



Inspiring Great Writing Using Technology

Technology has given us a myriad of tools to put wonder back on the agenda in a classroom. Here are some practical technology-based writing activities to get you started.

Step	App/ Software	Action Activity
Step 1: Plan for Success	<i>Felt Board</i> <i>Story Dice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Felt Board</i> and <i>Story Dice</i> apps. Ask students to form pairs and use the apps to generate ideas for plot, character & setting. Get students to pick their best ideas and use the <i>Narrative Story Graph</i> to expand on them.
Step 2: Sizzling Starts	<i>Audacity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Audacity</i> software. Put a list of topics on the board. Ask students to form pairs and use the software to record their ideas for a Sizzling Start. Once students are happy with their Sizzling Start, get students to play back the recording and transcribe it onto paper.
Step 3: Tightening Tension	<i>Junior Storytellers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Junior Storytellers</i> app. Ask students to form groups and use the app to set up and record their own animated tension scenes. Get each group to share their tension scene with the class.
Step 4: Dynamic Dialogue	<i>Comic Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Comic Life</i> app. Ask students to take a series of photos or draw illustrations and upload them to the app. Get students to bring the images to life with dialogue.
Step 5: Show, Don't Tell	<i>Lifecards</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Lifecards-Postcards</i> app. Ask students to form groups and pick an emotion. Get the groups to use the app to create postcards that SHOW their chosen emotion.
Step 6: Ban the Boring	<i>iMovie</i> <i>Microsoft Movie Maker</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>iMovie</i> app or <i>Microsoft Movie Maker</i>. Ask students to work in groups to brainstorm and script a video blog. Get students to use the software to record their video blog. Ask students to share their finished blog with another group and suggest ways to ban the boring bits in each other's work. Use the software to edit the video blog based on the feedback.
Step 7: Exciting Endings	<i>Remixed Fairy Tale</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Remixed Fairy Tale</i> apps. Play some examples to the class as inspiration. Ask students to work in groups to come up with an alternative ending to their favourite fairy tale or story.
All	<i>Verso</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Verso</i> app. Set a series of writing activities online and ask students to post their responses. Get students to comment on each other's work using Seven Steps terminology.

For more ideas on how to integrate different apps and software into your writing lessons, become a *Seven Steps Online* member and download our Action Activities: www.sevenstepswriting.com/info-seven-steps-online/.



Using Multimedia to Teach the Seven Steps

Here are some fun writing research activities to help you integrate different forms of multimedia into your writing lessons.

Step	Multimedia	Action Activity
Step 1: Plan for Success	Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download the <i>Narrative Story Graph</i>. Find examples of TV advertisements that tell a 'mini-story' (e.g. Rhonda in the AAMI advertisements). Demonstrate how the advertisements follow the Narrative Story Graph. Get students to plan their own advertisements using the Narrative Story Graph.
Step 2: Sizzling Starts	Text Interactive content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to go to the 'News' page on the DogoNews website: www.dogonews.com. Get students to find examples of Sizzling Starts that catch their attention and make them want to read more. Interact with the content by posting a comment on the article.
Step 3: Tightening Tension	Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the following video clip showing Nik Wallenda walking in high winds on a tightrope over the Grand Canyon: https://youtu.be/FTWne15LT4E. Discuss what Nik can see, hear, touch, taste, smell and feel (emotions) while performing this death-defying stunt. Write a Five + 1 Senses tension scene based on the clip.
Step 4: Dynamic Dialogue	Audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to an episode of the radio play <i>The Archers</i>: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qpgr/episodes/player. Discuss how dialogue is used to convey information about the plot, setting and characters. Work with a partner to script and record a conversation between two of the characters in the episode.
Step 5: Show, Don't Tell	Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Google Images to find examples of advertisements from different charities. Share the images with the class and discuss how they SHOW rather than TELL the reader. Get students to design their own advertisements using the same techniques.
Step 6: Ban the Boring	Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the following YouTube clip showing deleted scenes from popular Disney movies: https://youtu.be/koK2YexYi84. Make a list of the reasons why these scenes were deleted according to the commentary in the clip. Add other ideas and suggestions to the list. Get students to look at their own work and use the ideas in the list to Ban the Boring bits.
Step 7: Exciting Endings	Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch the Miniscule Short Film, Picnic: https://youtu.be/N00rA1aFwJl. As a class, brainstorm alternative endings – the crazier, the better! Get students to work in groups to write and animate an Exciting Ending.

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