



READ Saskatoon is seeking your input

Are meaningful writing activities the most challenging parts of your tutoring time? We are seeking the assistance of three tutor-learner matches to help trial writing activities.

What will this require?

- training will require an hour of both learner and tutors' time.
- writing activities will be trialed over 6 weeks, at about 15 minutes of each tutoring session
- We will meet again for two hours in April to gather and discuss your feedback.

Your time is valuable – honorariums will be paid to participating tutors and learners. Call Sheryl at 652-5448 to participate or learn more.

Our Next Celebrity is...

READ Saskatoon would like to celebrate its volunteers. Each upcoming edition of the READer will highlight one volunteer! Stand by your phone, it may be you...

Why use Poetry in your tutoring sessions?

There are many benefits that can be gained by exposing adults to poetry reading and writing activities. If you're hesitant about using poetry, here are five great reasons why using poetry is a must!

1. Poetry supports the development of the building blocks of literacy.
2. Poetry supports the development of writing and raises the standards for writing.
3. Poetry is an excellent venue to teach and reinforce grammar and vocabulary skills.
4. Poetry provides a focus for reading and writing, and helps adults learn how to be concise.
5. Poetry supports components defined in brain research such as the importance of searching for patterns, and is an acceptable way for adults to express emotions and feelings.

- For more information go to: www.readingaz.com/poetry/index.html

"Just Ask" Column



Interested in meeting with other tutors to share learner experiences and materials? We are establishing a tutor corner, on READ Saskatoon's website:

www.nald.ca/readsask/trcorner.htm

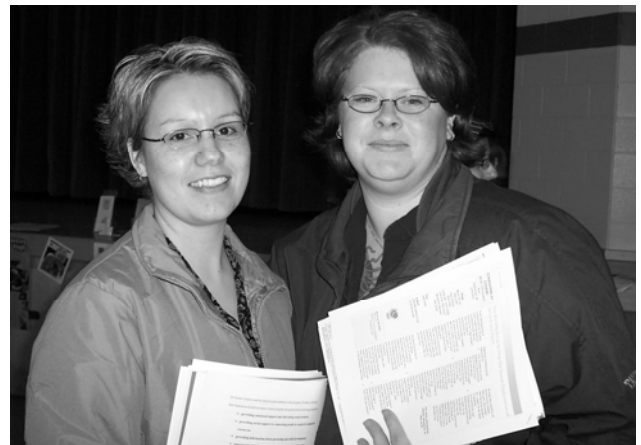
Email, fax or mail us your questions, ideas or suggestions and we will post them on our website for others to learn from! Email us at readsaskatoon@nald.ca

Question: *"My learner and I have been meeting for about 6 months now. I often prepare a lesson plan for our sessions but we never seem to get to it. My learner prefers to just 'sit and visit.' How can I involve her more?"*

Suggestion: Together, set a goal. Ask your learner about what they want to be able to do that they couldn't do before. Be specific and determine a realistic time period for your goal. Ask your learner about reading materials they might be interested in, skills they may need in daily life or for their job; and discuss future plans. Determine together how they can achieve their goal. Plan a few sessions together- what materials and activities will you use? Review your goal at the start of each session. Have fun together!

Question: *"My learner and I have been meeting on and off for 3 years. She has made great progress but will soon be returning to her home country. What can I do now?"*

Suggestion: Contact READ Saskatoon to be matched with another learner or take a break from tutoring and become a mentor to other tutors! Share your knowledge, skills and experience with new tutors by taking part in the *Tutor to Tutor: mentorship program*. Mentors will be matched with a group of tutors and are expected to meet with their group every month to 6 weeks while sharing information with READ Saskatoon Staff. If you are interested in becoming a mentor contact Desiree or Mavis at 652-5448.



