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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

DIGITAL STORYTELLING: PROMOTING WRITING LITERACY SKILLS

AT AN A2 LEVEL

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del Título de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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RESUMEN

El propósito de este proyecto de graduación es dar a conocer cómo la influencia de la tecnología hoy en día puede llegar a ser una herramienta útil a la hora de aprender una lengua extranjera, como lo es en éste caso el Inglés. Mediante la herramienta llamada *Storybird* los estudiantes tienen la capacidad de crear, imaginar y escribir historias que les ayuda a mejorar su destreza enfocado a la escritura. Para esto se analiza tres estudios de caso, los mismos que utilizan como herramienta principal Storybird. Dichos estudios son realizados en diferentes lugares del mundo, y a la vez dirigidos a estudiantes con diferente tipo de destrezas. El propósito de estos estudios es mejorar su escritura por medio de narraciones digitales, conocidos en el ámbito extranjero como *Digital Storytelling,* dando así una alternativa diferente de enseñanza para los estudiantes. Por último, se desarrolla una Guía de Aprendizaje dirigido a docentes, con el propósito de facilitar y brindar nuevos instrumentos de aprendizaje, con el uso de Storybird, para estudiantes que desempeñan un nivel A2 dentro del Marco de Referencia Europeo para las Lenguas.

Palabras clave: Narración digital, Storybird, tecnología, Marco de Referencia Europeo para las Lenguas, estudios de caso.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research project is to show how the influence of technology nowadays may act as a useful tool when it comes to learning a foreign language, as it is English in this case. When students use a tool called *Storybird*, they may have the ability to create, imagine, and write stories which help them improve their writing skills. For this reason, three case studies are analyzed in order to know how Storybird helps students to develop their writing skills. These case studies are carried out in different parts of the world and simultaneously targeting students with different skills. The purpose of the studies is to improve their writing skills by means of digital storytelling, giving the students alternatives in their learning process. Finally, a Teacher's Guide was made which focuses on students that belong to an A2 level within the European Framework of Reference for Languages. The guide has activities in which students use Storybird as a main tool in order to develop writing literacy skills.

Keywords: Digital storytelling, Storybird, technology, European Common Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), case studies.

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DEDICATORY

Without a doubt the unconditional support of a family

is one of the fundamental pillars in the life of the human being.

First of all, I want to thank God. Second, to my beloved parents

who created the person who I am today and motivated me

with their love and patience to finish successfully my college career.

To my entire family thanks for your love and support.

It was not easy, but today I can say that I did it.

<div align="right">

Gabriela Ortiz

</div>

TO

*My lovely father and brothers who
have always supported me for finishing my studies.*

*To the loving memory of my sister Diana, my
Guardian Angel, whom I still miss every day.*

*To my two little nephews and niece, David, Diego and
Cristina for being my greatest inspiration.*

*And especially to my beloved mother.
Thank you mom for always being there in moments of
discouragement. This wouldn´t be possible without all
your help.*

*And last but not least, to God for giving me the
opportunity to fulfill one of my biggest dreams.*

I know this is just the beginning of something new.

<div align="right">

Ana Gabriela

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INTRODUCTION

Technology has been considered a useful tool for the teaching-learning process. Moreover, this incredible tool has opened new ways for creativity in order to motivate students, giving them the opportunity to consider themselves as creators of their own learning.

For many years, technology was not seen as a supportive tool for education. Nevertheless, teachers and students started to change this by using it effectively. New ways of learning have appeared by the use of different tools that technology offers nowadays. One of these digital resources is Storybird. Storybird is a web page in which students feel free to create and demonstrate that learning a second/foreign language it is not as difficult as many people may think.

With the use of Storybird, students have the chance to develop a new way of understanding and using the English language through the creation of stories. Case studies have proved that using Storybird with students that are learning a second/foreign language help to develop and enhance writing skills. For this reason, this study presents a deep analysis of how Storybird works and helps students to acquire a language in a new way.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

1. TOPIC

Digital Storytelling: promoting writing literacy skills at an A2 level.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The development of technology through the years has greatly contributed to the improvement of many different social, economical, political, cultural, and educational areas. Therefore, nowadays, educational-technological resources are being integrated into the classroom, as seen in different research applied worldwide. Nevertheless, there is still a road to build up in terms of its implementation. Concretely speaking, the implementation of digital storytelling to promote writing literacy skills is still to be developed in local high schools.

3. BACKGROUND

English is a world language that is being taught as a second/foreign language in most schools and high schools in countries where English is not spoken as an official language, and, of course, in Ecuador. However, according to the latest International Education Organization Education First (EF) (2015) English Proficiency Index, 5th edition, Ecuador has been ranked in 38th place which belongs to a "low proficiency" level.

As a result, an English as Foreign Language (EFL) student in Ecuador does not have, in most cases, the ability to interact with a native speaker of English in either the written or spoken language; this may be because there is not a solid base or structure from the beginning of their studies. Secretaria Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) conducted research, in a national context, on the English language proficiency level students have. The results showed there is a low percentage of students that are able to manage the language (El Telégrafo, 2012).

This low level of English proficiency in Ecuadorian schools has raised interest in looking for new methodologies and techniques for enhancing the learning process. Moreover, "it is difficult to deny that students may not enjoy traditional classes because learners are living in a digital age… they have and use several technological mediums for entertainment or communication every day" (Montero & Santacruz, 2013, p. 15). In this way, educational institutions need to modify their teaching practices in order to make 21st century learners meet their needs.

4. JUSTIFICATION

Nowadays, technology has become one of the main tools to improve education around the world. "When used appropriately, technology has the potential to enhance students´ achievement and assist them in meeting learning objectives" (Shelly, Gunter & Gunter, 2012, p. 11). That is to say, implementing

innovative activities in the classroom, will stimulate not only students´ interests but involvement and, above all, meaningful learning. "Simply put, these technologies afford us the ability to convey concepts in new ways that would otherwise not be possible, efficient, or effective, with other instructional methods" (Klopfer, Osterweil, Groff & Haas, 2009, p. 4). As a result, the need to modernize the learning process is notorious in our days, and implementing technology in the classroom seems to perfectly serve the purposes of modern society.

Bill Sheskey (as cited in Blackboard Inc., 2010) mentions that "Educators in the 21st century realize that students entering the classroom today are much different from those who have come before. Today's students are demanding a change in the classroom because of their ability to gather information faster than any other generation." As the times have changed, education requires improvement in order to fulfill the new educational demands and challenges. This does not mean that the use of blackboards, notebooks, and course books will not still be helpful. The problem does not rely on the material but on how teachers use it.

In English there is an interactive way of using the language, and this is by stories. Stories allow students to use the language creatively, promoting writing literacy skills. Moreover, stories enclose real, authentic and natural dialogues in which students are able to develop new and real vocabulary (Pathan, 2012, p. 31). However, "Most EFL students hate to write as they have no experience, no confidence, no ideas, a slender vocabulary, skewed grammar and a vague notion

of punctuation. So, they should practice, practice and still more practice to learn writing" (Abdel-Hack & Abdel-Hamid, 2014, p. 9).

This paper attempts to foster writing literacy skills at an A2 level by systematically analyzing the literature with the implementation of digital storytelling. More concretely, improving writing literacy skills by using Storybird to incorporate story writing in the EFL classroom.

5. OBJECTIVES

5.1. General Objective

To promote the development of the writing skill through digital storytelling at an A2 level.

5.2. Specific Objectives

1. To systematically review the literature on digital storytelling to promote writing digital stories in the EFL classroom.

2. To compile activities that involve the use of Storybird for creating stories.

3. To design a didactic user's guide to properly implement digital storytelling (Storybird) in the EFL classroom.

4. To involve students in the development of their own learning by the creation of short creative writing pieces at an A2 level.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Technology in Education

Technology has evolved according to human needs, and it has been implemented as an effective classroom management tool in the field of education. For this reason, schools are currently trying to find proper ways to incorporate technological resources to improve and innovate daily teaching practices. Therefore, technology has been acting as an academic instrument in education which may help students adjust their own environment, adapting their needs with the development of their knowledge (Williams, 2012, p. 115). Chelsea LoBello (2015) stresses the importance of technology in education. She explains that "… students are surrounded by new ways and new technological advancements. Outside of the classroom, these technologies are a major aspect of their lives; for that reason, education should embrace and support this technological world our students live in" (p. 6).

However, teachers need to be creative when implementing technology into their teaching practices; they may want to teach and interact, so they have to "guide students to identify, select and use the most appropriate technology tools for all kinds of learning activities" (as cited in Deutsch, 2005). Most of the tools used by teachers during their classes, according to the International Society for

Teaching in Education (ISTE), contains "media, multimedia, hardware, software, electronic gradebook, presentation graphics, electronic references, communication, video, and audio authoring, and social networks among the others" (International Society for Technology in Education, 2016 p.1).

Moreover, ISTE highlights how students must be responsible for their actions while they learn through the use of some technology. At the same time, with the help of a teacher, students are able to confirm how, when, why, and where is the best moment to consider learning and acquiring a new language.

In a research, Smeets (2004) mentions that "many teachers apply several elements of powerful learning environments in their classes, especially the presentation of authentic tasks and the fostering of active and autonomous learning" (p. 343). Nevertheless, there still remain some teachers who continue to use limited teaching methods. For this reason, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) applications need to contribute to students' knowledge; that is to say, teachers must build a learning environment which aligns with students' comfort and enthusiasm, leading to cooperation in every tasks based on their needs.

Moreover, Tim Kasprowicz (2002) set out to "bridge the communication gap between … the student, the parent(s), and the teacher" (p. 4). He exemplifies how technology develops in response to men's needs to solve problems and make life easier, establishing that problem-based learning can also help an educator gain higher order thinking that leads to creative ideas (Kasprowicz, 2002, p. 4).

For Muehleisen (1997), "The Internet has the potential to provide a new learning environment that has rich digital textual, graphic, audio, video and other interactive features for the language learning approach as well as for culture" (p.1). In other words, the Internet has facilitated people to be in contact, not only with things related to academic purposes, but also to social information.

Angel Perez Gomez (2013), in his article La Era Digital Nuevos Desafíos Educativos (Digital Era – New Educational Challenges), talks about how the digital era has changed over the years. The Internet, as Perez says, deals with the fact that most people have the advantage of being connected with relatives, friends, and more. However, one important aspect is that technology has been an instrument for teenagers to improve their way of learning during their adolescence. Most teenagers have the possibility to be connected with the world through different social networking like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, among others. For this reason, teachers should be creative and use unusual and interesting tools to get students' interest, by taking into consideration students' predisposition to use technology. Finally, schools should create powerful learning scenarios, where students investigate, share, apply, and reflect on new information (p. 66-67).

2.2. Technology in English as a Second Language (ESL) / English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

People who learn a second/foreign language these days feel the necessity to improve their own way of acquiring knowledge. And as time changes, there is the need to ease the learning process. Nowadays, people find it easier to work in front of a computer than to write on a sheet of paper. "The popularity of information communication technology over the past decade has brought about the innovative use of the Internet in second language learning and teaching, particularly in the area of English as a Second Language (ESL)" (Liao, 1999, p. 1).

Currently, ESL students feel more confident about acquiring the language in a modern way than how it used to be many years ago. For this reason, as it was mentioned before, technology has been acting as an instrument to trigger students' motivation and understanding of the language. Kelliel Woodson (2015) explains that "technology can dramatically – and oftentimes instantly – increase student engagement. … Technology is exciting, fascinating and ever-evolving, and when used thoughtfully, it can transform even the most mundane lesson into one that is powerful and thought-provoking" (p.1).

Therefore, ESL students can be easily motivated if the teacher manages to integrate technology well, in acquiring a second language, having the opportunity to improve their own way of learning. As a result, students are able to build up their own knowledge in a meaningful way.

Moreover, using technology in the classroom will allow students to simulate real life experiences by increasing their own knowledge through visual learning. As a result, technology will help them enhance their vocabulary and their way of writing by multiple alternatives. "Technology can be instrumental in creating an innovative online grammar resource aimed at raising learner awareness of troublesome grammatical features" (Hegelheimer & Fisher, 2006, p. 2).

On the other hand, the use of technology in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom may offer many advantages for both learners and teachers. Implementing different activities will enhance learners' language skills, and the acquisition of the language. "If used creatively and wisely with suitable activities, the use of computer technology can help EFL learners in many ways and can be an effective tool to motivate EFL learners to seek and to fulfill their own learning needs by themselves" (Alsied & Pathan, 2013, p. 66). In other words, technology needs to be implemented in such a way that can provide a meaningful learning process. Using technology in classroom does not mean learning. Teachers need to create situations according to learners´ needs. Only in this way can the use of technology in classrooms be effective and productive. Richards and Renandya state (as cited in Bonilla, 2014, p. 429) "We should not lose sight of the fact that it is the teacher, not the technology, who determines the quality of the learning that takes place in the classroom." In addition, Rahma Al- Mahrooqi and Salah Troudi (2014) remark that, in order to develop students´ proficiency in a foreign language, institutions need "to invest time, effort and huge resources in order to cater for

different learning styles" (p. 1). In this way, it is important, not only to provide a good class environment (computers, material, hours, etc.), but to pay attention to students' different ways of learning.

In the article Using Technology in the Classroom: A Study with Turkish Pre-Service EFL Teachers, it is mentioned that the use of technology in EFL contexts will provide learners with great opportunities to learn the English language. This is because EFL learners do not have opportunities to be in touch with real language situations, and technology may help to overcome these problems (Merç, 2005, p. 229). Moreover, in Ecuador the number of academic hours officially scheduled to learn English in high schools has been reduced to 5 periods per week (El Telégrafo, 2015). This reduction in time does not allow learners to practice and assess their skills effectively. And it is here where teachers' creativity and the implementation of technology in class lessons can greatly help.

At the present time, adolescents are the ones who interact more with technology. They love the idea of being part of a new era in which they may develop and create new ways of understanding and learning in different kinds of contexts. Moreover, teachers are the ones who are also adapting this kind of process so they may find an interesting and interactive way of teaching a second/foreign language.

2.3. Digital Storytelling

The development of technology through the years has greatly contributed to the improvement of many different social, economic, political, and cultural areas, and in education indeed. As a result, there have emerged new teaching practices that try to contribute and enhance teaching and learning processes with the help of some technology. This is the case of storytelling, which has emerged in the last years with a new term: digital storytelling. "Combine the old age tradition of storytelling with the latest technology and the result is a compelling tool that motivates students to read more and write better" (Abdel-Hack & Abdel-Hamid. 2014. p. 9).

Storytelling has being part of human communication since ancient times. It has been known as one of the first methods of human expression, and it has lasted decades (Menezes, 2012, p. 229). Moreover, Olivier Serrat defines storytelling as "the vivid description of ideas, beliefs, personal experiences, and life-lessons through stories or narratives that evoke powerful emotions and insights" (Serrat, 2010, p.361). In this definition, we could highlight the word "vivid" which makes reference to the production of a strong or clear impression on the senses (Merriam Webster Dictionary ,2015). In this way, the art of storytelling is more than just telling a story; it is creating a magical connection between what it is being told and the senses. That is to say, a vivid description allows one to feel and to travel through the story. Not just listen to it.

Yan Xu, Hyungsung Park, and Youngkyun Baek (2011), mention that "Storytelling is widely used in classrooms to enrich the learning experience. Storytelling is a natural method of human communication and is prevalent in all aspects of human social interaction" (p. 181). That is to say, storytelling has allowed humans to express and communicate ideas, feelings, experiences, and thoughts in a natural way. As we can see, storytelling has been acting as a useful method of communication.

