

Yes They CAN: Rigorous Writing Tasks for Low-level ESL

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WARM UP. Brainstorm.

- A. Write two answers for each category in the chat pods.
- B. Use the graphic organizer below to take notes on what you hear/see.

Tools and scaffolds to prepare low level ESL students to write	Challenges low level ESL students face when writing	Challenges low level ESL teachers face when teaching writing
Provide a model	Feeling daunted	Students look confused or tune out when it's time to write

Task 1. Same Gist, Different Words

- A. Provide a model paragraph at/below the level of your lowest students. Model the process for the whole class. Highlight key words. Tell students: "You will work to change the words but retain the same meaning."
- B. Provide a different model at/below the level of your lowest students. Have students work in pairs or small groups to rewrite the sentences or paragraphs using the same meaning but different words.
- C. Share the student produced "same gist/different words".
- D. Other students comment if they think the meaning remains the same, using academic language.

Task 2. Letter To Self For Goal Setting

Teacher provides template for students by inserting the level appropriate student learning outcomes (SLO's) and academic words to be covered in the semester. Provides envelopes for students to address and teacher sends them two months after class has begun.



_____ (date two months after class start date)

Dear _____ (*student fills in his/her name*),

Two months ago you started your ESL class. By now, you can _____ (*list SLO's e.g. write full sentences and are starting to write paragraphs*). You know the meaning and can use these academic words: _____ (*list the words covered in the first part of the semester*). You feel more comfortable writing in English and can write a short note to your boss and new friends who don't speak _____ (*student writes native language*).

In the next two months you will be learn to _____ (*list SLO for level completion e.g. write a complete paragraph and messages using formal language. You will also be able to differentiate between formal and informal language.*)

(Provide a space for more advanced students to add a personal goal they hope to accomplish in two months).

You are making progress on your goal. I'm proud of your commitment to your learning. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

_____ (*student signs*)

Task 3. How Do You _____?

With your partner discuss two scaffolds you would need to provide your students with prior to them writing 4 – 5 sentences describing a process using sequencing words.

Student task: Your friend or family member wants to take ESL classes at your school. Write 4 or 5 sentences telling them what they need to do. Use the sequencing words on the board.

Task 4. Same Meaning, Different Audience Impacts Register.

Have students write a message conveying their illness and inability to go to work for three different audiences adapting appropriate register.

Tweet	Family
Text message	Colleagues OR Friends



Email	Supervisor
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Task 5. Connecting Reading of an Inspirational Person to Three Evidence-Based Tasks.

- A. Provide students with a timeline graphic organizer to complete the critical points in the person’s life leading to accomplishment of a goal.
- B. Create a word cloud with the key words from the reading. At the next class meeting show students the word cloud and create a class summary of the reading. Provide students with the academic language used for sequencing: first, second, next, after, finally . . .
- C. Provide a timeline for students to complete the critical points in their life to reach a goal. Provide a Venn diagram for students to complete using their information and the inspirational person’s to determine similarities and differences. Model a compare contrast paragraph with students providing sentence frames and using your information. Provide students with sentence frames to complete their paragraph.

_____ and I had different/similar birthplaces. ___ was born in ___; however, I was born in _____. _____ and I both share a passion for _____. In contrast, ___ enjoys _____ while I prefer _____. Although _____ achieved his/her goal of _____; I am still journeying toward mine of _____. I envision achieving mine in _____ when I _____. Though ___ and I have different paths to achieve our goals, I am inspired by _____ for his/her determination to _____.



Inventors and Scientists: Katherine Johnson

Synopsis: Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson is an African-American physicist and mathematician. She worked for NASA, helping the first American orbit around Earth and the first man to walk on the moon. She retired from NASA after over 30 years of service. In 2015, she received the government's highest honor for a civilian called the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Early Life

Born in 1918 in the little town of White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Johnson was a research mathematician. She was simply fascinated by numbers. She was smart too, and by the time she was 10 years old, she was a high school freshman. This was a truly amazing achievement in a time when school for African-Americans normally stopped at eighth grade. Many African American kids had to stop going to school even sooner than that.

Her father was determined that his bright little girl would have a chance to meet her potential. He drove his family to Institute, West Virginia, where she could continue her education through high school. Johnson sailed through school, graduating from college at age 18. Her skills at mathematics drew the attention of a young professor, W.W. Schiefflin Claytor.

"He said, 'You'd make a good research mathematician and I'm going to see that you're prepared,' she recalled. "I said, 'Where will I get a job?' "And he said, 'That will be your problem.' "And I said, 'What do they do?' "And he said, 'You'll find out.'" With her teacher's encouragement, Johnson became ambitious. "In the back of my mind, I wanted to be a research mathematician." On the way to fulfilling her dreams, she spent some time teaching. She wasn't passionate about her work but needed to pay the bills.

The "Computer" At NASA

Soon, she began working for the government space program that came before NASA, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, or NACA. NACA had taken the unusual step of hiring women for the tiresome and exact work of measuring and calculating the results of wind tunnel tests in 1935. In a time before the electronic computers we know today, these women were called "computers." During World War II, NACA started hiring African-American women as computers. They were so pleased with the results that, unlike many organizations, they kept the women computers at work after the war.

By 1953, the growing demands of early space research meant there were openings for African-American computers. That's where Katherine Johnson found the perfect place to put her mathematical skills to work. As a computer, she calculated the flight path for Alan Shepard, the first American in space. "We wrote our own textbook, because there was no other text about space," she said. "We just started from what we knew. We had to go back to geometry and figure all of this stuff out. Inasmuch as I was in at the beginning, I was one of those lucky people."



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Johnson may have been lucky, but it was her skill at geometry that allowed her to make such a great impact. "Early on, when they said they wanted the capsule to come down at a certain place, they were trying to compute when it should start," Johnson remembered. "I said, 'Let me do it. You tell me when you want it and where you want it to land, and I'll do it backwards and tell you when to take off.'"

Johnson was respected by her coworkers. Even after NASA began using electronic computers, astronaut John Glenn requested that Johnson personally recheck the calculations made by the new electronic computers before his flight aboard Friendship 7. It was on that mission that he became the first American to orbit the Earth.

"You could do much more, much faster on computer," Johnson said. "But when they went to computers, they called over and said, 'tell her to check and see if the computer trajectory they had calculated was correct.' So I checked it and it was correct."

Life After NASA

Johnson continued to work at NASA until 1986. Her work was important to the success of the Apollo moon landing program and the start of the Space Shuttle program. Johnson received honorary degrees throughout her career. In 1967, she was awarded the NASA Lunar Orbiter Spacecraft and Operations team award for her navigation work. On November 24, 2015, she received the nation's highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, from President Barack Obama.

Not bad, for a little girl from West Virginia. Coincidentally, that little girl was born on August 26: Women's Equality Day.

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Task 6. Commitment to Increase Rigorous Writing Tasks.

Three tasks or strategies I experienced today that I can implement.

Two tasks I plan to do next week to follow-up on this workshop.

One aspect or principle I want to learn more about.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. _____
2. _____

1. _____