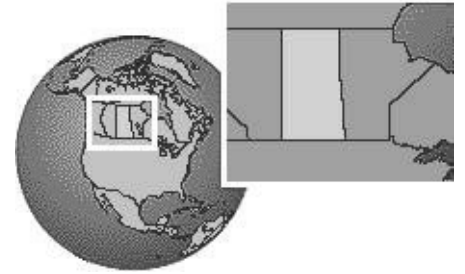
During the last two months of 2005, READ Saskatoon hosted two practicum students: Tanya and Kimberly. We want to thank them for all the help they gave to the office and Project Ready. We wish them all the best in their studies and know they will make great Youth Care Workers. Thank you for being our role models!

- READ Saskatoon staff
and Project Ready Participants.

Encounter with another language

- Submitted by Sally Cochrane

I have spent most of my adult life as a self-employed professional musician. I made my living performing, teaching private lessons, and working as Personnel Manager for the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. When I was in my forties, I decided to go back to university to get an education degree so I could teach school.



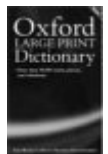
After graduation, my first full-time school-teaching job required me to teach music from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in French for the Francophone School Division of Saskatchewan. Although I can function in French in a superficial way, I lack the vocabulary to express more complex ideas.

When I accepted this teaching post, I was unprepared for the depth of anxiety that would be caused by my lack of understanding of the nuances of my second language. Things that would have been easy for me to say in English were difficult or impossible in French. It was frustrating to be unable to communicate satisfactorily with students, parents, staff and administration. I began to feel incompetent. Depression set in as I felt I had compromised myself professionally. My self-esteem plummeted to an all-time low. A year and a half later, when I look back on this experience, it still brings tears to my eyes.

This experience renewed my respect for people who are struggling with language skills. The ability to express one's thoughts and feelings through language is closely linked with self-esteem. I can only imagine how difficult it must be for someone to come to a new country with skills that seem to become irrelevant because they are not in the "right" language.

Oxford Large Print Dictionary

The Oxford Large Print Dictionary has been noted for its unique combination of Oxford's unmatched dictionary resources and a specifically designed large-print format for ease of reading. Now fully updated in this revised edition, The Oxford Large Print Dictionary incorporates the latest changes and additions to the English language, providing a total of 74,000 definitions in over 60,000 entries. The vitality of our language has been recognized with the inclusion of many new words and phrases.



- http://www.schoolnewstoday.com/spelling_book-help.html

How literacy friendly was our election? One Saskatoon adult learner tells her story.

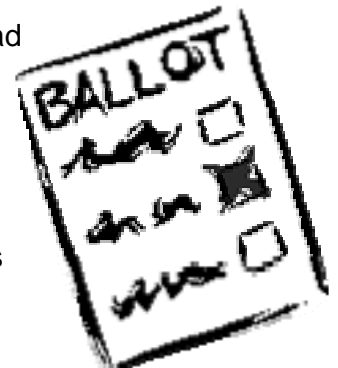


January 23rd, 2006 was an important day for many politicians and it was also an important day for many learners across Canada. I had the privilege of sitting in a room with 6 other learners, just days after the election to share our thoughts and feelings on our voting experiences.

Most of them all feel intimidated and scared. They did not understand the whole procedure. One female learner was yelled at when she passed the masking tape placed on the floor to help represent a line. When she gave back her ballot she was barked at because she did not fold her ballot right. She was horribly upset by this; she felt stupid and embarrassed. One man was unsure how to vote early because he was going to be away out of town the day of the election. He was upset that he could not have his vote heard.

Many of us did not know how to mark the ballot. Do we put an X? How about a check mark or do we simply color it in? Another learner heard that if you were to put an X or a mark outside of the designated area your vote would not count. If this is the case, my vote would not have counted because I think I went outside the circle. It would have been nice to have someone there to politely explain the rules to me.

I can truly say that I expected the ballot to be a lot different. To me it was hard to read because the writing was so close together and being in one color just made it all blur together. I saw a television document about South Africa's First Democratic Elections on April 1994. The ballot was big and clear looking, it had columns straight across with the names typed, then they had color parties logos or symbol in which represented each members as well as a color photographs. Finally there was a big space to mark.



