Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Photocopy bear from cover
2. Color chart using animals from the book

Procedure
A great picture book can be used in a variety of ways. Below are some suggested activities for Eric Carle's Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?.

1. Photocopy bear onto brown cover paper, fold in half, and make a little book with white paper inside. The book can be cut out to make the bear shape. Ask children to re-write the story of Brown Bear. They can change the animals, the colors, and what the animals see.

2. Make a color chart using the animals in the book.

3. Create a class book for which each child writes and illustrates his/her own page. In response to “Children, children, what do you see?,” students can draw self-portraits and complete the sentence, “I see a _________ looking at me.” Encourage students to be silly and creative. You may also emphasize shapes and/or adjectives, by asking students to include a shape in their response, such as, “I see a round, red beetle looking at me.”

Chalk One Up!
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Black paper
2. Sidewalk Chalk
3. Glue
4. Rough-grit sandpaper
5. Scissors
6. Cardstock

Procedure
1. Read Arthur series book, *Binky Rules*. In the book, Binky’s name mysteriously appears in chalk all over the school. Students will make chalk name rubs similar to those in the book.

2. Cut out sandpaper letters and glue them to cardstock.

3. Children take turns selecting the letters of their names from the sandpaper alphabet (younger children can select just their initials).

4. Children place black paper over the sandpaper letters and rub with sidewalk chalk. As children rub, their names mysteriously appear on the black paper.

Virginia SOLs
K.11

Source: http://pbskids.org/arthur/grownups/activities, WGBH Play and Learn with Arthur Vol 2
**Head Start**

**Literacy Skills / Writing**

### Materials

1. Newspaper headlines

### Virginia SOLs

1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9, 3.10

### Procedure

1. Students select a headline of interest from the day’s newspaper.

2. Students choose only one word from the headline.

3. Direct students to write a sentence that starts with that word. For example, using the headline, “Culture is National Treasure,” from which the student chooses the word “treasure,” the student might write, “Treasure is something you cherish.”

4. Then direct students to use the last word of the first sentence to write a second sentence. Using our example of, “Treasure is something you cherish,” the student’s second sentence would start with “cherish.” Therefore, s/he might write, “Cherish means you really love something.”

5. Up to this point, you are leading students step by step through this writing exercise. After two sentences are composed and students have an understanding, explain to students that they will now write a whole page using this pattern. The writing may not make sense in its flow of sentences. Only the individual sentences must make sense. The purpose of this exercise is to get students writing and having fun!

Extended example using the word treasure:

“Treasure is something you cherish. Cherish means you really love something. Something you might cherish is your skateboard. Skateboard is a word for a fun toy that can sometimes be dangerous. Dangerous situations scare me. Me has two letters. Letters are fun to write, because in them I can say things in my own words. Words sometimes escape me, but not today! Today I’m writing. Writing is a blast!”

Source: (2003). The Virginia Press Association’s Newspaper in Education Committee
Materials

1. *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown

Procedure

1. To introduce or review the use of adjectives, read aloud *The Important Book*. This story describes everyday items and experiences, highlighting the objects many uses or appearances. The most important thing about the object is emphasized.

2. Students select an important thing to describe. What is important to them?

3. VARIATION: You may use the book for the first week of school, describing the most important qualities of your grade level. Then, ask students to compose an important book passage about themselves to include with your grade level analysis. This is a great class generated book for your classroom library at beginning of the year!
King Change-a-Lot
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. King Change-a-Lot
2. Wish slips
3. A large chamber pot

Virginia SOLs
K.11, 1.11, 1.12

Procedure
1. Read, King Change-A-Lot by Babette Cole.
2. Ask children to fill an old chamber pot with written wishes.
3. Bring closure to the activity by asking students open ended prompts, such as, “What else could King Change-a-Lot have wished for? How would you change the Kingdom? What sort of King/Queen would you be and why?”

Source: Literacy Activities for the Early Years: http://www.penguin.com/au/PUFFIN/TEACHERS/classroom%20activities/literacy_early.htm
Little Cloud
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. *Little Cloud*
2. Blue construction paper
3. White paint
4. Crayons
5. Writing paper and pencil

Virginia SOLs
K.11

Procedure
1. Read *Little Cloud* to the class.
2. Take children outside, lie down and watch the clouds.
3. Talk about what the clouds look like.
4. In the classroom, ask the children to draw and write about what they saw in the clouds. Use blue construction paper for their drawing and writing paper for their descriptions.
5. Students paint their cloud drawings and write while the clouds dry.
6. Once dry, students may need to add details to the clouds with crayon.