In present times, there has emerged a new form of storytelling, and this is digital storytelling. Nevertheless, the use of this new term is not separated from what storytelling is. Digital storytelling maintains the essence of storytelling, as Carmen Gregori (2008) states, "Digital storytelling owes its structure and elements to traditional storytelling; although it has considerably enriched its format, presentation and distribution modes with the inclusion of the newest multimedia technology" (p. 2). In other words, what has changed is just the way in which the stories are presented. Technology has made easier the process of creating stories, and at the same time has changed the format of their appearance.

Digital storytelling includes the use of some technology. In this way, learners are able to acquire the language and develop digital literacy at the same time. On one hand, they are going to acquire the English language by writing their own stories. On the other hand, as learners practice the language, they are also mastering some digital literacy (Banaszewski, 2005, p. 8).

Moreover, Erin Miller (2009) mentions that "Digital storytelling is the practice of combining still images with a narrated soundtrack including both voice and music" (p. 6). Taking this into consideration, the author gives us a clear idea of what digital storytelling is. Music mixed with stories creates a perfect combination, giving listeners the chance to be involved in the stories. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that before listeners or readers have the opportunity to listen to or to read the final stories, a whole process is done; as Anita Norman (2011) says, "students learn more during the digital storytelling process than what they express through the story itself" (p. 3). So it can be inferred that the implementation of digital storytelling in the classroom is not reduced to the final product, the presentation of a story using media. What is important is the whole process learners go through. During this process, learners are going to develop other skills, too. For presenting a final story, learners may change many times the perspective of their stories until they get what they really want to express. They may want to change the characters, the script, the images, the soundtrack, the plot of the story, among other aspects. All these changes show that learners are involved in the digital storytelling process. To sum up, the process is as important as the final presentation of the story. Student Dina states that "Digital storytelling is just like a Kinder Surprise; you get three in one. You use your English, you work on a topic, and you learn from the steps in the process" (as cited in Norman, 2011).

Yan Xu, Hyungsung Park, and Youngkyun Baek (2011), describe some characteristics of digital storytelling,

- *Flexibility* which refers to the act of changing and editing the story, whenever the learner will need to do it.

- *Universality* insuring that everyone can become the producer of the story.

- *Interactivity* where learners and technology work together.

- *Community Formation* due to the fact of a collaborative environment (p. 181).

2.3.1. Writing for Digital Storytelling

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the development of writing literacy skills with the use of digital storytelling. This means that this project will be focused on the writing process. It is well-known that before presenting a digital story, there is a writing stage which can be considered as the most important one. Learners need to write down what they want to express in order to give the story a logical sequence and meaning. If they do not write it down, there is no story.

Moreover, and according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (Council of Europe, n.d.) the story writing will follow an A2 level. In other words, students will be able to write about the following aspects:

- Everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences.

- Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.

- Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background and their present or most recent job.

- Can write short, simple, imaginary biographies and simple poems about people (Council of Europe, p. 23).

Writing is considered one of the most difficult skills to be mastered, even in the mother tongue. Learners of a language find it complicated to come up with a way to let their ideas flow and write them down in a coherent way. Some others lack of vocabulary or basic grammar feature which makes writing a difficult task (Sumer Abou, 2015, p. 24). Furthermore, Dr. Abdel-Hack and Dr. Abdel-Hamid (2014) from Benha University (Egypt) explain that "they [students] are always hesitant to write because they cannot generate ideas and they are afraid of making mistakes" (p. 9). Moreover, "Educators often have difficulty motivating upper elementary and adolescent students to write" (LoBello, 2015, p. 2). She also mentions that "Students' often argue that writing in school is "boring" or "irrelevant", but if you ask them about technology, they will have a much different response. Students understand how relevant technology is to their lives, and are motivated by that" (LoBello, 2015, p. 7).

2.3.2. The importance of writing in Digital Storytelling

Glen Bull and Sara Kajder (2004) note that "The goal of digital storytelling is to allow a writer to experience the power of personal expression" (p. 48). In this way, digital storytelling is the means that permits the writer to transmit all his/her

emotions through a story. That is to say, to feel the experience of what he/she is able to do. Chelsea LoBello (2015) mentions that "Digital storytelling has the power to not only improve student motivation towards writing, but also improve student self-perception, creativity, and overall writing performance" (p. 2). In a few words, with the help of digital storytelling, students will also develop other abilities. Digital Storytelling is not only important for inspiring students to write, but on how well they do it; moreover, it also contributes to students' personal growth. With the implementation of digital storytelling to create digital stories, students "…also become designers, listeners, interpreters, readers, writers, communicators, and thinkers" (Abdel-Hack & Abdel-Hamid, 2014, p. 11).

Abdel-Hack and Abdel-Hamid (2014) say that "there are variety of reasons of using DS [Digital Storytelling] in classroom such as: motivates students and involves them in the writing process, helps improve writing skills by having students learn to write with a concise point of view" (p. 17). In this way, students are writing for and with a purpose.

Moreover, the writing process of creating digital stories is based on a narrative style. Narrative style refers to the relating of events or telling a story. It includes two important aspects, a chronological and logical sequence of the different events, and the art of providing sufficient details of them (Abdel-Hack & Abdel-Hamid, 2014, p. 9). As a result, the use of this narrative style for writing is completely different from an essay or test writing. Narrative writing allows the writer to use the language in his/her own way. "It [Narrative writing] offers writers a

chance to think and write about themselves and their experiences" (Abdel-Hack & Abdel-Hamid, 2014, p. 11). Nevertheless, writing will of course provoke different difficulties for students. Some are related to language use (grammar, punctuation), and others associated with how to generate ideas for the story. However, all these complications are part of the learning process and will help to improve the writers' story outcome.

2.3.3. Why digital storytelling?

Digital storytelling has been acting as a powerful teaching and learning tool in which teachers and students create their own way of learning with the help of technology. Most of the time this is understood as a main source for second/foreign language learners, maintaining their creativity based on multimedia ideas.

For Bernard R. Robin (2008), digital storytelling is a technological application that works as an alternative to help teachers overcome problems presented in a classroom. It also facilitates the students' work. They become creative storytellers by researching, selecting, and writing exciting stories (p.222).

> "Digital storytelling does not need to be an additional task or more homework for students; it teaches skills that fit well within common learning guidelines set forth by many school districts. By working with students (and librarians), teachers can use digital storytelling as a fun and engaging learning activity for students" (as cited in Nordin, 2010, p. 2).

As we can see, digital storytelling usage does not have to be reduced to simple class assignments. It can easily become part of a lesson plan.

In addition, other researchers stated that "Digital storytelling refers to telling and creating a story in digital format using a computer. It is a process of writing about the story, and adding multimedia elements of voice, imagery, and music to create a visual story (Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 1)

For these reasons, Storybird is an instrument in which storytelling is an important mechanism to develop students' interests in writing and reading. Experts in this field think that interacting with pictures is a helpful way for people to learn easily and quickly. Moreover, users have the opportunity to express their feelings with images through a short and interesting story. As a matter of fact, researchers such as Burmark have found that "integrating visual images with written text both enhances and accelerates student comprehension; and digital storytelling is an especial technology tool for collecting, creating, analyzing, and combining visual images with written text" (as cited in Russell, 2013, p. 133). Moreover, many educators that are involved in multimedia projects with students would agree that some of the most significant gains are in higher-order thinking and problem - solving skills, including synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating, and presenting information. For this reason, this kind of tool may also act as a hook to capture the students' interest in learning and exploring new ideas. Some students may feel the necessity to create new stories according to pictures in order to express their emotions and attitudes.

There are plenty of digital sources that teachers can use to improve learners acquisition of a second or foreign language. Depending on the skills teachers want to enhance, different digital tools can be used. The aim of this research project is to promote writing literacy skills at an A2 level. There are many programs that contribute to this purpose such as Power Point, Movie Maker, Photo Story, Lit Lift, among others. Each of these programs provides different tools to create stories. Nevertheless, in this project, Storybird will serve as the source to promote literacy in terms of writing stories.

2.4. Storybird in Education

2.4.1. What is Storybird?

As it is known, there is a range of social media programs which help students develop their own language learning skills. Storybird is considered a social media tool that allows people to create their own stories and be able to share with people of different ages all around the world. Helena Menezes (2012) states that "Storybird is an extremely engaging collaborative story writing website that embodies three ideas – creating, reading, and sharing" (p.299). Moreover, it is an instrument that allows students to focus on the content of their writing rather than worrying about the pictures that they will use.

"A teacher can also use Storybird as a formative assignment to help students organize key concepts of the learned materials, or use as informal assessment that will gather student's learning information to evaluate students'

learning progress" (as cited in Nordin, 2010, p. 2). In this case, teachers have the opportunity to measure and assemble information to have a better understanding of lesson planning. Also, students have the chance to create their own work, and teachers will prepare their classes in a modern and creative way.

On the other hand, Avery (2011) says that "Storybird is a collaborative storytelling tool. Students use collections of art to be inspired to write stories. Once the art is chosen, students are able to build their story by dragging and dropping pictures and creating a story to match. It's great for teachers because they're able to easily create student accounts and assignments for students" (p.1).

Teachers and students learn from each other when they use Storybird. In this way, students will have the opportunity to interact in front of a computer by giving their own meaning to the drawings; moreover, teachers can have the possibility to help students increase their creativity, innovation, and increase their learning. As we can see, the creation of stories is a collaborative and autonomous process. Collaborative because teachers are the ones who guide and assess students while they are writing and autonomous because the students are the ones who write the stories using the material they like.

It is important to bring up Sylvester and Greenidge's (2009) statement that says: "Teachers should verify their districts' policy regarding publishing student work on the Internet before using Storybird. Also, Storybird is not meant to be used as major teaching method; it should be used as supplementary improvement only" (p.1). In other words, Storybird will make students come up with ideas that increase

their own vocabulary. It also will make students have a better understanding and practice to keep their minds working. That is why it is really important for teachers and students to demonstrate a really good management of the program in order to maintain the interest of Storybird.

2.4.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Storybird

Storybird is a useful instrument addressing adults, teens, and children. There is not a specific age to be entertained with Storybird. Most of its uses are based on artwork already given by the program. Moreover, people are free to share their stories by typing their friends' username on any comment they give.

Regina Steward (2015) mentions some advantages and disadvantages when using Storybird.

Advantages

- Storybird has easy and handy directions for users.

- People are able to sign up for free.

- Plenty of artwork to develop people's creativity by writing and making up their own stories.

- If some of its members do not feel free to share their stories with users, they able to keep it private.

- Storybird can be easily integrated into classroom activities.

- Teachers' are able to give private feedback to the student's stories.

- Storybird focuses on story-making as a collaborated process.

- When people share their work, friends and teachers are free to edit the story.

Disadvantages

- Storybird has limited artwork to choose from.

- It has a limited number of letters per slide; however, you can have as many slides as you wish.

- Teachers are not able to give feedback if students do not publish their stories.

- Students are not able to upload their own or any pictures to the program.

- The Storybird artwork guides the story because depending on what pictures there are in the artwork, they will create a story.

2.4.3. The influence of Storybird in Education

For many years, students were able to receive and produce information according to what the teachers had said. But in modern days, education has made a difference since students are the ones who interact and demonstrate how well they can learn by themselves.

Dollar and Tolu conducted a case study with 5th grade English language students in Turkey. The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation of digital story writing in the classroom. They focus on the following aspects, "teacher and student motivation, attitudes, perceived effects on writing skills, pedagogical applications in the classroom, and problems and suggestions for better use "

(Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 1). According to these authors, the importance and contribution of using digital stories relies to the fact that,

> "They help learners construct their own learning. In other words, they allow students to become active and autonomous learners, and through use of digital tools, students develop their language skills and improve their proficiency level. In order to create digital stories, students learn to become effective media viewers. If they are required to create digital stories, then they become critical viewers of media" (Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 1).

Digital story writing involves, not only the act of writing by means of a computer, but also the cognitive development of the learner. That is to say, the learner becomes the main source from which stories will emerge.

In the afore mentioned case study, Storybird was used as the means to create digital stories. Additionally, English teachers and one 5th grade class participated. Data was collected using the following instruments: observations, students' artifacts, and semi-structured and informal interviews with the teachers and students. The purpose of each of these elements relied on the following:

- Observations: to examine the attitudes and motivation.
- Artifacts: to analyze students' stories using a rubric, and based on language use, grammar, vocabulary, story length, creativity, discourse and plot.

- Interviews: to learn about their attitudes, motivation, processes they followed to create stories, and any problems including technical, and any suggestions they had (Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 2).

During the data analysis, researches agreed that teachers and students were anxious to use Storybird. "Teachers revealed positive attitudes and high motivation to implement digital story writing … Student were engaged more than when they were asked to write a story on paper" (Dollar & Tolu, 2013. p. 2).

Nevertheless, some problems came up during the writing process. Some students forgot their username and password. And others were not able to find pictures in the Storybird library to match with their stories (Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 3).

The study concludes by highlighting the following aspects. First, Storybird is a tool that can be easily integrated in the classroom for writing purposes. Second, students felt motivated and their class participation increased. Finally, the researchers mention that "it should be noted that technology itself does not improve foreign language learning. Only when implemented with sound pedagogy, can technology enhance language learning" (Dollar & Tolu, 2013, p. 4).

A second case study was carried out in Bogota-Colombia by Yeison Herrera from the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. He did a research based on students who wanted to promote their creativity in writing stories using Storybird. He used two groups of learners to improve certain specific aspects of their writing skill. According to Herrera, he expected the students to be in an

English language proficiency at an upper-intermediate level (B2) conforming to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), but their writing skill was below average (Herrera, 2013, p. 166).

One of the biggest problems that students have, according to the research, was that some of them did not have a clear idea on how to create and organize their writing. For this reason, there was the necessity to enhance the students' writing based on real life situations.

"When creating a storyboard, learners can discuss what they want their story to say, how to structure it and what images to use. The creation of storyboards as a prewriting strategy helps learners develop their writing skill" (Herrera, 2013, p. 170). Two groups of learners (adults from 18 to 24 years old) volunteered to be part of this study. The study was focused on the following:

- A pedagogical intervention: based on a collaborative strategy for the production of stories supported by Storybird emerged from the learners' necessity to improve their narrative skills in short time.

- Focus group: Learners talked about their feelings and the extent to which Storybird and the Collaborating Writing (CW) strategy had helped them to overcome their writing difficulties.

- Survey: applied at the end of the intervention cycles in order to validate the data analysis, and how well the students developed their own learning process.

- Pre and post tests: to measure the knowledge learners gained (Herrera, 2013, p. 171-172).

During the research, the students felt comfortable with the use of Storybird. The main point was to create in learners a way of acquiring a new model of writing. That is to say, students were able to organize their ideas while creating their own stories. Also, they knew that a story had chronological events, an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

"Their vocabulary is expanding enormously when they write they stories and when they have to negotiate meaning and/or correct their partners' stories and look for new words" (as cited in Herrera, 2013, p. 176). Consequently, students' vocabulary started to increase because they feel the need to expand it since they feel encouraged and motivated to do their writing tasks. Moreover, they knew that somebody else was going to read their stories.

