



Write It Workshops: Brainstorm Bonanza

Workshop Objective:

The purpose of this workshop is to teach participants how to brainstorm story ideas effectively. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a list of ideas to draw from for future story writing.

Outline:

The facilitator will demonstrate the importance of brainstorming and will share brainstorming techniques for writing stories. Participants will familiarize themselves with initial story development by becoming aware of the foundational components of stories (i.e., by connecting settings to characters and plots). Participants will leave the workshop with an understanding of the importance of story development, a list of story ideas they can draw from in future, and at least part of a written story.

Workshops are approximately 60 minutes in length, with the following structure:

- Ice Breaker Activity (5 minutes)
- Minds-On Activity linked to the designated writing skill (15 minutes)
- Instructional component on how to brainstorm story ideas (15 minutes)
- Writing activity pertaining to the designated writing skill (20 minutes)
- Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Ice Breaker Activity: *Book on the Brain* (5 mins)

Participants take turns to introduce themselves and, in one sentence, share the title of the book they are reading or read most recently and state one or two adjectives describing the book. For example, "I'm reading *The Giver* and it's interesting and spooky."

Minds-On Activity: *Stringing Story Plots* (15 mins)

A reproducible page with with 9 individual sentence strips will be provided with this kit to help with the activity, featuring three different settings, characters, and central actions/problems (Appendix A).

Sentence strips should be placed faced down in 3 piles – settings, characters, and central actions/problems.

- The facilitator will model the activity by turning over 1 sentence strip from each pile, read it aloud and/or record the result on a chart for students to see. See chart below for sample results.

A spaceship in the future	A cat	A bird has flown in from outdoors
The gymnasium after school	A school principal	An allergic reaction causing itchiness and sleepiness
An airplane just before takeoff	A kindergarten student	Access to electricity/power is suddenly cut off

- Participants are placed into small groups. The student with the first birthday of the calendar year is designated as the recorder. The student with the last birthday of the calendar year is designated as the



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reporter. Each group is given a set of sentence strips, paper, and a writing tool (pen, pencil).

- Participants in each group are given an opportunity to turn over one sentence strip from each pile and the recorder records results by creating a chart similar to that modelled by the facilitator until time is up.
- Each group's recorder shares two results aloud to the whole group.

Instructional Component: *Sentence Stretches* (15 mins.)

Facilitator will model how each row of the previously created chart can be stretched to create a story idea using the chart below to model and record:

Who?	Is Doing What?	When?	Where?	Why?
My cat	My cat is stuck in a spaceship.	My cat is stuck in a spaceship in the future.	My cat is stuck in a spaceship about to take off from earth.	My cat is stuck in a spaceship about to take off from earth because she wants to go home.
My school principal	My school principal is in a storage closet.	My school principal is in a storage closet during a school dance.	My school principal is in a storage closet during a school dance in the gymnasium.	My school principal is in a storage closet during a school dance in the gymnasium because when he was getting a mop the door locked shut behind him.
A kindergarten student	A kindergarten student is on an airplane hiding his pet rat.	A kindergarten student is on an airplane hiding his pet rat just before takeoff.	A kindergarten student is on an airplane hiding his pet rat just before takeoff at Pearson International Airport.	A kindergarten student is on an airplane just before takeoff at Pearson International Airport looking for his pet rat.

- Individual participants select a person or a character (i.e., A girl, Luke Skywalker) to develop into a *Sentence Stretch* as modelled by the facilitator.

Writing Activity: *Write on!* (20 mins)

- Participants write a short story based on their *Sentence Stretch*.

Wrap-Up (5 mins)

- Participants volunteer to read their work aloud to the whole group or in their previously arranged group.
- Participants fill out survey.
- Hand out Ripple Foundation bookmarks and brochure (if available).



Setting: **A spaceship in the future**

Setting: **The gymnasium after school**

Setting: **An airplane just before takeoff**

Character: **A cat**

Character: **A school principal**

Character: **A kindergarten student**

Central actions/problems: **A bird has flown in from outdoors**

Central actions/problems: **An allergic reaction causing itchiness and sleepiness**

Central actions/problems: **Access to electricity/power is suddenly cut off**