

There's after, although, as because and before.

If, provided, since, unless, until, and than.

There's whenever, wherever, and while and where and when.

See YouTube for additional lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEF5wreLh9U>

Activity 5: A 3-Day Mini-Journal

Directions:

As a group, the “writer” writes today’s date, yesterday’s date, and tomorrow’s date on a sheet of paper. On yesterday’s date, the students discuss and write about something that a student or the class did yesterday. On today’s date, students write about something they are doing right now. On tomorrow’s date, students write about something a student or the class plans to do tomorrow. Students should only write only a few brief sentences and be sure to have the group “writer” use neat writing.

When the group has finished writing, the “speaker” reads the sentences to the group slowly and carefully. As the group members listen, they will identify the verbs in the sentences and the “writer” will circle them. Think about verb tense as you circle the verbs.

Next, the “speaker” must read the group discussion questions:

1. Did we use past tense verbs in the sentences for “Yesterday’s Date?”
2. Are the verbs on “Today’s Date” in the present tense?
3. Did we use future tense verbs for “Tomorrow’s Date?”
4. Do we need to change any of the verbs?

The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups. See the next page for a group mini-journal, or do this activity on a blank sheet of paper. A completed sample is provided below:

Group Journal
Yesterday’s Date: Our class <u>visited</u> the new computer lab for the first time. The computer lab teacher told us about the <u>rules</u> , and she showed us all the <u>equipment</u> . We were excited to see all the <u>new computers</u> .
Today’s Date: Our class <u>is learning</u> about group work for writing class. As we <u>work</u> in groups, we discuss the <u>different</u> roles. We listen to <u>one another</u> . Each member of the group has a special <u>job</u> . Each member must listen and <u>work with each other</u> . Together we can use our skills and <u>improve our writing skills</u> .
Tomorrow’s Date: Jacob’s family <u>will go to</u> the beach this weekend. Jacob <u>will take his</u> dog too. He wants to <u>build a sand castle</u> and wants to <u>swim in the ocean</u> one last time. Jacob and his family will have a great time <u>together</u> .

Activity 5: A 3-Day Mini Journal

Student Activity

Hint: You can write about a book, you, a game, a television show, a special dinner, or an event. Anything is okay, as long as it is something from any member of your group. The group “manager” should help each member of the group share and decide which activity to write in each area of the mini-journal.

Group Journal
Yesterday's Date:
Today's Date:
Tomorrow's Date:

Activity 6: Color My World

Directions:

Part 1

Practice using adjectives and adverbs to help make your sentences interesting. Have the “speaker” read the sentences below to the group. Each member in the group will select one sentence and take 5 minutes to draw a simple sketch or picture to go with it. After each member shares their picture, have the students discuss if it was difficult to draw interesting pictures. Since each sentence did not use adjectives or adverbs, it may have seemed difficult.

Part 2

Next, ask students to think of a word (or words) they could add to their sentence to make it more interesting. Students may think of their own words or use words from the word box for ideas. Students should revise their original sentence and then redraw another picture for it. Allow more time. The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups. After group members have completed most of the revised illustrations, share and discuss which picture was easier to draw. Discuss how adjectives and adverbs add detail and make sentences more interesting.

Activity 6: Color My World

Student Activity

My brother got a cat.
Josie's sister writes books.
Nick and I ran a race.
The kitten scratched the baby.
The horse walked to the barn.
My mom will bring a cake to the party.
A baby cried.

Adjectives Words that describe a noun	Adverbs Words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs
soft	easily
gigantic	slowly
sweet	carefully
favorite	quickly
strawberry	really
hungry	recently
blue	today
excellent	happily
small	nicely
brown	perfectly
tiny	lazily
friendly	nicely
difficult	fearfully
thoughtful	loudly
funny	sweetly

Activity 7: Writing Detective

Directions:

Begin by having the group “manager” distribute a copy of the letter to the group. Then, ask the “speaker” to read the letter, while the group listens. Allow each group fifteen minutes for the “writer” to edit the letter with contributions from the group members. Finally, students should discuss the errors they found as a peer-editing activity. The teacher should be walking and assisting the groups. Facilitate by discussing the corrections from the teacher key. There are fifteen mistakes in her letter. Challenge your groups to find all of them.

July 29, 2018

Dear Sofia,

Can you believe summer vacation is nearly over? During the summer, I got a cat. Her name is Midnight because she is a black cat. We adopted her two months ago from the San Antonio Humane Society. The entire family adores her. She is tiny, soft, and playful. The most unusual thing is that she is missing a tail! Can you believe it? It doesn't matter because we love her so much. I have spent many summer days reading and relaxing with Midnight on my lap. She is the “purrfect” companion. I can't stop petting her soft fur and scratching between her ears. Before summer ends, I would like for you to visit, so you can meet Midnight. Would you ask your parents about coming over to spend a few days with our family? You can join me on the porch with a good book, and we will be in good company with Midnight too.

Your cousin,

Emma

Activity 7: Writing Detective

Student Activity

Directions:

Emma has written a letter to her cousin Sofia. Before she mails it, she wants to make sure there are no mistakes in it. Find Emma's spelling, capitalization, and punctuation mistakes. There are fifteen mistakes in her letter. Discuss the editing as a group before the "writer" edits the letter.

july 29, 2018

Dear Sofia

Can you believe summer vacation is nearly over. During the summer, I got a cat. Her name is midnight because she is a black cat. We adopted her two month's ago from the San Antonio Humane Society. The entire family adores her. She is tiny soft, and playful. The most unusual thing is that she is missing a tale! Can you believe it. It doesn't matter because we love her so much. I have spent many summer days reeding and relaxing with midnight on my lap. She is the "purrfect" companion. I cant stop petting her soft fur and scratching between her ears. Before summer ends I would like for you to visit, so you can meet Midnight. Would you ask your parents about coming over to spend a few days with our family. You can join me on the porch with a good book and we will be in good company with Midnight to.

Your cousin,

Emma