At the end of the study, "they become more aware of the use of structures, improve their vocabulary and the attempts to write more complex sentences increase" (Herrera, 2013, p. 177). Also, learners reflect on the language content and create meaning, expanding their vocabulary and using more accurate, and complex structures when writing narrative texts.

Finally, Angela Hortman (2012) contributes with a case study based on effective writing strategies to engage and support two second grade English Language Learners. The students were from Spanish speaking backgrounds, but displayed different abilities. The research implemented effective writing workshops

that integrated technology in order to improve second language learners writing. The main tool used by the researcher was Storybird. Hortman implemented the use of technology to discover if visual aids help students to get their thoughts on paper as well as improve their writing all together (p. 2).

The study was based on two students from a Spanish background. The first girl was from Puerto Rico, and the other girl born in the USA but with Nicaraguan parents. Even though both of the girls had different abilities in the English language, both had the ability to develop an understandable assignment with writing skills. Hortman emphasizes that "Educators should also respect a child's culture and celebrate diversity in his or her classroom" (as cited in Hortman, 2011 p.5). A lot of English language learners have unstable backgrounds and there is a need as educators to be sensitive to their own background knowledge when they construct their own writing (Hortman, 2012, p. 5).

During the process of the study, students managed to figure out how their background, lifestyle, and their own environment helped them in order to develop their writing using technology. Since Storybird acts as a tool which works with drawings, it also helped the children to find tangible visual means of representing their thoughts. At the end, students produced stronger pieces of writing specifically using language control and detail in their writing skills.

The following charts show an analysis and interpretation of the three qualitative case studies mentioned before. The subsequent aspects were taken

into consideration in order to find out whether writing literacy skills were increased or not.

Location and Time Application

	Case study # 1 Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study	Case study # 2 Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.	Case study # 3 ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study
LOCATION	Turkey	Colombia- Bogota	The Unite States (Georgia)
TIME APPLICATION	6 weeks	8 weeks	3 weeks
DIGITAL STORYTELLING TOOL	Storybird		
SKILL	Writing		

Case studies one and two took place in English as Foreign Language countries. That is why the duration of the cases lasted between six and eight weeks. However, case number three was developed in an English speaking country so it lasted three weeks due to the fact that English is used as the mother tongue. All three case studies use the Storybird digital tool to enhance writing skills of the participants.

Participants

Case study # 1 **Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study**	Case study # 2 **Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.**	Case study # 3 **ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study**
Three English language teachers with their 5th grades (10–11 year old children)	The first group with fifteen learners aged from 18 to 24 years old (8 women and 7 men). The second group with 10 learners aged from 23 to 27 years old (7 women and 3 men, 4 were undergraduates and 6 workers).	Two 2nd grade English Language Learners. • One girl from Puerto Rico. • Other girl born in the U.S.A, but with Nicaraguan parents.

Participants in cases one and three were primary children between six and eleven years. In case two, teenagers and adults were part of a private institute. For this reason, the results are going to vary from one case to another.

Objectives

Case study # 1 Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study	Case study # 2 Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.	Case study # 3 ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study
The study aims at investigating how digital storytelling affects young EFL learners' language learning, and how it can increase their motivation and engagement in language learning.	Presenting how the use of Collaborative Writing (CW) through Storybird, a web 2.0 tool which promotes the creation of stories collaboratively, led two groups of learners to improve certain specific aspects of their writing skill.	To study the effects of technology, specifically Storybird, on ELL students' writing.

Each case study focuses their goals according to the students' needs. The first study has a flexible and understandable objective in which students will be motivated to manage storytelling by the use of technology when writing their stories. In the second study, teens and adults will be able to improve their writing skills using CW (Collaborative Writing), developing their own thinking and understanding of their writing. Finally, the third case study is also similar to the cases mentioned before; students will increase their writing using Storybird.

Results

Case study # 1 Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study	Case study # 2 Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.	Cas e study # 3 ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study
Using a digital story tool increases student motivation. Our participants' motivation was quite high as observed by their teachers and the researchers. They were enthusiastic about sharing their stories with their classmates, teachers and even the researchers.	The CW strategy supported with the use of Storybird conveys to learners to improve specific aspects of the written language. They become more aware of the use of structures, improve their vocabulary and the attempts to write more complex sentences increases.	Students produced stronger pieces of writing specifically using language control and detail.

The results in the three case studies are similar. In the first one, students built up confidence and motivation after making their own stories. In the second study, teens and adults became aware of structures, vocabulary and complex sentences while making their stories with the use of CW. Finally, in the third case study, students came up with stronger abilities in the use of the language according to their social background information.

Limitations

Case study # 1 Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study	Case study # 2: Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.	Case study # 3 ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study
• Students lost the username and password information to logon the classroom site. • One student complained that he was not able to find pictures matching his story in the Storybird library.	• It was primarily limited by its short time. • Learners could feel limited by the range of pictures offered by Storybird.	• Time for assessment.

We found some limitations related to each case study. First, students were not able to remember their passwords, so they felt frustrated by this situation. Second, the time was short when making the stories. In the last case study, the assessment was a little bit complicated for the teacher at the moment of assessing the students. Finally, we found one common limitation between case studies one and two. Students felt disappointed while they were looking for pictures. The pictures offered by Storybird were limited for them while they were writing their digital stories.

Assessment

Case study # 1 **Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study**	Case study # 2 **Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.**	Case study # 3 **ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study**
The rubric was created by the researchers with numerical findings.	Examiners mark tasks using assessment scales that were developed with explicit reference to the Common European Framework of Reference For Languages (CEFR). The scales, which are used across the spectrum of our General English, Academic and Professional English and Business English Writing tests, consist of four subscales: Content, Communicative Achievement, Organization, and Language.	A WIDA rubric and specific checklists to reviewed their writing behaviors throughout this case study helped alleviate subjective the analysis.

For each case study, different rubrics were used (See Appendix 1, 2, 3). As we can see, each one of them depends on the student's needs. But in the third case study, the teacher found it difficult to assess the students because the rubric was a bit complicated for students of a young age. For this reason, the teacher had to adapt the student's necessities to the rubric.

Strategies

Case study # 1 Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study	Case study # 2 Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool.	Case study # 3 ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study
They created puppets out of papers and fabric and used them to narrate their stories in the classroom.	They created *focus groups*. Learners talked about their feelings and the extent to which Storybird and the CW strategy had helped them to overcome their issues. Since learners reflected in small groups, they gained more confidence to answer questions and share ideas.	Students were able to develop their own learning by connecting their ideas according to each student's background information. Also, they managed to be in contact with real life situations and made that appear in their writing.

Different aspects were taken into consideration while students were designing their stories. In one of the cases, teachers, in order to capture the listeners' attention, made puppets in order to make the listeners feel the real story while listening to it. In the second case study, focus groups were designed. This made the students and teachers feel comfortable while making up their stories; at the same time students had the opportunity to express their thoughts, worries, and anxieties when writing their stories. Finally, in the third case, the teacher used an interesting strategy in which students would have the chance to express and

develop their own writing including their own real life situations, due to the fact that each student belonged to a different social background.

2.5. Constructivism in the Classroom

Constructivism is known as a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. For many years, teachers used to manage a classroom without thinking about students´ needs. Teachers were the ones who created a way to learn, and students did not have the autonomy to contradict the teacher. The lack of communication between teacher and students made experts come up with new methodologies to improve learning. Nowadays, the students are the ones who create and develop their own knowledge while the teachers become guides.

2.5.1. Conceptualization

Janet Giesen (2005) mentions that "constructivism is a way in which people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences" (p.1). Using Storybird, students themselves are going to experience the fact of creating stories in a digital way. Additionally, after they have published their stories, students will share their experiences during the writing process.

Moreover, Davis, Maher and Noddings (1990) say that it's important to know that "each learner has a tool kit of concepts and skills with which he or she must

construct knowledge to solve problems presented by the environment" (p.3). Since each of the students have their own "tool kit," stories will be different. Students have different ways of seeing the world. Thus, each of the stories will reflect a part of the students' identity. That is to say, students will face real facts according to their own necessity in order to develop independence on their own writing.

For this reason, constructivism is shown as a foundation in which students and teachers have the chance to interact and learn from each other. Students have the opportunity to build up their own knowledge step by step with the help of the teacher.

On the other hand, nowadays, constructivism also deals with technology. For this reason, there is a close relationship between both of them. Abbas, Lai-Mei and Hairul (2013) mention that "Constructivism states that learning takes place in contexts, while technology refers to the designs and environments that engage learners" (p. 49). According to this, constructivism and technology create a useful atmosphere in a way that students are able to build up their own knowledge. As constructivism deals with contexts, then the students will face the fact of becoming independent storywriters. All their previous knowledge and experiences will help them to construct a story. On the other hand, technology is related to the environment, so the use of the computer lab and the Storybird website will provide this requirement.

"The roles of constructivist teachers are to create a learning environment that is invigorating, interactive, immersive, and informative" (Abbas, Lai-Mei &

Hairul, 2013, p.50). Therefore, their way of teaching must have a useful and motivating environment based on the students' needs, and, as was mentioned before, technology plays an important role in this context.

> "Classroom teachers become facilitators who assist students in constructing their own understandings and capabilities in carrying out tasks on computer technologies. The shift from lecture and recitation, which often still occurs in secondary classrooms, to coaching automatically supports a constructivist approach to learning; computer encourages the teacher to play the role of a coach" (as cited in Amarin & Ghishan, 2013, p.53).

Since teachers act as coaches in the student's learning process, new ways of acquiring the language must be taken into consideration. As the learning process increases with technology, teachers feel free to develop in students a different way of learning. Thus, students will interact according to their needs developing their own creativity.

2.6. Creativity

Technology allows students to use their minds in many different and productive ways, and teachers must know how to take advantage of this knowledge. "Youth possess often unappreciated repertories of practice which allow them to use their imagination and creativity to combine print, visual and digital modes in combinations that can be applied to new educational, civic, media and

workplace contexts" (Walsh, 2007, p. 79). The digital era has facilitated access to a lot of information in any place and at any time. Young people have rapidly mastered the use of any technological device, and this can become a powerful source to develop creative skills.

"Creativity is closely associated with advances in technology, and it is logical that an important objective of technology education is the development of creative abilities" (Peterson, 2001, p. 1). As a result, creativity, technology, and education are terms that necessarily need to be connected in our modern society. Helping students to develop creativity, with the use of Storybird they will enhance their performance, not only in the classroom, but also in other contexts due to the fact that it will promotes personal development.

However, most of the time students do not feel the confidence to challenge themselves and be creative, and one reason may be the lack of scenarios with which to do it. Anna Craft, Bob Jeffrey and Mike Leibling (2001) note in their book Creativity in Education, the following: "In order to prosper, creativity needs opportunity" (p. 76). That is to say, creativity does not only ask students to come up with some ideas. It gives them the chance to try to from different sources so that they can think, reflect, and create. And this is what this project aims to do. With the use of Storybird, students will be able to write and construct stories by choosing from the Storybird library. There is no limit for students' imagination. Moreover, students know when they are prepared to do a task, and if they follow their interests, learning will have importance, and it will be meaningful.

2.6.1. Conceptualization

Throughout the last years, the educational system has tried to promote creativity in students from childhood. The use of different activities and even the creation of some scholar clubs aim to reach the development of creative skills. But, what is creativity?

The video "Creativity- It´s our future," summarizes essential ideas and concepts about creativity. It mentions that creativity does not mean having knowledge of everything; what it really encompasses is what you can produce with that knowledge. "Creativity is about storytelling… and expression… and passion… and heart" (Adove Tv, 2013). And this is what we want the students to produce. To transport all that they know into a story. With what they know we do not only refer to the language (grammar, vocabulary, etc.), but to their life experiences. A simple story can hide a lot of feelings.

2.6.2. Creativity in Education

Traditional education has not given chances to develop learners´ creativity. This means that students have not been allowed to think "outside of the box." The current educational system needs to foster, not only well instructed leaders, but also creative individuals. Wayne Morris (2006) mentions that "creative teaching may be defined in two ways: firstly, teaching creatively and secondly, teaching for creativity" (p. 4). As we can see, teachers are the ones in charge of being aware of how they teach, and what they teach.

In the same way, creativity seems to be stronger than knowledge in educational settings. "Knowledge, as an outcome of education is said to be no longer sufficient" (Shaheen, 2010, p.166). In other words, the aim of our educational system in the twenty-first century will not be to measure what and how much an individual knows, but what he can do or create with that. Moreover, knowledge changes, and what someone learns today might not be useful five or ten years later. Furthermore, for Robina Shaheen (2010), creativity must be seen as a fundamental life skill because it plays and will play an important role not only in educational environments but in socio-economic issues, too (p. 166).

Keith Lloyd and Peter Smith (2008) state that there are some important aspects to think about when giving a definition to creativity for learning. These aspects are the following: imagination to think; purpose to achieve a goal; originality to give novelty; and value (p. 3). As Storybird will be used to promote creativity, then it is important to know where the above aspects will be presented. First, imagination will be reflected in the fact that students will have to think. Think about what they want to write about; this is to imagine a scenario, characters, and a plot. Second, the purpose to achieve a goal. This will be reflected in the fact of writing a story. Third, students, especially youths, know how to impress others, and, of course, to give originality to their products. In such a way, every single story is going to be unique. Finally, value. This is related to the final product, the story. And it is also connected with the objective. Students will write so that they will have

something at the end of the process. And of course, the final story will have value for each of the students.

Adove Tv asked Sir Ken Robinson for a definition of creativity. He is considered an expert in subjects related to creativity in education. He stated that "creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value" (Adobe Tv, 2012). Moreover, he emphasizes that creativity is a process, not an accident. That is to say, creativity is constructed by phases in which ideas change constantly, and little by little, something is created. "Often the idea you start with is not the one you end up with" (Adove Tv, 2012). So while students are reading, writing or thinking, suddenly something new shows up and changes their plans and when writing stories this will happen. Students will write and erase their stories many times until they finally get the right one. As a matter of fact, their final product will be a compilation of all those changes.

The role that creativity plays in learners´ cognitive development helps to construct holistic individuals. "Enable pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better. It should give them the opportunity to become creative, innovative, and enterprising" (Shaheen, 2010, p. 168).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Basic Methodology

Our research paper is based on a systematic literature/bibliographical research, due to the fact that academic sources have been analyzed to triangulate information and therefore support this study.

In the bibliographical research, different articles and books were taken into consideration in order to have a better understanding of our topic. *The Impact of Digital Storytelling on Fourth Grade Students' Motivation to Write* by Chelsea LoBello had been an important source of information which has contributed to the monograph giving us a meaningful and deep understanding of our study.

Also, case studies were analyzed with the purpose of coming up with a more accurate perspective about the use of digital storytelling. As Kesli Dollar and Aylin Tolu in their article *Examining the 5th Grade English Language Learners' First Experience of Writing Digital Stories: A Case Study*, gave an essential contribution as to how students were able to manage their writing skills becoming active and autonomous learners with the help of digital storytelling. On the other hand, as digital storytelling has different purposes for writing a story, Storybird is one of them. The article, *Writing skill enhancement when creating narrative texts through the use of collaborative writing and the Storybird Web 2.0 tool* written by

Yeison Herrera acts as a second case study which promotes the student's creativity on writing stories using Storybird. Finally, Angela Hortman in her article *ELL Writing Strategies: A Case Study* mentions how technology may be a practical tool to engage and develop writing skills in students.