I just want to thank every literacy organization in which that had a hand in supplying information to learners about voting. Also to all those learners that went out and voted, you should feel very proud of yourself. I just hope your experience was better than these 6 learners here in Saskatoon. I would also like to give deep thanks for the learners that shared their experiences and allowing me to share them with you. For the learners that did not vote please don't feel bad. You will have another chance in the future, and by then hopefully it will be a fun and exciting experience.

*Forever a learner
Carey Rigby-Wilcox*

New Government, New Priorities: What does it mean for literacy?



Canada's new Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has announced a set of renewed priorities for the country. Among these are cleaning up government; lowering taxes; strengthening the justice system; implementing a renewed childcare initiative; and improving healthcare. Although indirectly linked to justice, health, and families, literacy itself is clearly not pinpointed as an immediate government priority.

Nevertheless, there is still reason to hope that the community's work over the past few years will not be wasted. Compared to a few years ago, literacy has a much higher national profile as a public policy issue. This is due to our efforts as a community to develop meaningful policy advice and action plans; to statistical releases that point to the need for action; and to intergovernmental recognition of literacy as a priority. There is also a growing awareness of how literacy connects to a broad cross-section of federal responsibilities, including immigrant settlement, Aboriginal issues, health, and more.

Post-election transition will have an impact on the community's efforts to secure literacy advances, and also on the results of those efforts.

- Movement for Canadian Literacy Website: www.literacy.ca

Read, Rate, Reread

Try this activity with your learner. It is a great way to reinforce that rereading is more effective than one-time "careful reading".

After reading something for the first time, rate your understanding on the scale below. Read the passage a second and third time, rating your understanding after each reading. Notice the change in your ratings from the first to third readings.

First Reading

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(I understand only a little.)					(Ask me anything – I get it all!)				

Second Reading

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Third Reading

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Summary Statement

Newspaper Activities



Collect a number of newspaper articles (from a variety of different newspapers), and try some of the following activities:

1. Separate the articles from the headlines. Put the headlines in one pile and the articles in another. Match the headlines to the articles.
2. Repeat the above activity, but include some headlines without including the articles that go with them (and vice versa) to make things a little harder.
3. Give your learner a headline, and ask him to write an article to go with it. This activity can also be tried by giving your learner the article and asking them to make a headline for it.
4. Give the adult learner a number of articles about the same story, but from different newspapers. Ask them to compare the stories from each newspaper. Ask them some of the following questions:
 - Are there any differences between them?
 - Are some stories biased towards one particular point of view?
 - Does one newspaper have more text than another?
 - Does one newspaper have more pictures than another?

- How important does the newspaper see the story? (i.e. is it on the front page or in the middle of the newspaper?)

- www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/newspape.htm

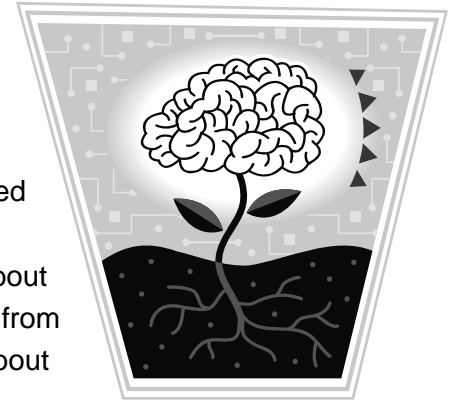
5. Have your adult learner cut out pictures of things they like in the newspaper and then write sentences about the pictures.
6. Read a few scores from the sports page and have students write them down.
7. Find numbers in newspaper advertisements that deal with money and have your learner practice reading the prices aloud.
8. Using pictures found in the newspaper, have your learner write sentences about the pictures using prepositions to describe the spatial relationships.
9. Discuss an issue found in an editorial that may be pertinent to learner's life.
10. Have learners circle words they do not understand and ask them to try to figure out the meaning from the context or look up the definition in the dictionary.
11. Analyze advertisements to discuss the way prices vary from store to store. Learners may report their findings by writing a paragraph.
12. Collect newspaper photographs of people and have learners make up stories about the people.



