

## Teach Reading and Writing with the Language Experience Approach

This simple practice works well for students of all ages who are learning English.

Here are the steps:

- The student dictates a story about a personal experience. The teacher types or prints the story. Young children can first draw a picture and then tell a story about the picture.
- While the teacher writes the story, the student helps by spelling some words.
- The student reads the sentences after the teacher writes them.
- To expand the story, the teacher asks questions such as “what did you do when that happened?” Or “what happened next?” Or “tell me more about...”
- The teacher models editing the story with the student – making complete sentences, editing grammar, explaining punctuation, and more.
- This story is now used to build reading and writing skills. Student can highlight short vowel patterns, words with silent e, and other decoding skills that the student is learning.
  - See <https://www.nysmigrant.org/resources/library/ELA> for resources in determining students’ needs in the area of phonics.
- The teacher modifies the story to add words with the skills the student needs to learn. If teaching words with short vowels, the teacher includes more of these patterns in the story.
- Expand the student’s reading skills by teaching other words that follow a specific pattern. If the student’s story is about a “cat,” then teach other words using short “a” – mat, hat, cap, and so many others. A “**word study notebook**” is ideal for expanding skills the student is learning. The student can add other words to the notebook on their own.
  - See <https://www.nysmigrant.org/resources/library/ela/consonants> for an example of a word study notebook.

And here are the many learning benefits:

- This approach increases engagement since the story is relevant to the student’s life.
- Phonics can be taught with the story and then expanded to include other words using the same patterns.
- The teacher can teach vocabulary in meaningful ways adding interesting words to the story.
- The student can reread the story to build fluency.
- Every week the teacher can add a paragraph or two, and the student can practice reading the story (or even add more to it). It could turn into a chapter book.
- There are many benefits in the area of writing – composing stories, selecting interesting words, learning grammar and punctuation, structuring sentences, and more!