The articles, previously mentioned, have been important sources in order to collect useful information that has greatly contributed to the development of this topic as they have provided us with information regarding the writing skill, learners' independence by the use of Storybird, interaction between teachers and students' and interests in writing literacy skills and students' perceptions about the use of digital storytelling.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The bibliographical information gathered in this project has served to highlight some important aspects regarding to the implementation of some technology to promote writing skills. As a result, the following conclusions were developed:

- The implementation of technology in an EFL classroom has the potential to enhance the learning process due to the fact that it facilitates communication. As is known, learning English as a Foreign Language requires a lot of effort on teachers and students in countries where the English Language is not the mother tongue. Nevertheless, technological advancements give the chance to improve language skills by different means such as web pages, online games, videos, among others.

- Digital storytelling is seen as a significant resource to involve students in the development of the English language; concretely speaking, in the improvement of writing skills because of its natural way of using the language to communicate. As a result, students feel confident to use the language in their own way, which allows them to make different decisions during the learning process; and as a result, improving language learning in

a different manner, as well. Furthermore, digital storytelling challenges them to use their imagination to create short compositions by using pictures. Additionally, the different activities proposed in the didactic guide for teachers show the varied uses of Storybird for a class lesson.

- The three case studies analyzed have provided a deeper understanding of the benefits of incorporating digital storytelling using Storybird. Moreover, they have shown that this webpage has the potential to improve students' writing skills through different techniques. Moreover, the attractive design of the Storybird webpage facilitates the use of this program in classes. Additionally, Storybird provides the creation of different storyboards which allow students to give meaning to each of them by writing.

- With the use of Storybird, students not only are able to develop writing literacy skills but also technological ones.

- The implementation of digital storytelling using the webpage Storybird must be seen as a complementary tool in the English classroom. It can be easily implemented in a class lesson, and best of all, students can manage this tool easily.

- As a personal experience, this research project has greatly contributed to our personal learning enrichment. During the research, we had the opportunity to learn a lot about the role technology plays in the current classroom. In a few words, we can say that teachers are in charge of using technology effectively and productively. That is to say, we, as teachers,

need to look for different techniques or strategies to implement this tool in the classroom. Just implementing technological devices in the classroom will not enhance learning, teachers need to guide it.

4.2 Recommendations

- Storybird should allow students to add their own pictures to the *Art Gallery* in order to create new digital stories. Furthermore, this will help the page to have even more published stories to share with other members that belong to Storybird.

- As it was seen, the implementation of Storybird in class requires an Internet connection. For private schools, it could be easy to have access to this requirement. Nevertheless, some public or rural schools sometimes have limited technological resources. All the same, this may not be seen as a big problem due to the fact that students can create their compositions using other means. That is to say, students can use pictures from different books, magazines, newspaper, etc. Here is where teachers' creativity must been shown.

- As said before, Storybird is a complementary tool to improve writing skills. So teachers need to create learning situations where the use of Storybird and educational goals fit.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Example Rubric Case Study #1

		1 (Poor)	2 (Average)	3 (Good)	4 (Strong)
Creativity and Language	Visuals				
	Vocabulary				
	Sentences				
	Adjectives				
Discourse	Coherence				
	Cohesion				
	Plot				
	Characters				
Grammar and Mechanics	Grammar				
	Mechnaics				
Comments and Total Point					

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Ana Gabriela Peñaranda Chucino

APPENDIX 2

Example Rubric Case Study #2

Cambridge English: First for Schools Writing Examiners use the following assessment scale:

B2	Content	Communicative achievement	Organization	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	ses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well-organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
4	Performance shares features of bands 3 and 5			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well-organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control Errors do not impede communication.
2	Performance shares features of bands 1 and 3			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task in generally appropriate ways to communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed	Performance below band		

Retrieved from: http://www.britishcouncil.org/macedonia-exams-fce-dec-08.pdf

APPENDIX 3

Example Rubric Case Study #3

Writing Rubric of the WIDA Consortium (Grades 1-12)

Task Level	Linguistic Complexity	Vocabulary Usage	Language Control
1 **Entering**	Single words, set phrases or chunks of simple language; varying amounts of text may be copied or adapted; adapted text contains original language.	Usage of highest frequency vocabulary from school setting and content areas.	Generally comprehensible when text is copied or adapted from model or source text; comprehensibility may be significantly impeded in original text.
2 **Emerging**	Phrases and short sentences; varying amount of text may be copied or adapted; some attempt at organization may be evidenced.	Usage of general language related to the content area; lack of vocabulary may be evident.	Generally comprehensible when text is adapted from model or source text, or when original text is limited to simple text; comprehensibility may be often impeded by errors.
3 **Developing**	Simple and expanded sentences that show emerging complexity used to provide detail.	Usage of general and some specific language related to the content area; lack of needed vocabulary may be evident.	Generally comprehensible when writing in sentences; comprehensibility may from time to time be impeded by errors when attempting to produce more complex text.
4 **Expanding**	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity; emerging cohesion used to provide detail and clarity.	Usage of specific and some technical language related to the content area; lack of needed vocabulary may be occasionally evident.	Generally comprehensible at all times, errors don't impede the overall meaning; such errors may reflect first language interference.
5 **Bridging**	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in a single organized paragraph or in extended text; cohesion and organization	Usage of technical language related to the content area; evident facility with needed vocabulary.	Approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers; errors don't impede comprehensibility.
6 **Reaching***	A variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in a single tightly organized paragraph or in well-organized extended text; tight cohesion and organization	Consistent use of just the right word in just the right place; precise Vocabulary Usage in general, specific or technical language.	Has reached comparability to that of English proficient peers functioning at the "proficient" level in state-wide assessments.

Source of research: WIDA Rubric

Autoras: Ximena Gabriela Ortiz Orellana
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DIDACTIC GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCING MYSELF

Level: A.2	Time: 40 min	Skill: Writing

Goal:
At the end of the lesson, students will be able to introduce themselves using basic language forms.

Materials:
Worksheets, computer, markers, pens/pencils, blackboard, dictionary.

PROCEDURE

WARM-UP (5-8 minutes)

- Ask students what they say when they see someone they do not know.
- Elicit "hello" and ask students what other greetings they know.
- On the board write:

I am 15	Hi	Good Morning
	Hello	
I like...	Bye	My name is...

- Tell students they have two minutes to introduce as many of their classmates as possible.

PRESENTATION (10 minutes)

- The teacher shows students an example of self-introduction using Storybird.
  Example

I am Kate

GabyOrtizOrellana

My name is Kate.
I'm 12 years old.

I love eating ice -cream with my friends.

I'm a student.
I love walking in the park.

I love animals.
I want to be a
veterinarian.
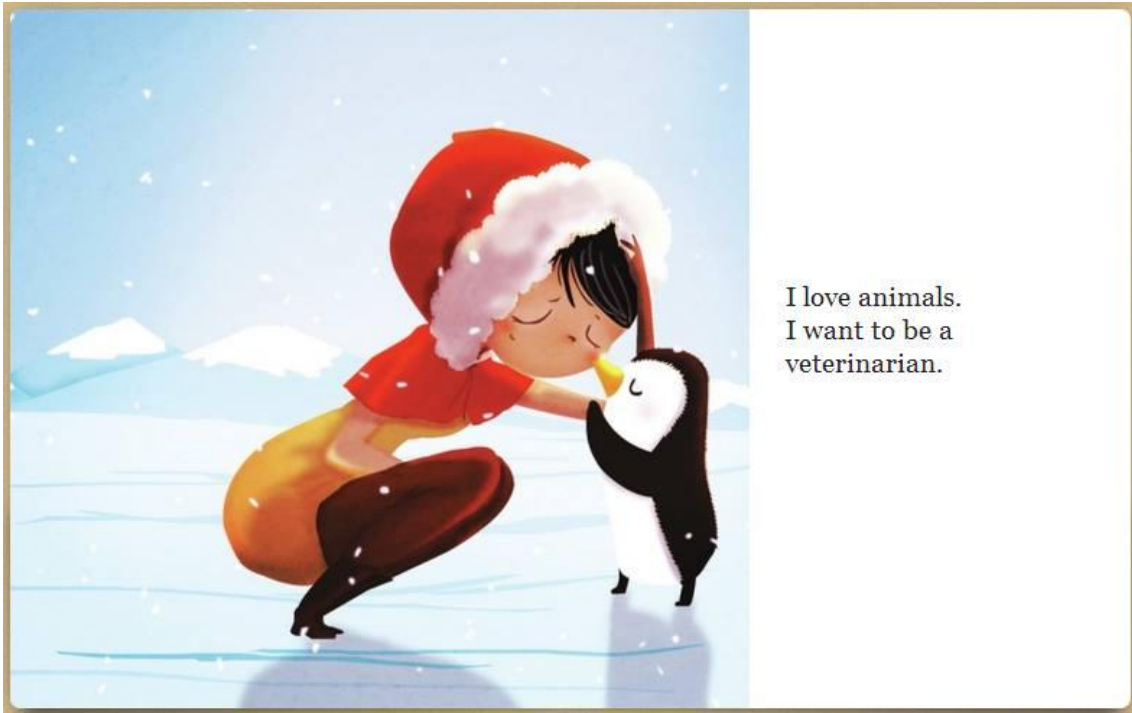
PRODUCTION ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

- Students will brainstorm as much information as possible about themselves.
  Example:

Gabriela
23 years old

Ecuadorian
live in
Gualaceo

love pizza

Who am I?

I´m a student

I have two
brothers,
Juan and
Fernando

I like listenig
to music /
romantic
music
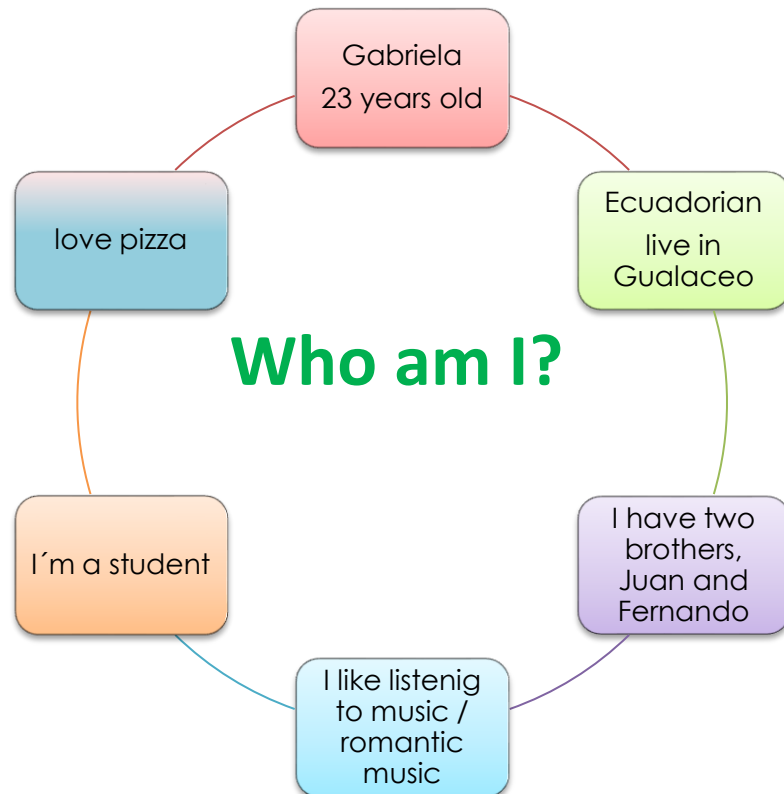
WRITING ACTIVITY (10 minutes)

- After brainstorming, students will organize their information in order to write a brief composition about themselves.

Example

> Hello.
>
> My name is Gabriela. I am 23 years old. I am Ecuadorian, and I live in Gualaceo. I am a student. I have two brothers, Juan and Fernando. I like listening to romantic music, and I love pizza.

HOMEWORK

- Using the previous model, and Storybird write your own introduction about yourself.

WORKSHEET

INTRODUCING MYSELF

- Brainstorm ideas about yourself

Who am I?
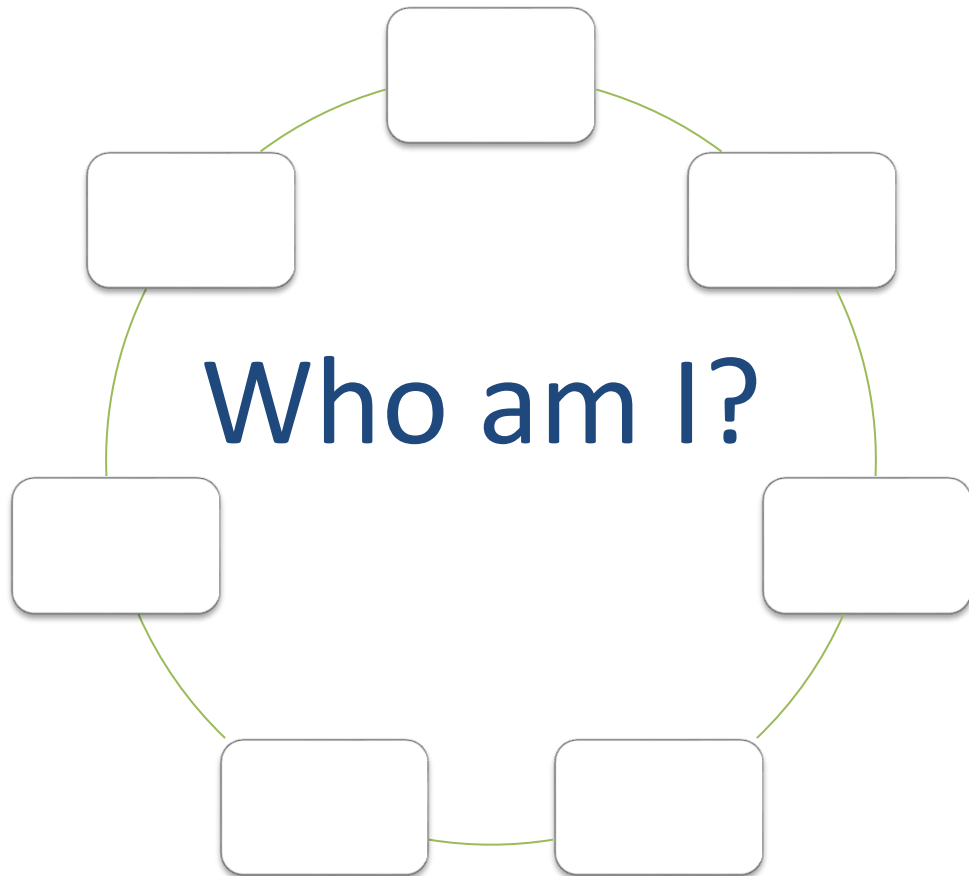
Hello.
My name

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO TO THE MOVIES?

| Level: A.2	Time: 40 min	Skill: Writing

Goal:
At the end of the lesson, students will be able to write about daily activities using adverbs of frequency.
Materials:
Worksheets, computer, markers, pens/pencils, blackboard, dictionary.

PROCEDURE

WARM-UP (10 minutes)

- Students write four statements about what they do daily.
- Then they get in pairs and ask their partners to guess something about them with a "How often" question like "How often do I skip lunch?" If their partner's first answer isn't the right adverb of frequency, they give hints like "much more often" and "a little less often" until their partners get exactly the right one.

PRESENTATION (15 minutes)

- Students will read "A day with Alicia" story.

A day with Alicia

Oogeley Boogeley 5

GabyOrtizOrellana

Alicia is a happy girl.
She always gets up at
7:00 a.m.