http://www.penpages.psu.edu/penpages_reference/28507/285072782.HTML

Brain-Based Learning

Brain-based learning has been called a combination of brain science and common sense. Hart (1983) called the brain "the organ of learning." He advocated learning more about the brain in order to design effective learning environments. Caine and Caine (1991) developed twelve principles that apply what we know about the function of the brain to teaching and learning. These principles were derived from an exploration of many disciplines and are viewed as a framework for thinking about teaching methodology. The principles are:



1. The brain is a complex adaptive system.
2. The brain is a social brain.
3. The search for meaning is innate.
4. The search for meaning occurs through patterning.
5. Emotions are critical to patterning.
6. Every brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes.
7. Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral attention.
8. Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes.
9. We have at least two ways of organizing memory.
10. Learning is developmental.
11. Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.
12. Every brain is uniquely organized.

How does this apply to your tutoring sessions?

For complex learning to occur, Caine and Caine have identified three conditions:

1. Relaxed alertness - a low threat, high challenge state of mind
2. Orchestrated immersion - an multiple, complex, authentic experience
3. Active processing - making meaning through experience processing

Susan Kovalik has also identified the following important components:

- Absence of Threat
- Meaningful Content
- Choices, Movement to Enhance Learning
- Enriched Environment
- Adequate Time
- Collaboration
- Immediate Feedback
- Application

Want to learn more about brain-based learning? Use these key words to search on the internet:

- Artful Minds
- Left brain
- Brain-Based Learning
- Brain Compatible Learning
- Brain Lab
- Brain Research Concepts
- Is the Fuss About Brain Research Justified?

- <http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic70.htm>

Websites for tutors...

<http://www.write101.com/> Write 101's archives contain past issues of free monthly newsletters that contain writing improvement tips on various subjects. Apart from serving as a good source for polishing one's writing and speech style, these short essays are also great, witty entertainment. Visiting this site is also an opportunity for more conscious study of one's own grammar, spelling, and vocabulary peculiarities in comparison to other uses of English.

<http://www.historesearch.com/> Histor eSearch was created for history buffs. The majority of the resources offered were created by others. Use of this site is absolutely free.

<http://www.englishclub.com/esl-lesson-plans/worksheets.htm> Here are some great ideas for activities that will brighten up any English language tutoring session. Here you'll find ready made lesson plans as well as tips and ideas you can include in any session. Topics include:

- activities and games
- ESL worksheets and lesson plans
- authentic reading materials
- ESL worksheet generator
- topic based worksheets
- talking points
- teaching tips

Best practices for Improving Essay Writing

*The following information is provided to help you progressively assist adult learners improve their essay writing skills. Learning to write essays is like learning another language. Take time to find out how **rubrics** can help (google on internet for what a rubric is and how it can be used).*

Remember: *stress one new requirement to really focus on each time you give an essay. Does he know how to quickly do an outline? Can he use transitional sentences to show logical thought? What about diagrams, drawings or equations to illustrate a concept while explaining it in words?*

First Essay

- Together, brainstorm a topic
- You review it first. Do this leniently. If you can, share other examples of excellent, moderate and poor essays.
- See if the learner can select and explain why some essay examples are better than others.

Second Essay

- give three possible topics for homework.
- Learner works on essay between meetings.
- Student self-evaluates with a rubric

Third Essay

- together, generate a list of possible essay subjects. Narrow to three.
- As homework, learner completes essay and brings to next session
- again self-evaluate and compare writing skills development to previous essays.

Fourth Essay

- Is she ready for a timed essay?

READer Family Fun Page



Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped
over the moon;
The little dog laughed
to see such sport,
And the dish ran
away with the spoon.



Colour me!

