

WIKISPACES / PB WORKS-BASED TASKS

Writing letters to pen pals

TARGET GROUP	Level: B1 +, ages 11-12 and up
CONTEXT (Ex: in class, online etc.)	Blended learning environment, Virtual learning environment
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising language related to talking about family life, interests and everyday activities • (For English as a Foreign Language): Reviewing the use of present simple for habitual actions, present perfect for actions that started in past and still happen today and past simple for completed past actions • Reviewing the ideal layout and style of an informal email • Learning and practice the editing features of a wiki tool • Developing team-working and collaborative learning skills
TOOLS AND RESOURCES	A wiki tool (PB Works ; Wikispaces , etc.)
CONTENT	<p>The objectives of the sample activity are as follows: This three-stage activity assumes that students have already been taught how the wiki works either in class or as a short “warm-up” activity. The activity is designed to allow students to work on their own to produce a first draft, then get peer review to finally work on improving and creating a final draft. It is this final draft that is then assessed by the teacher.</p> <p>Step 1 (1 week deadline): Students are asked as a home-based writing task to write a 150-200 word email to a new penpal where they write about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their family • where they live • what they do • their hobbies • their taste in music/cinema/literature/sport • and ask their penpal three specific questions of their choice <p>If they prefer they can “invent” any personal information.</p> <p>Stage 2 (1 week deadline): Students work in groups of 4 - the teacher sets up the Wikispace beforehand so that there is a separate page for each group and that all students know which group they belong to. They upload their emails to their group wikis for their team mates to read. Each teammate has to write feedback on the other three text either by inserting text in the original, or by inserting comments. Feedback should focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive aspects of the structure, language, vocabulary or content of text • Ideas about how the text could be improved without specific changes being made e.g. “you could start by introducing yourself in a short opening paragraph” <p>If students have never done this type of activity before, then it will require the teacher to model some feedback on at least 1 of the students' contributions in each group. The teacher will also monitor the feedback in terms of who is contributing and when – if a student is not engaging with the activity s/he needs to be contacted so that everyone receives sufficient and timely feedback.</p> <p>Stage 3 (1 week deadline): Using the feedback received, students work on revising their draft to create the final document. They submit this as the “end product” on an online group forum where everyone can read each other's work to see what they have done.</p>

ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS' WORK

In the first stage, teammates assess each other's work. The final assessment is done by the teacher. However, each student's final document can be assessed, alongside with their participation in stage 2, in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness of their feedback.

TEACHER SELF-EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY

ADDED VALUE

(Increase in value created by the use of the ICT tool)

- Assessing and giving feedback to one another's work, students assume the teacher's role for a while and consequently develop criticality towards their own work, timeliness, responsibility working in a group etc.
- Wiki tools allow the entire process to be done in a transparent manner (teachers can monitor the amount and quality of work of their pupils, pupils can see what others have done and contribute commenting).
- All the work can be saved for reflection at a later stage of their learning.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

If the task is collaborative (group work), teacher must monitor all the students and make sure they are all equally engaged in tasks. Internet connection problems may be hindrance.

Source: [Wikispaces](#) (registration required)