Alicia often goes to a restaurant to have breakfast with her parents.

Alicia's mother frequentely takes her to the market.
Alicia loves helping her mother with the groceries.

Alicia usually plays with her little brother and sister.

At night, Alicia rarely watches the stars before going to sleep.

Alicia always goes to bed before midnight.
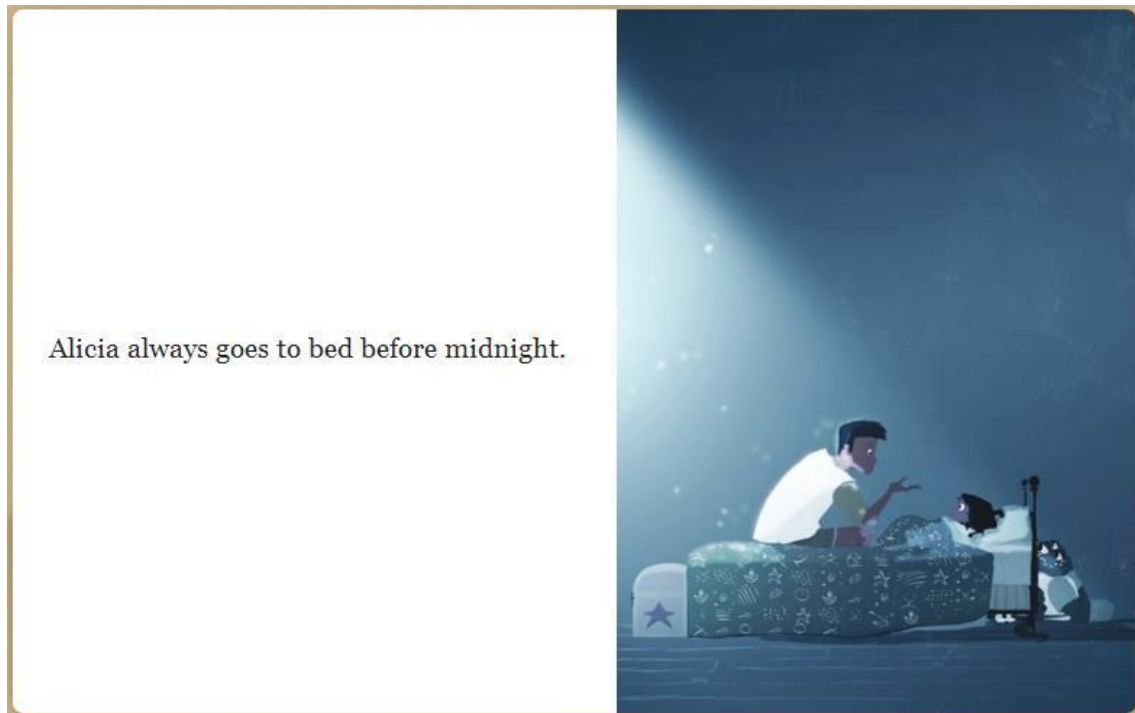
Reading Comprehension

1. **After reading the story, decide if the following statements are True or False. Correct the false statements.**

	True	False

- o Does Alicia always get up at seven?
- o Alicia never goes to a restaurant to have breakfast.
- o Alicia always watches the stars before going to sleep.

2. **Choose the correct answer according to the text.**

- o Alicia´s mother _____ takes her to the marker.
  - a) sometimes
  - b) frequently
  - c) never
- o Alicia _____ plays with her little brother and sister.
  - a) always
  - b) sometimes
  - c) usually
- o Alicia_____ goes to bed before midnight.
  - a) always
  - b) rarely
  - c) never

3. **Answer the following questions.**

   o Who does Alicia live with?

   _____

   o Where do Alicia and her mother go to buy groceries?

   _____

   o What does Alicia do before going to sleep?

   _____

PRODUCTION (15 minutes)

PAIR WORK

- Students will prepare an interview for a partner about his/her daily activities.

Example:

HOW OFTEN DO YOU..?

Partner´s name:_____

How often do you wash the dishes?

How often do you wake up at 10 a.m.?

How often are you late for school?

How often do you cook lunch?

How often do you watch TV in the evening?

How often do you go to bed at 9 p.m.?

How often do you wash your clothes?

How often do you study English?

HOMEWORK

- Students will write a short report with their partner´s information. They will present the report using Storybird.

WORKSHEET

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO TO THE MOVIES?

- Look at the chart and write four statements about your daily activities.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
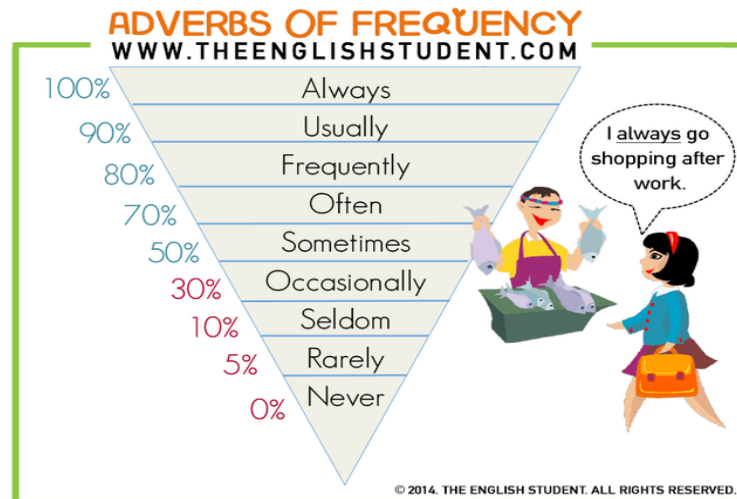
AN IDEAL PARTNER

wikiHow

Level: A.2	Time: 80 min.	Skill: Writing/Speaking

Goal:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe someone's personality by writing a short compositions using sequence words to show order.

Materials:

Worksheets, computer, markers, pens/pencils, blackboard, dictionary.

WARM UP (15 minutes)

- The teacher will give out sheets of papers with pictures of three different men.
- The teacher will introduce to the students his/her ideal partner. She/He will write the physical and emotional characteristics of his her partner on the board.
- Students will listen to the description and identify the teacher´s partner.

PROCEDURE (25 minutes)

- With the information gathered in the previous activity and with the use of Storybird, students will write a description of their ideal partner.
  Example:

My ideal partner

First, I would like a partner with a good appearance. A boy with brown hair, big black eyes, and white skin.
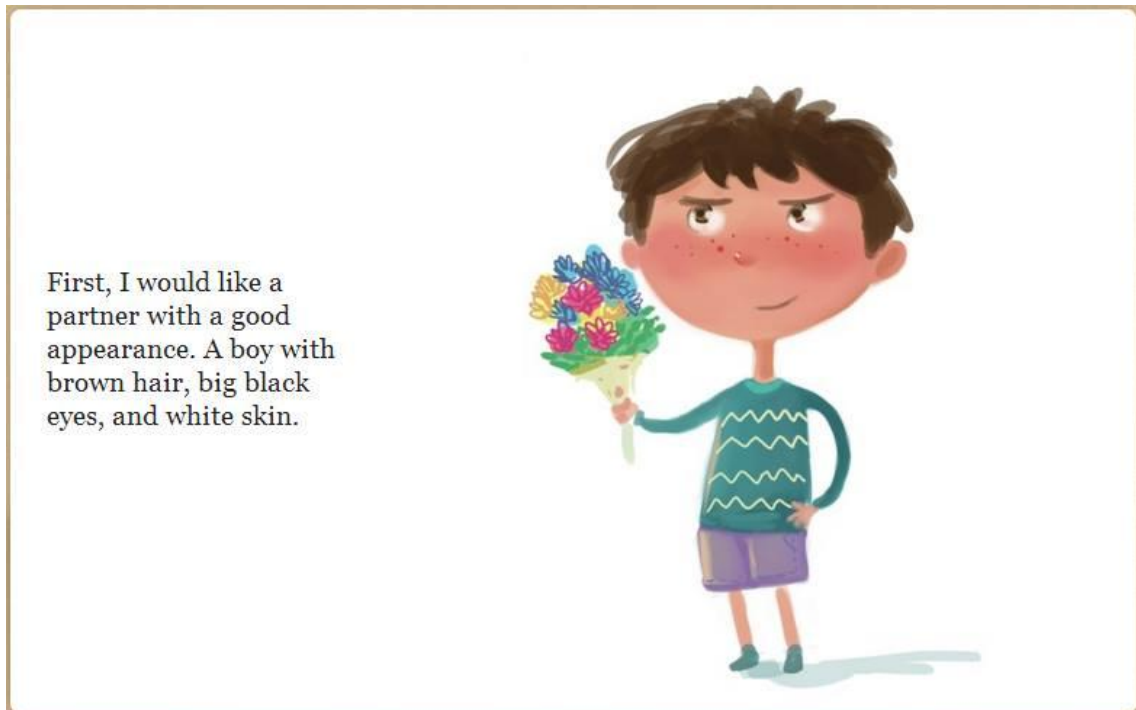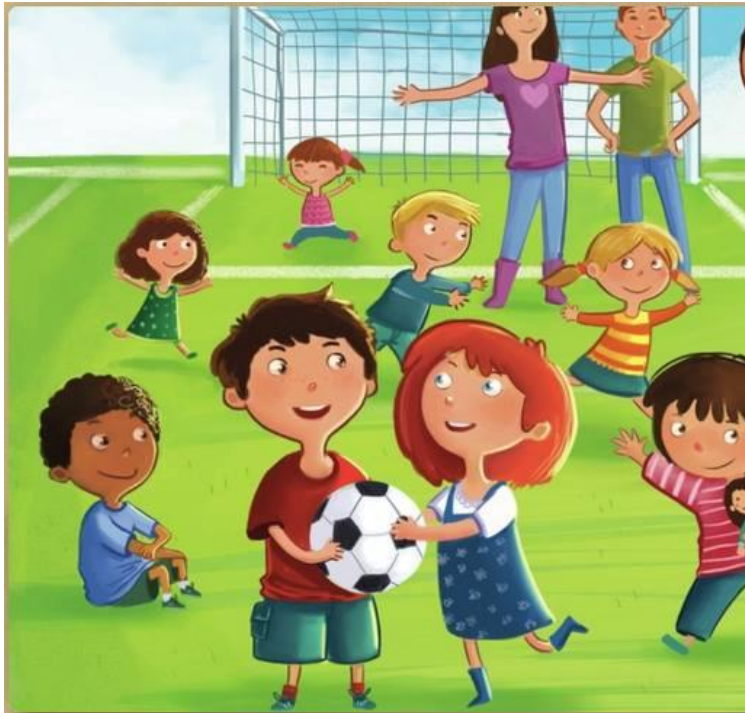
Second, I want a partner who likes sports because I like to be active. I would rather play basketball or soccer than stay at home and watch TV all day.

Third, I would like a partner who enjoys taking pictures. Having the best memories printed out in a photograph is perfect.

- After that, students will print and turn in the compositions to the teacher. Students will not write on the story.

PRODUCTION (40 minutes)

- The teacher will hand out the compositions randomly.
- Students will read the compositions and according to the description, they will make puppets of their classmate´s ideal partner.
- Finally, each student will present the puppet to the class. The rest of students will try to guess who the puppet belongs to.

WORKSHEET

1. **Listen to the description and identify which picture belongs to Mark.**
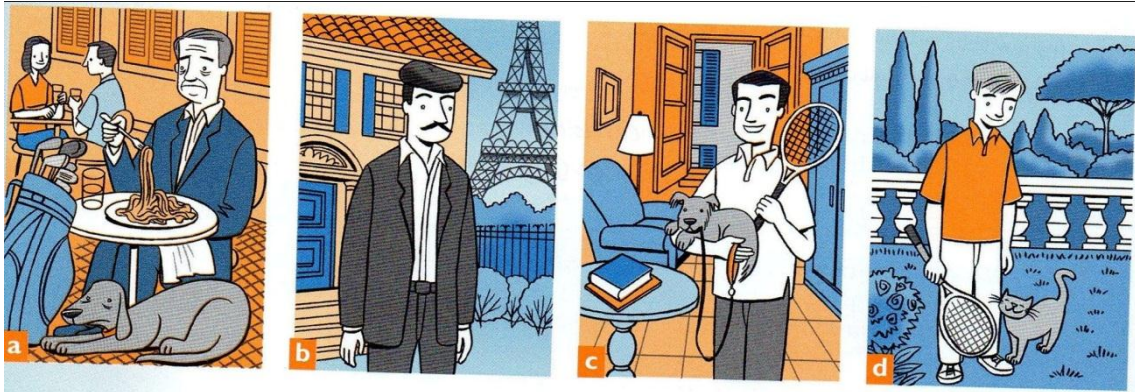
2. **The following words are used to put information in order. Give a characteristic of your ideal partner to each one of them.**

    a. First,_____

    b. Second,_____

    c. Third,_____

3. **Now give more details for each one of the characteristics.**

    a. _____
       _____

    b. _____
       _____

    c. _____
       _____

A POSTCARD FROM NEW YORK
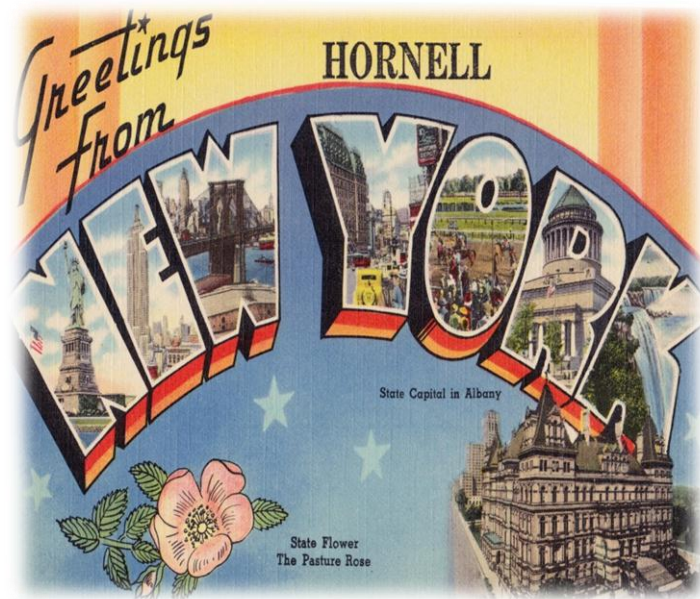
Level: A.2	Time: 40 min.	Skill: Writing
Goal:		
At the end of the lesson, students will be able to write about different events during a trip.		
Materials:		
Worksheets, computer, markers, pens/pencils, blackboard, dictionary.		

WARM UP (10 minutes)

- Students will play the "Can´t say Yes or No game". Everyone is given 5 coins. Everyone moves around the room starting conversations and asking each other questions. The only rule is that students cannot say the words YES or NO. If students accidentally say one of these words, they have to give a coin or square to the person who they said it to. Try to trick each other by asking questions that you would almost always answer with a yes or no.

PROCEDURE (15 minutes)

- The teachers will provide an example about the structure of a postcard.
- Students will read it and recognize the different information to include when writing a postcard.

PRODUCTION (15 minutes)

- The teacher will create an assignment on Storybird platform.

A postcard from New York!

⚙ Edit Assignment

Instructions:

Write a postcard to a friend, relative, etc. In the postcard tell them how you are enjoynig your holiday, what you have done so far, and what you are going to do next. Feel free to use different slides in order to show to your classmates how original your postcard is.