What is this poem about? In England's royal court, it was the custom to dub people with silly nicknames. Elizabeth I was often called "The Cat" from the way she fiddled with her Cabinet ministers as if they were mice. The cow, moon and her "lap-dog" were also characters in these court charades. The dish was Elizabeth's serving lady and the spoon was, of course, the royal taster. When these last two secretly eloped, Elizabeth had them captured and confined to the Tower of London. Nobody fiddled with Elizabeth! www.rooneydesign.com/HeyDid.html

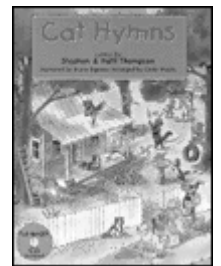
On your next visit to the library look for:



Three Little Kittens by Paul Galdone (Illustrator) The favorite Mother Goose rhyme about the three careless kittens who lost their mittens is given added appeal with Galdone's bold and colorful illustrations. "This refreshingly hearty version of the nonsense verse will be as much a favorite of adult storytellers as it will be of toddler listeners." -- School Library Journal **Ages 3-8**

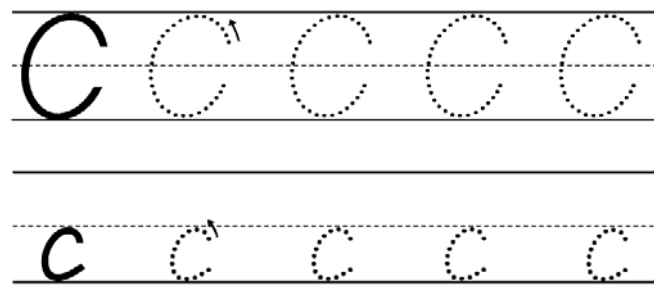
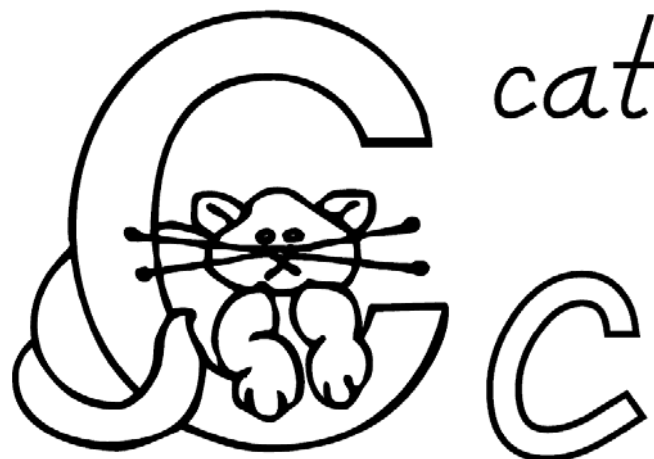
Cat Hymns Book + Music CD by Stephen Curtis Thompson Cat Hymns is the most fun kids can have with a book in a long time!

The illustrations in this book are great! The words to the songs are clever, and the music and singers on the CD are fantastic! You can tell the people who did this book know and love cats. Kids can sing these songs in the car, "act out" the songs in little plays, or entertain themselves using the songs and cat-characters from the book for puppet shows.




The activities and information has been provided by: http://www.first-school.ws/activities/crafts/animals/pets/cat_2.htm, <http://www.miss-kitty.com/cathumor/store/poetrykids.html> and www.rooneydesign.com/HeyDid.html. Be sure to visit these sites for additional information and activities you and your children can do together.

Name _____ Date _____



© http://www.First-Schools

Practice writing the big and small letter C. You can also trace the upper and lower case letters with your finger to demonstrate how these are written and sound out the letter Cc as it sounds in the word cat. Do you know any other words that start with C? List them here:



I am a ca___. I like to wear a ha__ with ___wo feathers. I am also holding a ___abbit in my pa___. I love to wear brown boo___. People call me _____ in _____.

How much do you know about cats? Discuss basic cat facts, like

- How many legs do cats have?
- What are whiskers?
- What do cats eat?
- Are they big or small?
- Where do cats live?

Images and information about domestic cats can be seen at www.encyclopedia.com. Click on the pictures to enlarge and view information.

