
Writing Inspirations: A Fundex of Individualized Activities for English Language Practice

Review by William Corr
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WRITING INSPIRATIONS: A FUNDEX OF INDIVIDUALIZED ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRACTICE. Arlene Marcus. Brattleboro, VT: Pro Lingua Associates, 1996, pp vi + 90. US \$20.00

Writing Inspirations is an index of ideas and activities intended to encourage thought, discourse and, eventually, written work. Published in book form, it is intended for the use of teachers who wish to use it as a reference and resource. The material has been deliberately designed so as to be easily photocopied and the copies then grouped to create a set of index cards, a 'fundex', to use the author's term. The material is appropriate for adult, college and high-school learners working in a classroom setting, in a library study center, or in a tutorial.

The underlying idea behind putting topics on cards and making them available in an index card box, or 'fundex', is to empower and thus motivate the students, to give them an opportunity of choosing freely from among the activities, topics, and tasks available. Equally, the teacher is at liberty to choose a single card in order to work with the whole class on a topic complementing other classwork.

The subject matter of the material in *Writing Inspirations* reflects the kinds of experiences teens and adults encounter in the U.S.A. and Canada. If the fundex is used in other countries, the teacher will need to be selective and will almost certainly wish to add additional culturally-appropriate topics under each activity.

A total of 176 fundex cards, neatly divided into fifteen activity areas, are provided to be photocopied and handed out for individual, pair, or group writing/presentation assignments. A topic and several tasks are outlined briefly and clearly on each card. Each card can then be photocopied, mounted, laminated, and used. For example:

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS #3 / PREPARING FOOD

WRITE DOWN THE PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE DISHES. Use some of the following words:

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------|
| 1. a dash of | 2. a pinch of | 3. ingredients | 4. chop |
| 5. slice | 6. cut up | 7. mix | 8. stir |

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 9. fry | 10. bake | 11. boil | 12. broil |
| 13. simmer | 14. oven | 15. stove | |

Since this is an excellent and thoroughly utilitarian word-board, this is a fine example of what *Writing Inspirations* is about. Texts which may seem dull and pedestrian to a teacher are often student friendly.

The only concern I have is that this (and other reproducible books) comes at a time when the industry and profession as a whole are campaigning against the practice that many teachers have of indiscriminately photocopying everything and anything, to the detriment of our colleagues authors everywhere. That reservation aside, it is hard to fault this useful and very student-friendly book—and every school should have one.

About the Reviewer

*William Corr is a textbook writer, teacher and published historian who has worked and written in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Japan. His most recent book is *Admiral the Pilot: The Life and Times of Captain William Adams 1564-1620, Japan Library. U.S. 1995.**