Do this Assignment

Due in 2 days on January 26, 2016

- Students will imagine they are in a foreign place. They will write about the place they are visiting. They may invent new name for places they are visiting.

Example:

A postcard from
Auckland
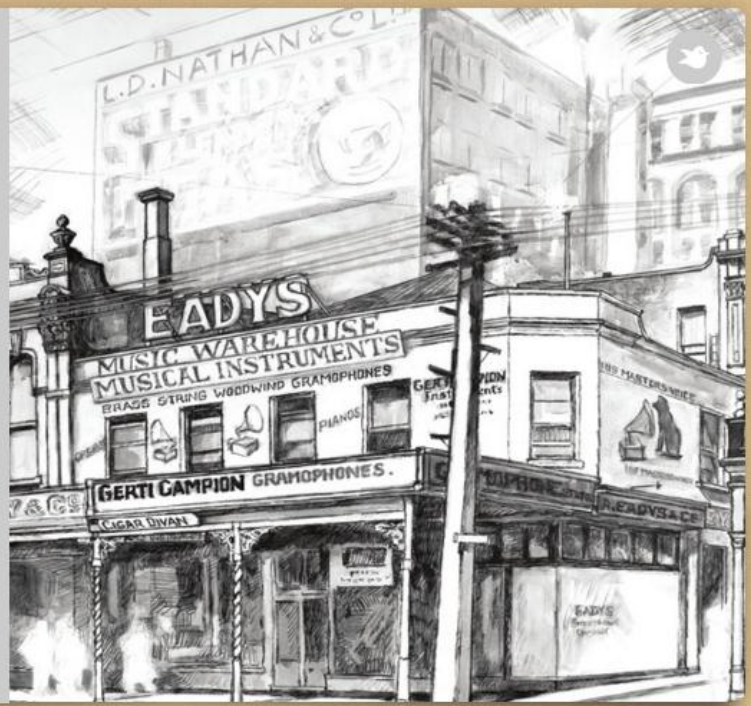
GabyOrtizOrellana

Dear friend

I'm having a great time in Auckland! My
cousin has shown me the important places
around here - the old Station, and the
Central Park.

The houses around here are so beautiful.
The weather during this season is great.
It's hot, sunny, and windy every day.
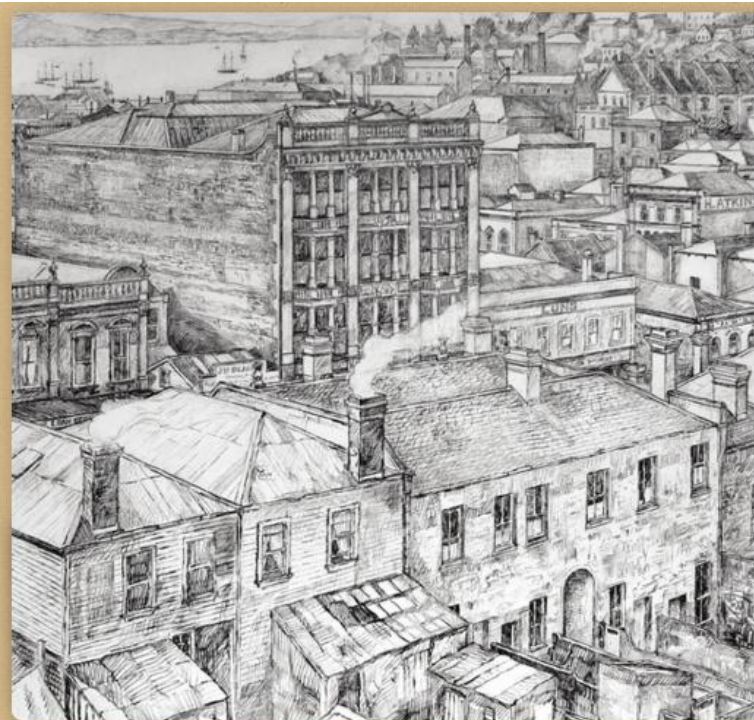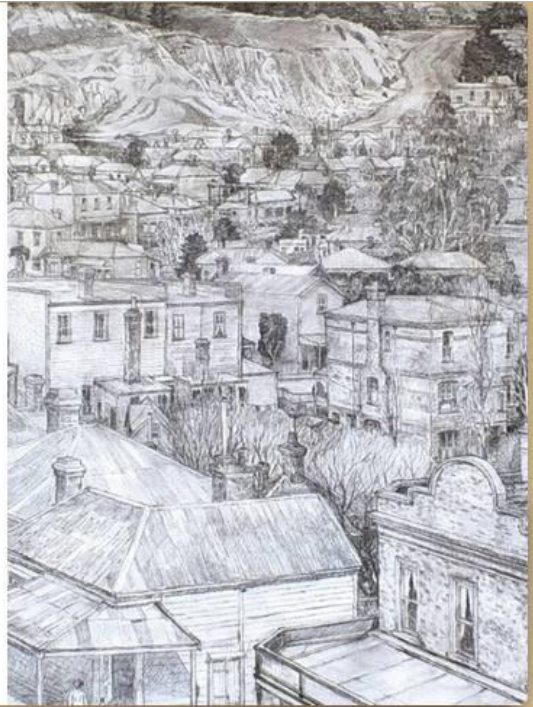
Tomorrow we're going to
visit the theater in
Auckland.

Wish you were here.

Love Gaby xx ..!!

WORKSHEETS
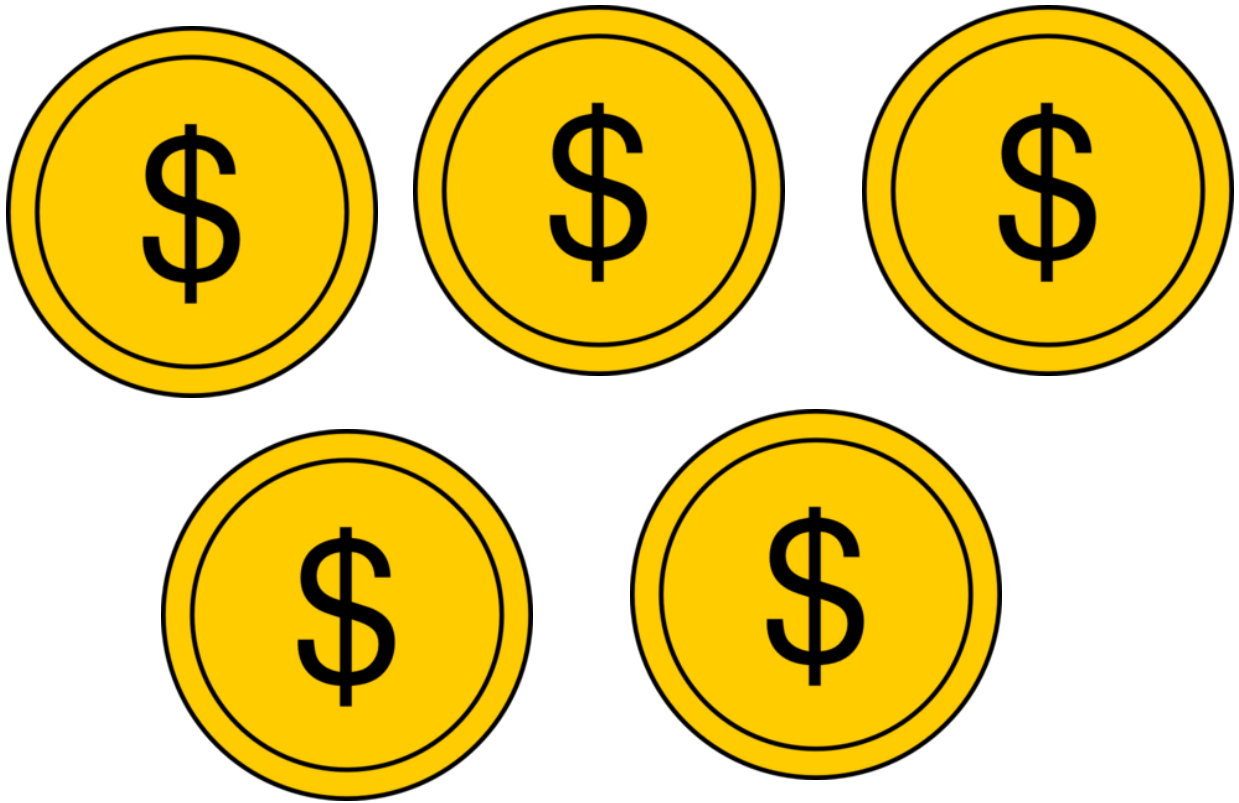
Can´t say Yes or No

Have you ever been at the beach/zoo/amusement park, etc?

Did you see a shark/elephant..?

Were you scared?

Did you go alone?

Did you enjoy the trip?

ACTIVITY

1. **Read the text and distinguish the different information to include in a postcard.**

Dear Mum and Dad

I'm having a great time here in New York! Aunt Eva has shown me everything – the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge and Central Park. I haven't taken a yellow taxi yet but I really want to.

It's sunny and hot every day. Tomorrow we're going to watch a show at a theatre on Broadway.

Wish you were here.

Love Ami xx

Affix stamp here

Susan & Ken Ford

42 Park Street

London

E7 3QE

UK

Top Tips for writing

1. Start your postcard: **Dear** + name.
2. Use the present continuous to say you're enjoying the holiday.
3. Use the present perfect to say what you have done.
4. Use **going to** for your future plans.
5. A good way to finish a postcard.
6. Finish your postcard: **Love** + your name. **xx** are kisses!

2. **Look at the picture and imagine you are there. Write about what you were doing, what it is like and if you are enjoying that kind of trip.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ME AS A WRITER

Level: A.2	Time: 40min	Skill: Writing

| **Goal:** |
| At the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe and write about past events. |

| **Materials:** |
| Worksheets, computer, markers, pens/pencils, blackboard, dictionary. |

WARM UP (10 minutes)

- Teacher need to cut out several pictures from newspapers o magazine stories

- Students will get in groups of three.

- The teacher will lay the pictures down on a table and ask one student from each group to come and take three pictures without looking at them.

- Tell students that these pictures all need to make up a story from a newspaper.

- Students will tell the class their stories.

PROCEDURE (15 minutes)

- Students will read "A scary Saturday" story, and answer some question about the story.

PRODUCTION (15 minutes)

- In pairs, students will write a story using Storybird. They will describe what happened in certain place at a certain time.

WORKSHEET

A scary Saturday

GabyOrtizOrellana

On a Saturday morning, a young and beautiful girl was found dead in the forest.

Nobody knew what really happened.

Her relatives said that Amanda was on her way home when something o someone attacked her.

Amanda used to walk in the forest.

Amandas' friends said that she always used to play with the animals in the forest.

Amandas' family and friends said that the forest will never be the same without her.

READING COMPREHENSION

1. **Answer the following questions**

   o Where was Amanda murdered?

   _____

   o Where was she going?

   _____

   o Did her relatives know who murdered her?

   _____

   o Who did she use to play with?

   _____
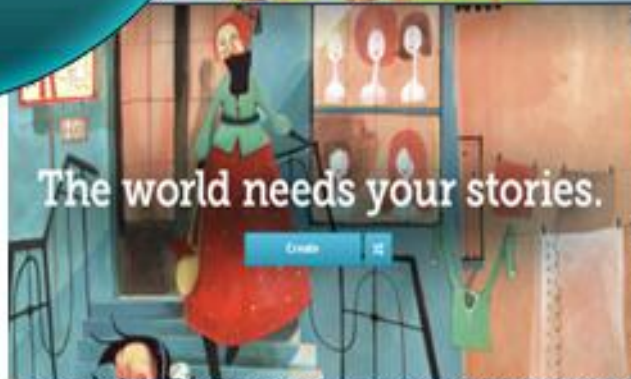
STORYBIRD USER GUIDE

STORYBIRD USER GUIDE

REGISTERING

✓ Go to www.storybird.com and click on: *Sign up for free.*
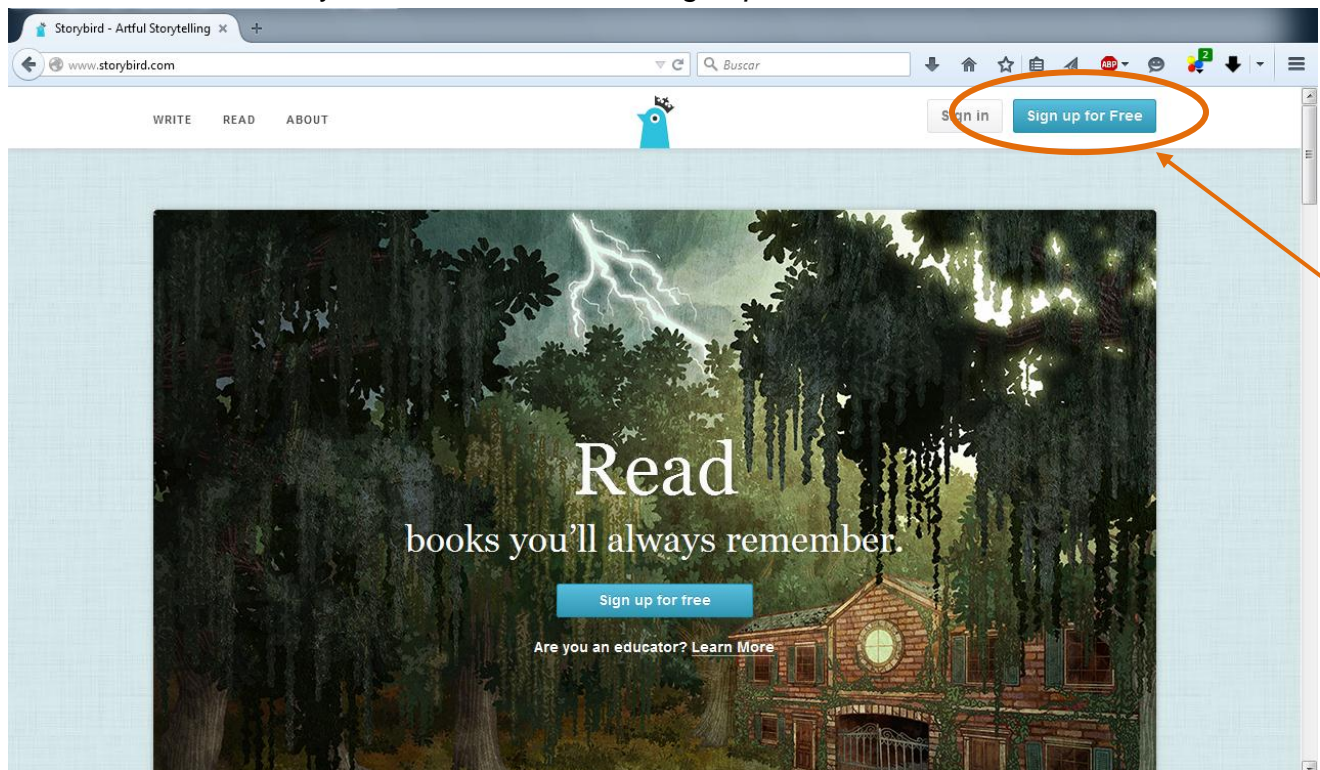
✓ Select *Educator/Teacher* as your account.

✓ Now create your Storybird Educator account.

Create your Storybird educator account:

or sign up with email below

Username   [   ]   No spaces or special characters.