Little Cloud
Writing
Magic Bags
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Large Ziploc bags
2. Various colors of finger paint
3. Clear packing tape

Virginia SOLs
K.11

Procedure
1. Place a dollop of paint into each bag.
2. Seal each bag and reinforce the four sides with clear packing tape.
3. Spread out the paint inside each bag.
4. Encourage children to use their fingertips to practice writing. To erase, the child can simply rub his hand over the bag and start again.

My Favorite Thing
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Samples of different types of poems - try to find poems written by children at your grade level or compose poems about your favorite thing
2. Drawing paper

Procedure
1. Writing should relate to students' lives. We should encourage them to write about what they know. Often, what “they know” is a memorable moment, experience, or favorite thing. During April, National Poetry Month, students can compose a series of poems about their favorite thing. Select standard poem structures (concrete, list, acrostic, quatrain, etc.) and conventions (repetitive verse, sound words, rhyme, sensory images, etc.) appropriate to your grade level.

2. An easy way to begin is by students illustrating a cover for their collection of poems. The cover should be a large picture of their favorite thing. Writing a list poem is a good scaffold to more difficult poem styles!

3. Students may perform a selected poem at an open mic or poetry cafe event for your class.

Virginia SOLs
1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12
Mystery Title
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. A new read aloud covered in construction paper
2. Select picture books previously read aloud to class

Procedure

1. Select a picture book and cover it in construction paper. On the construction paper cover, draw multiple question marks and include the author and illustrator’s name.

2. Using picture books familiar to the students, briefly reflect on the story and do a picture walk. Then ask, “Does the title match the story?” Demonstrate that the title of a book reflects the story and gives the reader an idea as to the topic and type of book.

3. Read the mystery title book aloud. While you read, prompt students to be thinking of a good title for the book.

4. Once finished, take recommended title options from the class. Then give students four pre-prepared options from which to choose. Two of the titles may be appropriate, but one will be a clear best fit (and the actual title). The other two choices may be silly to emphasize more clearly that a title must match the story.

5. Students vote on which title they believe is the real title of the book. Remove the construction paper cover and reveal the title!

Source: (2008). Teichman, A.
Name Bags
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. Plastic bags

2. Any type of manipulative letters such as letter cards, magnetic letters, letter tiles, etc.

Virginia SOLs

K.11

Procedure

1. Place the letters of a child’s name in a bag. Make a bag for each child.

2. The children write their names on an answer card and include it in the bag. The child uses the letters to spell his/her name.

3. The children can switch bags to spell a friend’s names, too.
Rainy Day Fun
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. Picture books about rain
2. Writing paper
3. Crayons

Virginia SOLs

K.11

Procedure

1. Make a classroom book to read on rainy days. Start by reading various titles about rainy days. Some good books are Rainy, Rainy Saturday, The Napping House, and Mushroom in the Rain. Consider rhymes and songs as well, such as “Rain, Rain Go Away” and “It's Raining, It's Pouring.”

2. Help children research rain and discuss what they like to do on rainy days.

3. Students write about the rain and illustrate their work.

4. Compile student work in a classroom book to enjoy on rainy days.

Sentence Elaboration
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. Paper
2. Pencil

Virginia SOLs

1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Procedure

1. Fold a sheet of paper into 3 equal sections labeled 1, 2, and 3.
2. Write a sentence on the board and have students copy it in the first section of their papers.
3. Student illustrate the meaning of the sentence in the space underneath.
4. Next, ask students to expand or elaborate on the sentence in the third space.

Squiggle and Write
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Writing paper
2. Black marker
3. Squiggle cards

Virginia SOLs
K.11, 1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Procedure
1. Squiggle and write helps students when experiencing writers block. When students are stuck and just can't think of anything to write, encourage them to select a squiggle.

2. Prepare squiggle cards by making a black line squiggle on an index card. Maintain 30 cards in the basket at a time, replenishing when low.

3. Students take the squiggle cards and must turn the squiggle into something - a setting, main character, animal, event, etc. Children glue the squiggle card to the writing paper or in their journal. Students illustrate the squiggle to build a story and then begin writing about the squiggle.

