

# Picture Story, Word Story

- The purpose of this activity is for an adult to demonstrate the developmental levels of writing to children.
- This can help children feel comfortable at their own level and supports their movement to the next level of writing.
- This activity can be used in whole groups or in smaller groups.
- To do this activity, first divide the paper in half horizontally.
- The purpose of the top half of the paper is to create/write the “picture story”.
- The bottom half of the paper is for the “word story.”
- After creating their picture on the top half of the paper, children should try to write a simple sentence that describes their picture on the bottom half of the paper.
- Adults should not focus on correct spelling, instead they can write the same sentence to demonstrate the various levels of print development.
- To show the various levels of print development, adults should model writing at the level just above the writing levels of the children in the group (adjust according to each child’s needs, attention spans and writing experience.)
- Adults should have children read their sentences aloud. If words are not recognizable, take the dictation on the back of the page or on a sticky note.
- When reading your dictation back to children, be sure to demonstrate proper tracking of Left to Right and encourage them to use a period at the end of their sentences.

**(EI 2.1a Fine Motor Tool; 6.1 Conversational Ability; 8.3 Writing; 27.1 Focus)**

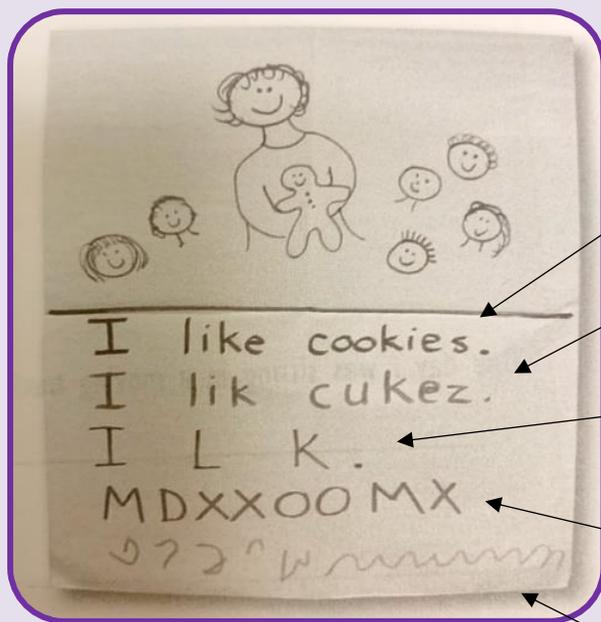
**Please note that this activity would be appropriate for a 4 year old child who has begun to write. This activity would likely be inappropriate for 3 year old child.**

**Example:** Picture Story/Word Story where the full progression of writing development is shown. Included are suggestions of how to discuss the various levels of writing with the children.

- Provide time for children to write freely in journals, as a choice.
- Encourage children to draw on the top and write on the bottom.
- It is important for children to know that any kind of writing is okay.
- Children need opportunities to dictate stories to adults and write their name and important words.



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**Conventional Writing:** Write correctly, using uppercase and lower case letters, ending with a period. “This is how grown-ups write. You can also write it another way using the sounds the letters make...”

**Phonetic Writing:** Say the sounds as you write, emphasizing the beginning and ending sounds. Think aloud as you say the word and choose the letters. Use capital and lower case letters with a period. “If you know some of your letter sounds, you could write your story like this...”

**Semiphonetic Manner:** Say the words aloud emphasizing beginning sounds. Write an uppercase letter for each beginning sound. “If you know letters, like the letters in your name, you could write like this...”

**Random Letter Strings:** Use letters that you know the children are familiar with and say the letter names as you write the sentence. End the sentence with a period. “If you are sure of any letters then you could write your sentence like this...”

**Mock Letters/Scribbles:** Say the sentence aloud while writing letter-like squiggles or marks (or just wavy lines horizontally in a scribble). End with a period.

**Please note:** Many teachers have found that flipping this order and starting with mock letters and ending with conventional writing is helpful. You may use the order that best supports children’s needs.

References:

Paulson, L. H., & Moats, L. C. (2018). *LETRS for Early Childhood Educators*. Boston, MA: Cambium Learning.

PED. (2019). *New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines*.

Puranik, C. S., & Lonigan, C. J. (2009). From scribbles to scrabble: preschool children’s developing knowledge of written language. *Reading and Writing*, 24(5), 567-589. doi:10.1007/s11145-009-9220-8