Email   [   ]

Password   [   ]   Between 6 and 60 characters.

Create Account   By joining Storybird, you agree to our Terms of Service

✓ Once you click on *Create Account,* you will need to go to your e-mail account and confirm your registration.

Don't want emails from Storybird? *Manage settings*

Activate Your Account

Hi

Click on the link below to verify your email address and complete your Storybird registration.

Click here to complete your Storybird registration

Didn't register for a Storybird account? Somebody else may have typed in your email address by accident. Feel free to ignore this email.

Questions? Need Help?
http://help.storybird.com

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✓ After you complete your Storybird registration, you will be redirected to sign in to Storybird.

Sign in to Storybird

g+ Iniciar sesión con Google

or sign in with email below

Username or email address

Password   Forgot your password?

Sign In

* Provide the requested information already given.

CREATING A STUDENT ACCOUNT

✓ In order to create a student Storybird profile, follow the steps already described above but select a *Student* account type.

What best describes how you plan to use Storybird?

Regular user

Educator / Teacher

Student

Professional Writer

Professional Artist

(You can change this later in your Settings)

CREATING A STORYBIRD CLASS

✓ Give the information requested and create a class account.

ℹ You're an educator? Fab! We have amazing free tools to help you get the most out of Storybird.
Start by adding a class. After, you can create new student accounts or invite existing users into your class.

Create a class account

|	
Class name	
School name	
Country	United States ▼
School zip/postal code	
Class grade level	Select... ▼
Class subject(s)	

Create class account   Cancel

✓ From now on you will manage your classes from a *Storybird studio.*
✓ Click on *Next* and then on *Got it* buttons!

WELCOME TO
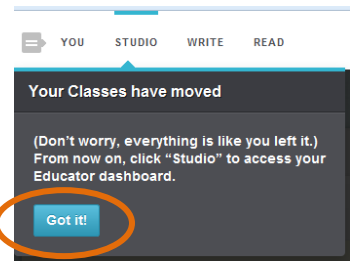
storybird studio 🐦
creative tools for educators

Picture books   Longform books   Poetry

Serialized longform books, unlimited poetry, and picture books:
three reading and writing formats enhanced for classroom use.

Aligns to The Common Core!

Next

YOU   STUDIO   WRITE   READ

Your Classes have moved

(Don't worry, everything is like you left it.)
From now on, click "Studio" to access your
Educator dashboard.

Got it!

✓ Now that you are joined, start managing your students.
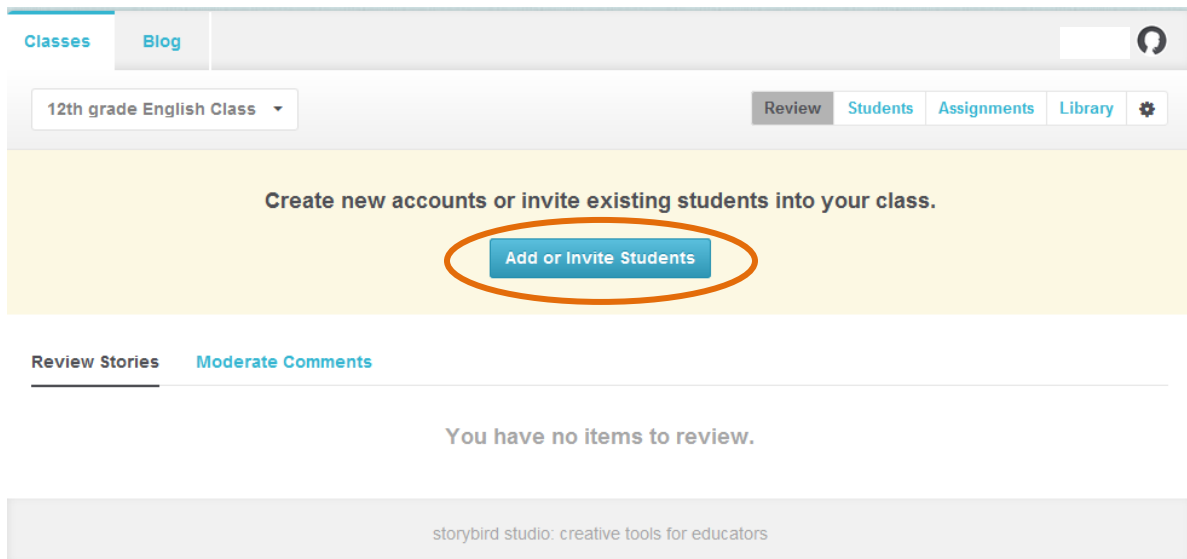
* In order to add or invite students, the teacher needs to ask students to create a *Student Storybird Account* in advance.

✓ Once students have created an account select OPTION 2 and provide students the *Class Access Code.*

CREATING ASSIGMENTS

After you have verified that all of the students have registered in the class correctly, start *creating assignments.* Click on *Create an Assignment.*
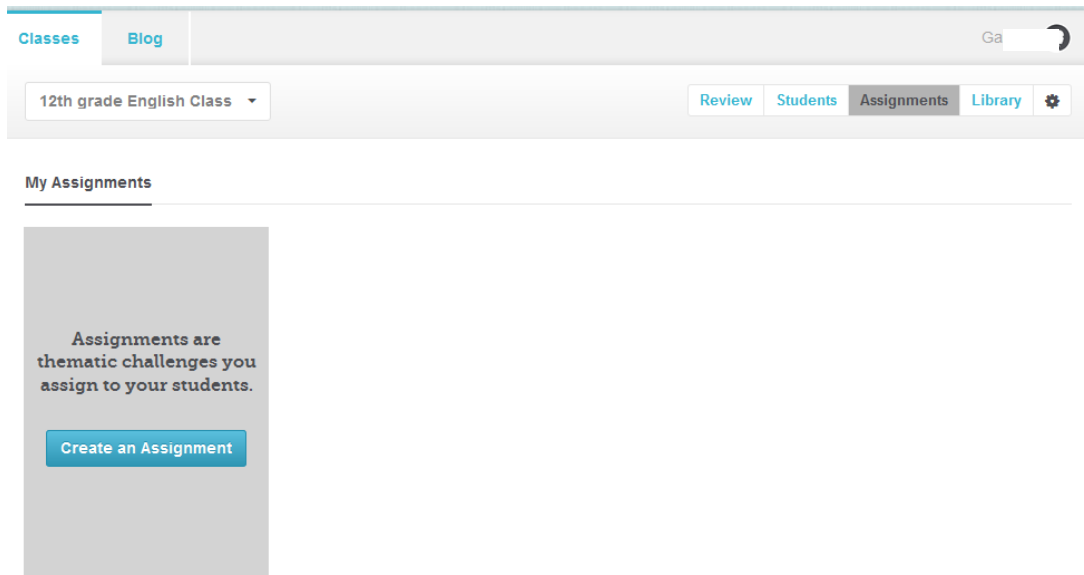
✓ Now you can create your class assignment as we can see in the following pictures.

✓ Students that belong to this class will be able to see the assignment and upload it to the class.

Create an Assignment

Name

Travel around the World

What's the assignment called?

Description

In this assignment you will create a story using a Picture Book describing the places you would like to visit.
Use the modal verb "will."

139/500

A summary or set of instructions to explain the assignment.

Media

ie. http://storybird.com/art/the-only-bear/

This will accompany your assignment, to explain or inspire.
Use media from Storybird, YouTube, Vimeo, or SchoolTube.

Storybird: URL from any story, poem, or artwork page
Video sites: Video URL.
Note: your district may block some video sites. Check with IT.

······ OR ······

Upload image

Examinar_ Ningún archivo seleccionado.
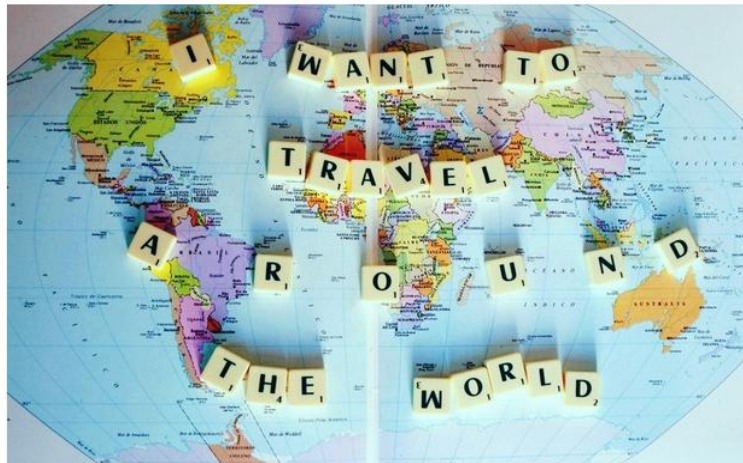
Artwork

- ◉ Use all artwork
- ◯ Use a specific artist
- ◯ Use a specific tag

We recommend using all artists/artwork to spur creativity. However, sometimes you may want to focus on one artist or thematic tag; this setting allows you to do just that.

Format

- ◯ Longform Book (multi-chapter)
- ◯ Picture Book (multi-page)
- ◯ Poem (single image)
- ◉ Any format

You can direct your students to create specific book formats or leave the default to "Any" and let them choose.

Due date

📅 07/05/2015

Due dates appear on the students' dashboards as a reminder to complete the assignment.

Save Assignment   Cancel

THE STORYWRITER

✓ Students will receive a notification about the assignment already created by the teacher. Then they will check the assignment by clicking on the following tab.

✓ Then click on *See all notifications*

✓ Click on the name of the assignment.
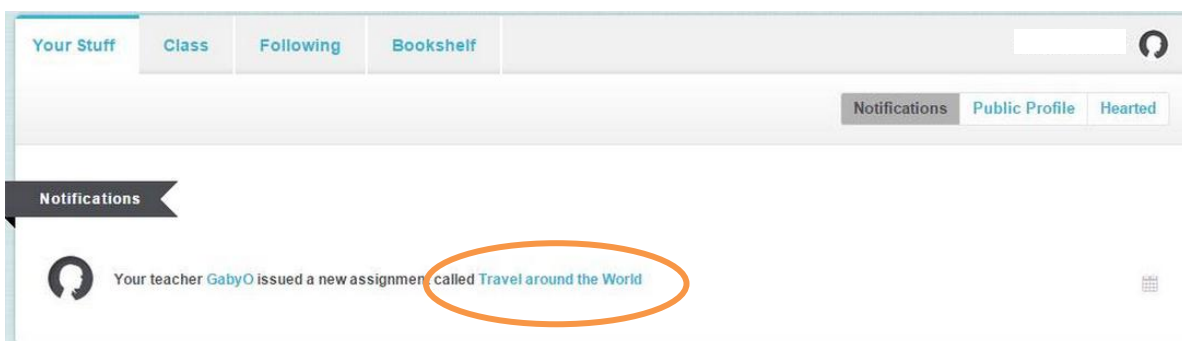
✓ Now students click on *Do this Assignment.*

| Your Stuff | Class | Following | Bookshelf | | | | Ω |

| 12th grade English Class | | | Home | Assignments | Class Library |

Travel around the World

Instructions:

In this assignment you will create a story using a Picture Book describing the places you would like to visit. Use the modal verb "will."

Do this Assignment

Due in 4 days on July 05, 2015.

There are no submissions for this assignment yet.

✓ Students look for pictures to create their stories. They have three options:

YOU   WRITE   READ

2. Choose from different tags

Write

Storybird reverses visual storytelling by starting with the image and "unlocking" the story inside. Explore artists, get inspired, and write.

All artwork ›
Recently added

SOME ARTWORK TAGS:
penandink
gallop
mystic
england
temple
wedding
height
cheeks
sweater
bow
rounds
eek
crash
hunting
potion
candle
wish
noel
friendly
cartoony

Search artwork tags

1. By clicking on any picture

3. Look for specific tags
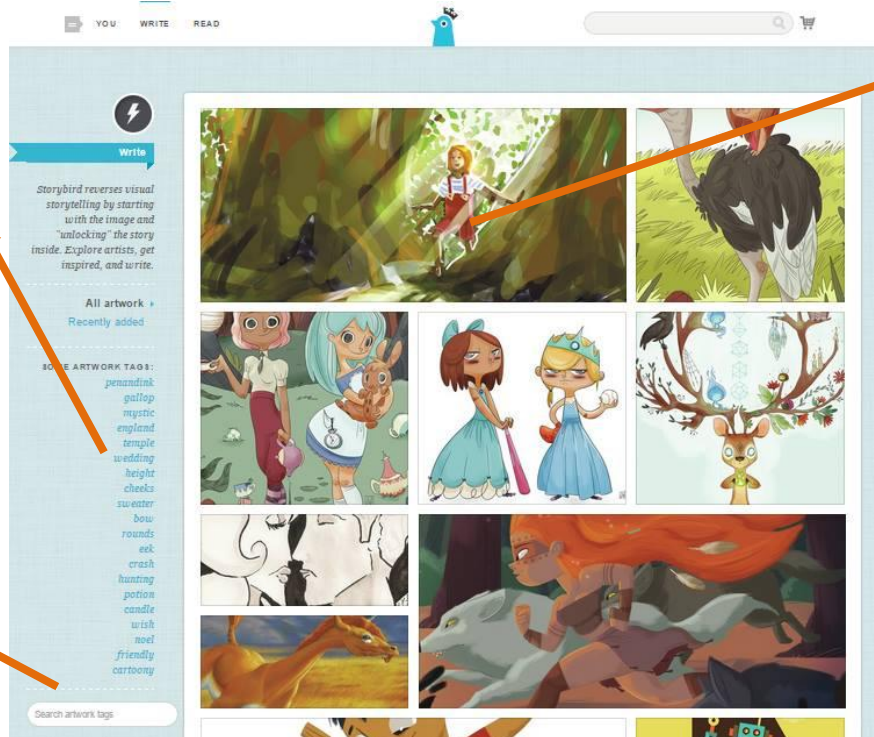
✓ In this case a specific tag is chosen.

✓ Now students can choose any picture they like.
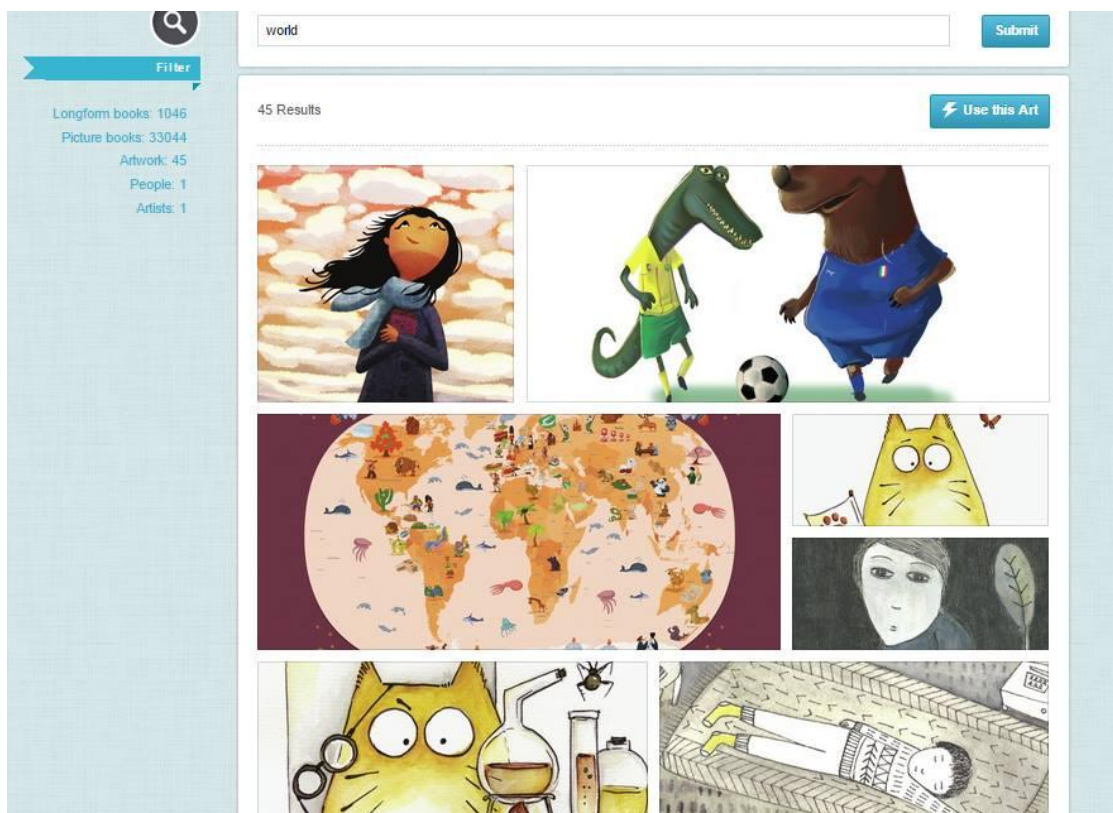
✓ Once the students choose the picture, they will click on *Use this Art.* Then click on the type of art given by the teacher.


