



Alpha to Zulu:

An A-Z of writing ideas for the middle years

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HAWKER BROWNLOW
EDUCATION

For my parents Alisoun
and Wyndham Grevis-James

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Introduction

Alpha to Zulu: An A-Z of writing ideas for the middle years is a collection of exciting poetry and prose resources for middle years teachers and students.

The ideas come from experiences of students in their middle years. They are an eclectic mix of activities about the fun and heartbreak of life; the observations of people and pets who are precious; and guided ways to write mysteries, ghost stories and rhyming poems.

This is a book to dip into to use for classroom activities, writing warm-ups, to teach styles of writing, extension resources and the list goes on! Everyone can write in many different styles using the assistance of the 'getting started' sections, and the short explanations and the questions posed make a writer think beyond the obvious ...

Highly able students can use the entries as a starting point to stimulate their own thinking and writing. Maybe they can challenge themselves to work through the entire alphabet of ideas.

All students will be able to find fun and satisfaction in writing in so many different ways; all the way from Alpha to Zulu.

Amanda Swaney

Abuse poem

Wouldn't you like to do it? Hurl abuse at someone who's treated you badly or given you a hard time for years? Sometimes there isn't a particular person who is annoying you but you just feel in a bad mood in general and you want to 'vent your spleen' or get rid of those bad feelings.

Usually you don't say anything; maybe you give them a black look of hatred, but that's about all. But here is a way to put it down in print. Try varying the size of the print or the shape of the lines so that the reader gets a stronger sense of the emotions that you feel.

Because you feel really nasty, choose a subject that is usually treated with love and respect like the sea or the mountains or a rose ... and pick on its worst points.

Getting started

Choose your subject and then brainstorm all the nouns and then the verbs that you can think of that are linked with this subject. After this, make pairs of rhyming words using the lists of verbs and nouns. Adding endings such as -er and -ing can increase the number of rhyming pairs. Finally, develop word partners by using alliteration. For example:

Subject: Sea

Nouns (keep these as the singular form of the word): sand, shell, wave, sandcastle, dune, seagull, wind, seaweed.

Verbs (think of action words that will link with your nouns): blow, throw, dump, fling. Add -er or -ing to them.

Rhyme (link rhyming words): blower, thrower, dumper.

Alliteration (words beginning with the same sound are often effective): foam-flinger.



Ads

We're surrounded by advertising. Businesses sell us glamorous products like cars, jeans and overseas holidays. Advertising also sells us ordinary objects but does it in a way that makes them look desirable.

How would you go about selling your sister? your brother? your old teddy? your grandfather? Try pretending the subject is a style of architecture and use real-estate jargon to describe them. You could describe them as a type of food and use 'foodie' language to 'sell' them. Maybe you could sell them as a piece of furniture.

Getting started

Decide who/what you want to sell. Usually a brother or sister springs to mind, or possibly a neighbour. List the features that could be selling points or things that you might wish to mention to prospective buyers so that they won't be completely misled. For instance your great uncle may have an incontinence problem so you could mention 'water damage' or 'leaky pipes' or 'plumbing in need of repair'. A sister may have a 'persistent squeak' that is cured after 'long sessions on the phone'.

When you give an inanimate (non-living) object the qualities of a human it is called **personification**.

Referring to a tree as being a withered old man, or a crane on a building site as a giant stretching its arms to the sky are both examples of personification.

For sale: One grandmother

Cottage. Old-fashioned charm. Garden full of lavender, violets and gardenia. Stumps weak and inclined to shudder at loud noise from grandchildren. Paint peeling and chipped. In need of a complete facelift. A home to be loved and cherished. All reasonable offers considered.

For sale: Older brother

Sleek, heavy-metal road machine. Loud exhaust noises after filling with oil. Heavy fuel consumption. Rapid acceleration but staying power limited. Noisy when idling especially if there are girls around. Metallic duco with fluoro flashes. In need of a muffler but otherwise in excellent condition. \$15,999 or nearest offer.

For sale: Maiden aunt

Sturdy cedar chest. Drawers full of memories and treasures. French polished to a rich sheen by years of visits to beauty parlours and frequent afternoon tea parties. One drawer tends to stick, especially when Uncle Ebenezer's name is mentioned. Ornaments such as mirrors, combs and curling tongs included in the sale. \$1600.