

Children need to be expecting to write, and wanting to write. They should not share the teacher's fear that they might make a mistake! (*The teacher should not be focused on that either, of course!*)

The Classroom - the place where they spend a lot of their daylight hours - should be full of

- print material
- pictures
- language - in print and heard
- ideas
- fun
- things to be curious about
- opportunities to learn
- encouragement to learn
- reassurance that it is OK to make mistakes while learning
- opportunities to share their learning

Even if the teacher has to spend a *little* more time outside of class teaching time! However, by involving the children, a lot can be done as part of teaching.

Here are some easy ideas:

1. Posters

The classroom walls and pin-up boards are a wonderful and under-utilised resource in many schools. Most of the materials we see are

- old
- faded
- tatty and torn
- irrelevant
- NEVER LOOKED AT!
- So - what is the point of that?

Even if you are not the home room teacher with the right to decorate the room, there is always a section of pin-up board for English which it is your duty to fill.

Materials should be bright, and fresh, and frequently referred to. The material could even be produced by the children themselves - something they wrote!

The children should be eager to see what new treasure you have for them. So

- Surprise them with something new and interesting.
- Challenge them to take note of and use the new material - have a quiz / game
- Reward them for doing so.

The children spend time in their classroom when there are no teachers, so why not make use of that time. Also, it is something for the children to attend to if they finish their exercises early.

Here are a few of the things you could display on the wall / pin-up board:

- **Vocabulary** that is new (not too many at one go) - ask children to draw a picture for each item, choose the best ones to display proudly, but make sure it's not always the same children's work that gets displayed. Every week there should be fresh items. AND there should be an opportunity (quiz or game) for children to demonstrate that they have looked at the material.
- **Stories** that are new. Children could **illustrate** stories you have told to them or read to them, and a selection displayed. For listening and speaking you could ask children to comment on the story and the pictures.
- **Writing** by the children - whether creative writing or just the regular informative writing from the text book. If you want them to write in their exercise books to keep as evidence, pick some of the better ones and provide some nice coloured paper for them to write it out clearly with decoration / illustration. Display it for a week or two. Have a quiz to make sure other children have read the stories. (See [Creative Writing](#) page.)
- **Something curious** - A fun fact, a 'did you know?' poster. Find an interesting, relevant piece of information or something in the news. It doesn't matter if the children don't know all of the words (yet). If there is an interesting picture they will be curious and want to learn. After a day or so, discuss the information, have a game or quiz, encourage them to look it up in computer class.
- **A challenging task** - Set a task for them to do in their own time. It could be something very practical like: "How many spoonfuls of water are there in a bottle?" No, it's not an 'English' task, but they have to read it and reply in English. Or it could be something they need to find out on the Internet. (Make sure you check for sites first.) Make sure there is a reward for everyone who tries. Change to task every week or two.
- **A competition** - again it could be practical. for example: "Who can throw and catch a ball without dropping the most times?" Or it could be more bookish. For Example: "Who can think of the most names of animals?" When some of the children rise to the challenge, have a play off and let them prove it. Reward all who try (not just winners), and change the challenge every week or so.
- **A star chart** - A simple class list with all of the children's names. The teacher puts stars (stick or draw) next to their names when they work hard / try / do something good ... whatever. Sometimes when the whole class is good you might want to give everyone a star. Make sure there is no child who has **no** stars - find a reason to reward them. Start a new chart every couple of weeks. Reward the children with the most stars.