✓ Students now are able to create their stories by choosing and dragging pictures according to their needs.

Add a cover and a title to the story.

Add pages to the story.

✓ Once they finished their stories, they are ready to save their project. After that, they will publishe their work by clicking on MENU.
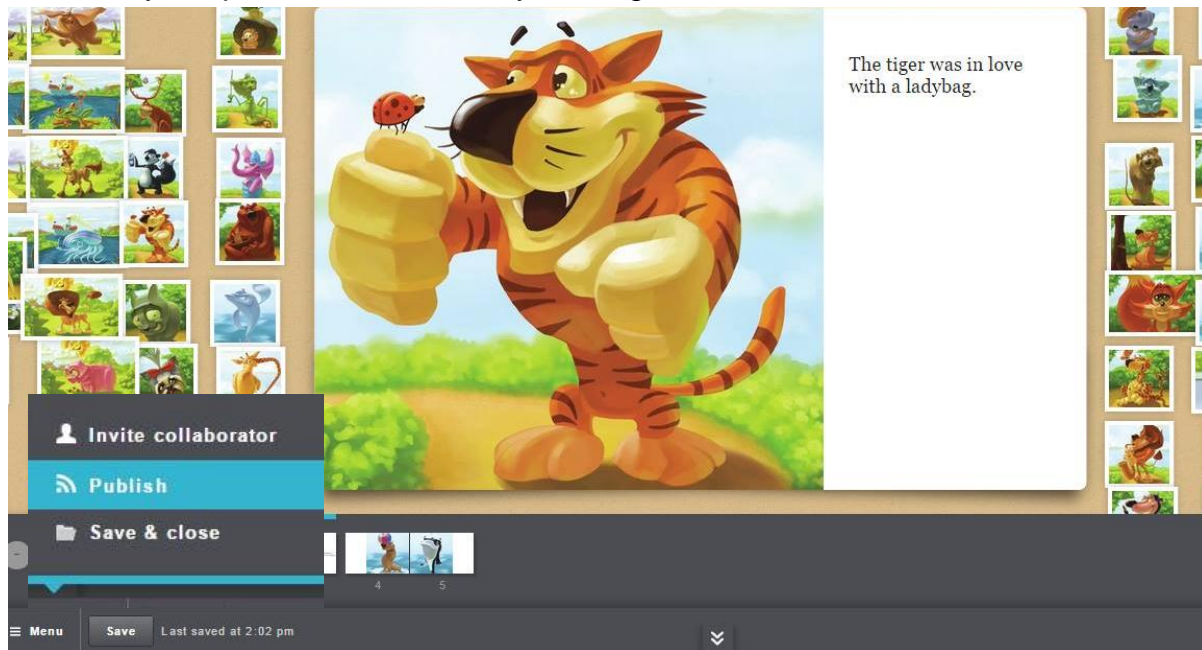

✓ Once they click on *Publish,* students need to add details to the story in order to complete the assignment.

Add a short summary of the story.
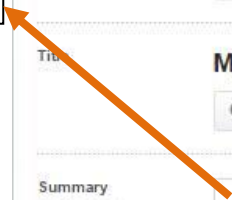
Categories (choose 2)
OPTIONAL

- Adventure
- Diary
- Education
- Friends
- Health
- Life
- Magic
- Poetry
- Scary
- Sci-fi/Fantasy

- Animals
- Dreams
- Family
- Guides
- Humor
- Literary
- Mystery
- Romance
- School life

ⓘ Categories are how we organize stories.

> Add a category according to the story.

Tags
OPTIONAL

Separate tags with a space.

ⓘ Tags are how you organize stories.

> Choose who the story is written for.

Written for
OPTIONAL

- Preschool (1-4)
- Kid (5-7)
- Tween (8-12)
- Teen (13-19)
- Adult

Assignment   Travel around the World ▼

> Students are able to see the name of the assignment where they are posting the story.

Privacy   ○ Public   ● Private   All school stories are private. Want to publish public stories?

[Publish] Cancel   Delete Story

✓ Finally students *Publish* their story.

YOU   WRITE   READ

My Story

My Story

anagabriela27

⚙ [Buy]   🔁 0   ♥ 0   <   ≡

AUTHOR:
anagabriela27

ARTIST:
novoseltsev
Follow

DETAILS:
Page count: 5

Published: July 1, 2015
Copyright © All rights reserved
Picture books › My Story

START A CONVERSATION

Mention people by typing @username
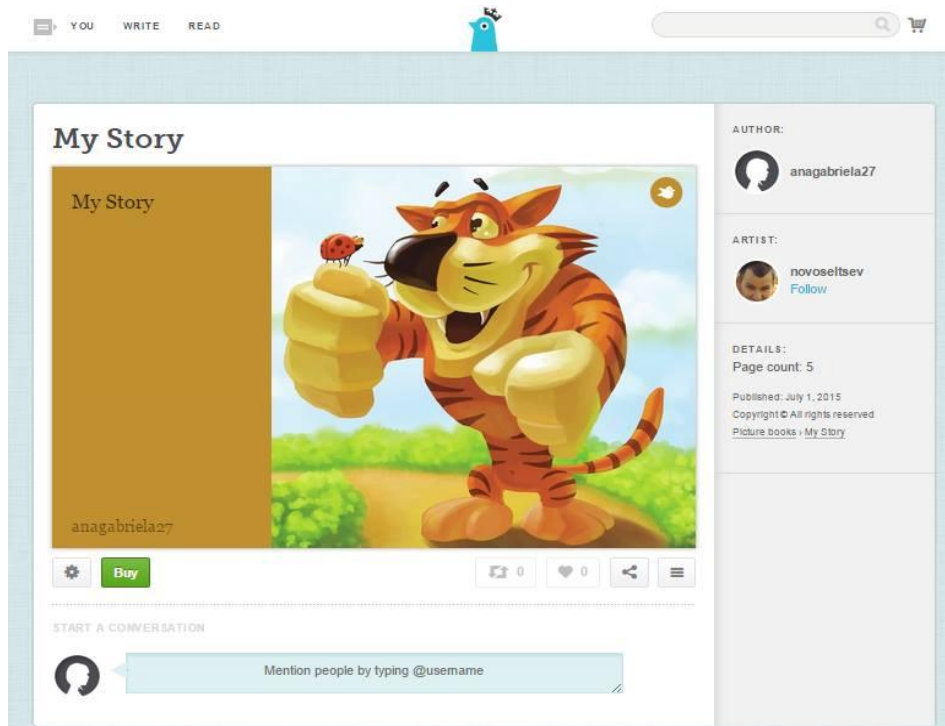
✓ When the students published their stories they will check if their task is already done.

TEACHER'S ASSESMENT

Teachers will check the assignments by clicking on *studio*, they will see the student's assignments immediately.

✓ By doing a click on the student's name, the teacher will see the story and give a feedback.


Teachers are able to see the number of pages and words used by the students in the story.

Teachers can read the story easily.

Teacher's feedback.

Teachers can grade using numbers or letters.

Teacher's feedback.

> **NOTE:** If the teacher wants to grade their student's assignment using Storybird features, he/she will have to pay a fee for it. If not, he/she will provide feedback by posting a private comment on the student's story.

CHECKING TEACHER'S ASSESSMENT
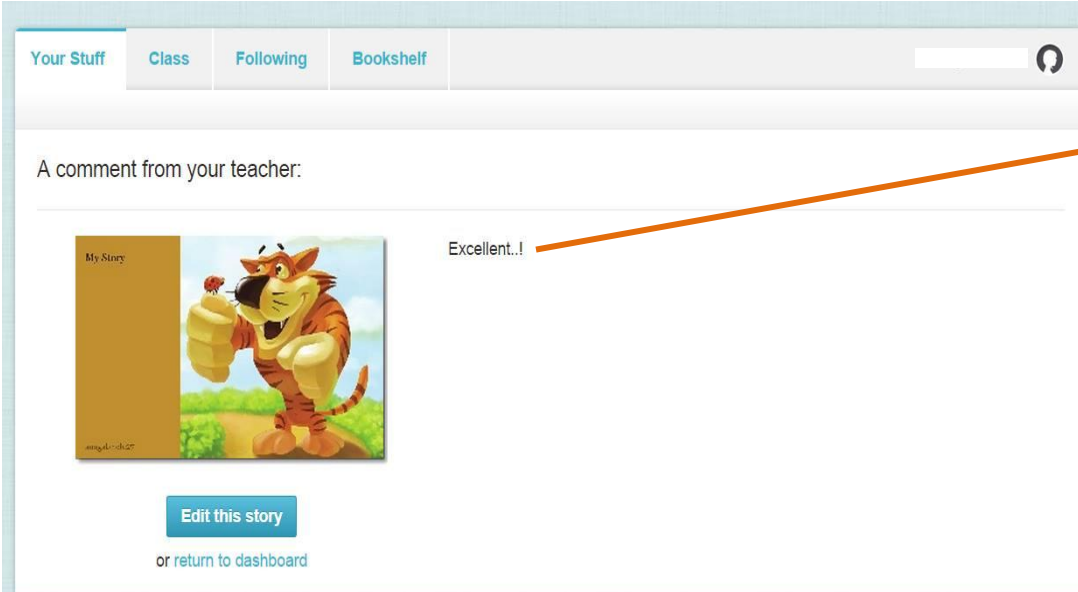
✓ Students will be notified that the teacher has assessed the assignment.

✓ Click on *Read Note.*
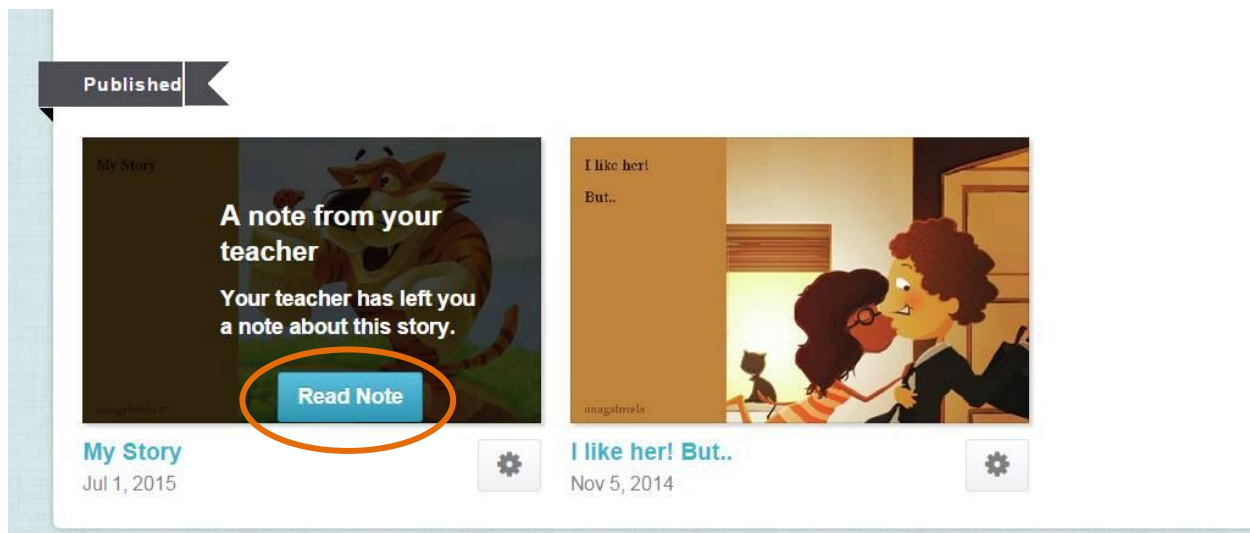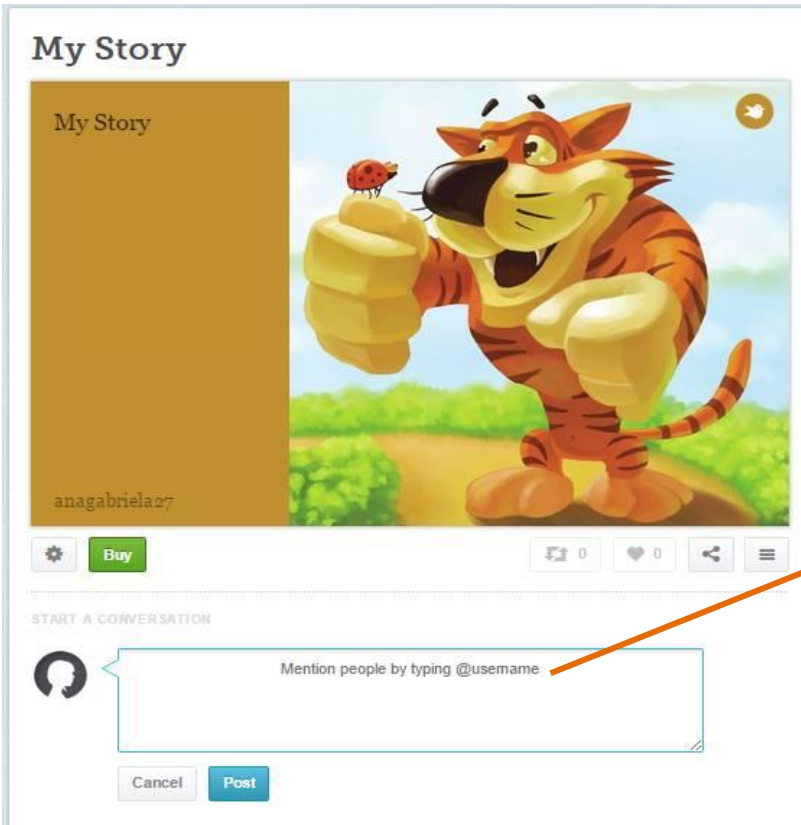
✓ Student will read the teacher's feedback.

Teacher's feedback

✓ Students will comment and share their stories with their classmates.

Student's comments