Use a Space...Man!
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Clothespins or popsicle sticks decorated as astronauts or a “spaceman”
2. Googly eyes or astronaut stickers; offer variety for students to be creative
3. White paint

Procedure
1. To encourage students to leave proper spacing between words, allow students to use a spaceman. Students create a spaceman using a popsicle stick or clothespin. Paint the sticks white and decorate to resemble an astronaut. This is their “spaceman” for leaving spaces.
2. Model how to use a spaceman during a shared writing activity. Place the spaceman after you complete each word and begin the new word to the spaceman’s right.
3. VARIATION: Another great reminder for students to use spaces is imagining words as spaghetti noodles and in between words are meatball spaces. You can illustrate a Morning Message by underlining words in the letter with a squiggly line/noodle and color in the spaces between words as big red meatballs.

Virginia SOLs
K.11, 1.11

Source: (2008). Teichman, A.
Wall Stories
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. A former read aloud enjoyed by your class appropriate for adaptation and collaborative writing
2. Chart paper
3. Post-it notes

Virginia SOLs
K.11, 1.11, 1.12

Procedure
1. Wall Stories are a great shared writing experience! Using a story familiar to students, rewrite each page on chart paper leaving out key details (in a clozed fashion) or open ended sentence starters to which students can contribute.
2. Begin by rereading the familiar story.
3. Then present the first page of your Wall Story. Read it aloud to students. Explain to students that they will rewrite the story as a class. Post the first page at student level on the wall or an easel. While at work stations, students contribute their ideas on post-it notes and stick them to the page. Encourage students to think on their own, be creative, and to even be a little silly.
4. Collect the post-it notes and select the best three to four ideas. Students vote on the choices and you fill in the blank or sentence.
5. Re-post the page at the art work station for students to illustrate. Since there will be at least five to six pages for the story, there will be many opportunities for students to illustrate at the art station and take turns.
6. Remove the story page from the art station and post it where there will be enough room for the remaining pages. Thus, it becomes a Wall Story. Leave the story on the wall for use during a Read Around the Room station.
What Are They Thinking?

Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. Thought bubble cut-outs or post-it notes
2. Big books
3. Cut-out of characters from a book for modeling purposes; may re-use these for a Reader’s Theatre work station

Virginia SOLs

1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12

Procedure

1. Read a big book aloud. Using cut-outs of the story’s characters, re-tell the story from the characters’ perspectives. Focus on what specific characters might be thinking or feeling during different parts of the book.

2. Select one character from the story. Reread the story. Before reading, encourage students to focus on what that specific character is thinking and feeling. Stop after each page and ask students to help you create thought bubbles for the identified character. Write a thought bubble and stick it in the book.

3. Give each student a big book that s/he can read independently. Have the students read their book one time for basic understanding. Then ask students to count and name the characters in their respective books. Students should reread the book one time for each main character. For instance, if there are three main characters, students read through the book three times. Each reread focuses the students on a different characters thoughts and feelings. You may want to provide guiding questions to students, such as, “What is the character feeling?” or “What would your character say when...?”

4. Students use the thought bubble (or text balloon) cut-outs to compose the characters’ thoughts and feelings. Students post the bubbles in the book. Students can read their book aloud to a partner, including the newly added text. These adapted big books will be a popular work station for weeks.

Source: (2007). Burke, M.
Thought Bubbles
Thought Bubbles

[Diagram of two thought bubble images]
Dialogue Balloons
Dialogue Balloons
Dialogue Balloons
Word Inventors
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials
1. Suggested picture books: Jamberry by Bruce Deegan, Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak, and One Fish, Two Fish, Read Fish, Blue Fish by Dr. Seuss
2. Transparency of Jabberwocky excerpt
3. Overhead projector

Procedure
1. Tell children that authors sometimes make up silly words to create fun stories. Although the words are made up, they still have meaning. Share the first two stanzas of “Jabberwocky,” by Lewis Carroll, to demonstrate that although the words are silly, they still have meaning. We can imagine a Jabberwock despite it not being real. You may wish to share the poem on the overhead, highlighting which words were indeed invented.

   “Twas brillig, and the silithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe. All mimsy were the borogroves, and the mome raths outgrabe. Beware the Jabberwock, my son! The jaws that bite, the claws that catch! Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun the fruminous Bandersnatch!”

2. Encourage children to share their responses to the poem. How did the poem make them feel? What words did the writer make up? What do children think the word brillig might mean?

3. Share other picture books in which the authors invented words.

4. Tell the students that they too can be word inventors. You may wish to scaffold their first efforts by starting a poem. You may also leave only the invented word for student creation. Your more advanced writers may want to attempt writing their own story or poem using invented words. Examples for your scaffolding efforts follow:

   The children went outside to run, sun, and willy-wum.

   The day was warm, so the kooky-lorm
   Brewed and stewed a mookey-mark storm.

Virginia SOLs
1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9