

## Workshop: The art of making “Little Books” as a Minimal Resource classroom activity to motivate and engage English students of all ages in the practice of both creating and enjoying literature

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### Abstract

There is something fascinating and almost magical about making one’s very own “Little Book”. Initially there is surprise as the empty book takes shape from a single sheet of paper. And then an engaging tale must be devised to fill the pages along with tiny pictures or designs. Immediately the scene is a quiet classroom with heads down and tails up as the students eagerly scratch away at their task.

As the masterpieces take shape, the students can be given opportunities to share their work (swap and read) with classmates, tell their tale to a group or the whole class while holding up their book, display the books on a table or board, and finally take it home to share with family and little brothers or sisters. Also, if especially desirable, the book can be opened flat and scanned or photo-copied, then re-folded to make sharing copies.

As an added treat, the book can include pop-up faces on every page, leading to character descriptions and discussions, and more stories.

Other examples of simple folding and pop-up books will also be indicated and discussed.

Participants should bring a pencil-case with coloured pencils / pens, and a pair of scissors if possible. \* *Stationary items will be available to borrow during the workshop.*

### Summary

Each participant will have the opportunity to follow simple step-by-step instructions to turn a single sheet of paper (A4 or A3) into a little 4-page book. Some call it the “origami” book because it involves a folding sequence. Others call it the “hotdog book” because it looks a bit like a hotdog roll at one stage. Elsewhere it is even called the “Poof! book” because of the way it seems to suddenly take shape.

A pair of scissors is needed for making a small cut in the paper, and then a pen or pencil, and/or coloured pens can be used to write in the book and decorate it. The contents can be a story, a catalogue (such as an alphabet book) or a non-fiction work. Each page can contain merely words, pictures and words, or just pictures.

If A3 paper is used, then greater content can be included. However, the tiny book that is produced from an A4 sheet of paper – the size most commonly available in schools – has a fascination all its own and is adequate for an interesting story or similar. Participants will be shown some examples of hand-made books as example.

When all the students make these books, they can then be involved in sharing with others or even showing the book in front of the whole class. At the end of the activity, they make a wonderful wall display. And finally they can be taken home and shared with family members.

Because the book is folded and the content is on one side of the paper only, the students’ efforts can easily be photo-copied (and then re-folded) so that multiple copies can be shared.

Workshop participants will be given a second sheet of paper, and shown the step-by-step process to develop a pop-up version of the little book. Again scissors are needed for some tiny cuts, and then it is a matter of writing in and illustrating the booklet. Examples will be available for perusal and participants will be encouraged to share and discuss ideas and possibilities.

A third section of the presentation will be given to demonstrate how a little book can be prepared for folding using 'Word' on the computer. Participants who are reasonably computer literate should be able to easily follow the steps to try later. Producing books by this method gives the opportunity to produce copies for all students in a class maybe as a reading activity.

## **Conclusion**

The presenter has successfully used this activity with students of varying ages and abilities, with a variety of book content and learning outcomes. The workshop is designed as a starting point for creative teachers to take ideas and adapt them to their own needs and situation. Information and further ideas are also available on the Internet for those who want to research further.