

Resources for the Adult Educator

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In this issue:



Speaking



Writing



Classroom Management



Professional Development



Exploring Resources



Tutor Profile



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Writing

Using MakeBeliefsComix.com to Prompt More Writing from ELLs, Basic Literacy Students

More Information

See You in the Funny Papers

<https://tinyurl.com/3jgtxcpd>

AARP Magazine wrote about Bill Zimmerman and MakeBeliefsComix.com in 2019. Read the article to discover more about how the website got started and how people have used it.

MakeBeliefsComix for ESOL/ Literacy Students

<https://makebeliefscomix.com/esolliteracy/>

This page of the site is dedicated to ELLs and literacy students.

30 Ways to Use MakeBeliefsComix in the Classroom

<https://makebeliefscomix.com/ways-to-use-mbc-in-the-classroom/>

This link contains both an article and videos that demonstrate how teachers can use the site. From practicing new vocabulary words to life skills practice and much more, the site's resources are versatile.

"Something to Write About"

<https://makebeliefscomix.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Something-To-Write-About.pdf>

Find out more about this free resource in the page 7 sidebar.

Purpose

To present the website MakeBeliefsComix.com as a resource for writing exercises for ELLs and basic literacy students and to highlight a specific writing prompt from the site.

Rationale

Do your literacy students and English language learners (ELLs) enjoy writing? Or does it take extra time and effort to get them to write? Sometimes, it could just be a matter of combining creativity with the task of writing.

The website MakeBeliefsComix.com provides teachers and students with a variety of resources where they can create comics or drawings and write text to accompany them. Using the resources from the site, students can create stories, or they can write about themselves. With some of the resources, they can send greeting cards or comics they created to friends and family. They also can create personalized comic strips.

The award-winning site has been used by special education teachers, art therapists, and grandmothers, to name just a few, according to an AARP article (see the article link in this page's sidebar).

MakeBeliefsComix.com was created by former newspaper editor Bill Zimmerman, who has also taught ELLs in the past.

Our article features one specific MakeBeliefsComix.com resource called "I Come From..." This resource is best used with ELLs but also can be used in other adult literacy settings. It could fit in well with a new class that is getting to know each other.

The Basic Activity

1. **Have the writing prompt "I Come From..." ready to share with students.** Use the QR code on page 7 to access it. Or they can find it online at https://makebeliefscomix.com/_downloads/Something-To-Write-About/Come-From-66-67.pdf.
2. **Write or say, "Where are you from?"** You may already know where many or all of your students are from, but this will be a starting point to get students talking for this activity. As students start to say where they are from, ask a few more questions based on the writing prompt. For example, you can ask:
 - Are you from a city or rural area?

- What language do people speak in your country? What language do you speak at home?
- Are people happy in your country? Why?

Add other questions as you see fit, and encourage students to ask questions of each other.

- 3. Let students know that they will complete a writing exercise that gives them more chances to share details on where they are from.** Provide them with a link to the writing exercise "I Come From..." or a printed copy of it.
- 4. Go over the questions shared with "I Come From..." with students.** You can give them time to read the questions on their own or read the intro and some of the questions aloud. Remind students that they don't need to answer every single question in their writing. The questions are there to prompt some ideas. There may be other information they want to share about where they are from.
- 5. Ask students to begin their writing with, "I Come From..."** They could also do their writing as a poem rather than paragraph(s); you can decide if you want students to attempt that or not.

Give the class time to complete their writing. Guide students as needed if they are having trouble getting started. If they are completing their work electronically, remind them to save their work.

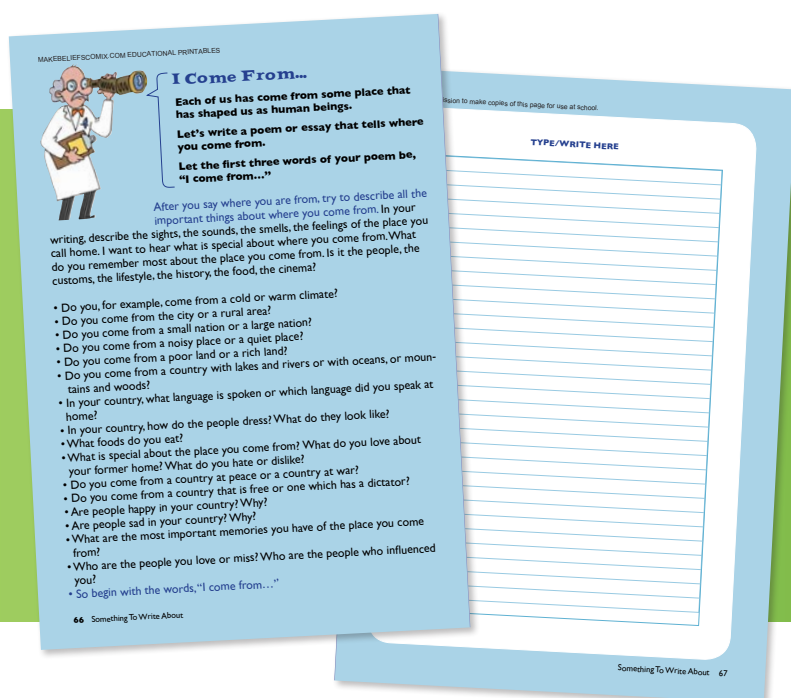
- 6. When finished, ask if there are volunteers who want to share their writing.** Here are a few ways that you can expand this activity:
 - Collect all the drafts and provide feedback.
 - Let students revise their writing to make it stronger. Follow any revision process you've used in the past.
 - Display students' writing in the classroom.
 - Ask students to draw a picture related to their writing.

Highlights From "Something to Write About"

One resource on the MakeBeliefsComix website is the free, 72-page downloadable book, "Something to Write About: Writing Prompts for English Language Learners and Literacy Students." The excerpt "I Come From..." is part of that book.

Here are some other topics covered in the book:

- Write About a Good Friend
- Write About Your Name
- Do You Remember a Story Someone Told You as a Child?
- What Kind of Business Would You Like to Own? Or What Kind of Job Would You Like to Have?
- Tell Me Something That Makes You Feel Proud
- Describe a Hardship You Have Experienced
- Who Is Your Hero?
- What Was Your First Day in the United States Like?
- Write About Your Home



Visual of "I Come From..."
in *Something to Write About*,
MakeBeliefsComix.com
and Bill Zimmerman.

Click [here](#) or scan
QR code to download.

