



WRITING BOX PROGRAM

Where it came from.

The Writing Box Program is adapted from the book *Kids Have All the Write Stuff; Inspiring Your Children to Put Pencil to Paper* by Sharon A. Edwards and Robert W. Maloy. In the course of his research, Dr. Maloy's found that writing is fundamental to reading and reading comprehension. He also discovered that children were not writing, and that the children he was observing were paralyzed at the very thought of putting pen to paper.

Dr. Maloy and Sharon Edwards, an elementary school teacher, put together a writing program for young children designed to inspire them to write on their own. To encourage this activity, they provided Writing Boxes, which contained writing materials (pencils, pens, markers, crayons, glue, paper, etc.) for each of the children in Ms. Edward's class. The experiment succeeded beyond their wildest hopes. There was an explosion of writing by the students, who created signs, poems, recipes, maps, cartoons, letters, journals and handmade books. Reading scores improved. Edwards and Maloy determined that the success of the program lay simply in its having providing writing materials and a nonjudgmental writing space for the children.

Will it work in a Public Library?

The pilot program began in 1993, as part of the Summer Reading Program at the Park Slope Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. The program was so successful that it was extended into the fall, during a crisis that delayed the opening of the public schools. The program continued in the summer of 1994, with other branch libraries providing Writing Box programs. More than 50 branches of the Brooklyn Public Library included the Writing Boxes as part of their Summer Reading Programs. In 1997, all branches were provided with materials, and instructions for the Writing Box program were part of the *Century Star Readers Summer Reading Manual*.

Here is how we adapted the Writing Box Program.

As we can not provide each child with her own Writing Box, each Children's Room provides one box for use by the children. It is feasible to share one box among 6-10 children at a table. We suggest a weekly hour-long workshop for children 7 through 12, based on a theme. During the rest of the week, the Writing Box would be available for in-library use as reference material (the children leave their library cards to hold as security). It is up to each individual library to decide what hours the Writing Box will be available. For example, weekly workshops could be held on Tuesday mornings from 10:30-11:30, and boxes could be available at the reference desk weekdays from 9:00 to 11:00 and from 2:00 to 4:00.

Writing Boxes

We recommend clear plastic rectangular containers with lids. They should contain a set of fine colored markers, a second set of thick markers, crayons, pencils, and erasers. Paper can be provided by having a box of scrap paper beside the Writing Box or by handing out clean sheets at the reference desk. It is not necessary to include every craft supply item in the Writing Box; neat stuff like glue sticks, stickers, colored glue, hole punches, brass brads, rubber stamps and rub-on letters can be for particular programs, or for later in the summer, to have a few surprises for the children who are regular users of the boxes.

Suggested contents of the Writing Boxes

The Writing Box. Any plastic container with a lid will work well; it should be big enough to hold the following contents easily without crowding. A clear or translucent box is best for keeping materials in order, and is also visually appealing.

Thick Colored Markers	Fine Colored Markers	Press-type Letters
Brass Fasteners	White Glue	Glue Sticks
Pens	Pencils	Clear Ruler
Transparent Tape	Erasers	Colorful Stickers
Crayons	Wooden Ruler	Pencil Sharpener
Rubber Stamps	Post-it Notes	Safety Scissors
Stencils (shapes, numbers, letters)		

Begin small with markers, pencils, sharpener, and erasers, and add other items as time goes on to “freshen” the Writing Box.

Younger Children

The Writing Box concept can be adapted for 3-6 year old children by having a separate box available for that age group. Young children communicate by writing and drawing. Large crayons, thick colored markers, masking tape, and rubbing forms are popular items that can be included.

Organization of contents

Take materials out of their original packaging, and place them in a clear, resealable plastic bag. Using a permanent marker, label contents on the side of bag. This will make clean-up and checking contents easy.

Paper

It is our experience that clean white paper and lined notebook paper are best given out separately from the box. Requests for paper are *never* refused. A box of scrap paper with old flyers and pieces of leftover construction paper is always available to be taken from as needed.

The Writing Box Workshops.

Each Workshop is one hour long. Each suggested program has five common elements: 1.) Books related to the topic, 2.) Creation of an example by the librarian, 3.) Modeling the action of writing, 4.) A simple interaction with the children, and 5.) Writing Boxes. At the Brooklyn Public Library, we found our teen Book Buddies were a terrific help in the preparation, maintenance, and distribution of our Writing Boxes. The young adults enjoyed the responsibility of being in charge of these elements of the program.

Note: During the program, always have extra pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, and a few student dictionaries on hand.

Suggested writing topics, forms, and sources for ideas:

Poetry	Thank you notes	Map Making
Pen Pals	Recipes	Signs
Letter Writing	Grocery Lists	Stories
Non-Fiction	Secret Codes	Captions for Drawings
Hieroglyphics	Menus	Cartoons
Plays	Journals	Chapter Books
Newspapers	Secret Messages	Book Making
Mazes	Word Puzzles	Concrete Poems
Lists	Numbers	Jokes and Riddles

Included in the **Discover2000Read** handbook are eight reproducible workshops.

1. Discover Maps
2. Discover Cartoons
3. Discover Hieroglyphics
4. Discover Menus and Recipes
5. Discover Newspapers
6. Discover Postcard and Letters
7. Discover Poetry
8. Discover Handmade Books

Helpful Hints.

- Set up the room with books on the related topic, face-out.
- Encourage parents to join in- not to observe, but to participate. You might say "Mrs. Fox, is there anyone that you would like to send a letter to?"
- Encourage older children to help the younger ones at their table.
- Encourage the children not to worry about spelling. Have a dictionary available, but don't let them get bogged down by it. We are writing, not editing.
- Stand back. Refrain from making comments like "I really like that." or "Isn't Marly's cartoon cute? Everyone look at Marly's cartoon." which foster competition and comparison. Each child's work is unique, and it is freeing for them to know that their work is not being judged.

KIDS HAVE ALL THE WRITE STUFF

A Bill of Writes

1. I write to please myself.
2. I decide how to use the Writing Box.
3. I choose what to write and know when it is finished.
4. I am a writer and a reader right now.
5. I have things to say and write everyday.
6. I write when I play and I play when I write.
7. I can write about my experience and my imagination.

8. I spell the way I can and learn to spell as I write.
9. I learn as I write and write as I learn.

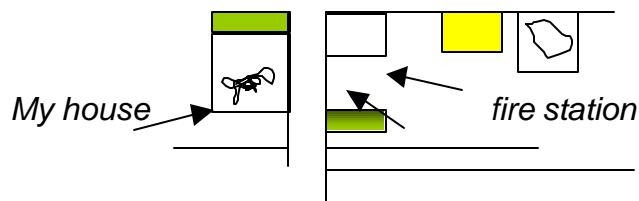
This *Bill Of Writes* has been adapted and reprinted with the permission of the authors of *Kids Have All the Write Stuff*, by Sharon Edwards and Robert W. Maloy.

Discover Maps

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather atlases and maps (bus maps, street maps, and maps of the library work well).

Step 2: Draw a map of your own neighborhood with markers or crayon on a plain piece of paper to use as an example. Label locations: "my house", "the fire station," "pizza," or "library". Spend less than five minutes on this map. Allow it to be imperfect. Make copies of the example to hand out, or draw it with a thick colored marker on a large piece of paper or black board (whichever you have available so that everyone can see).



Step 3: Check Writing Box supplies.

B. Discover Maps Program

Step 1: Show the children the maps, and ask them what kinds of maps they have seen.

Step 2: Show the children the map of your neighborhood and, if possible, quickly draw another map as they watch- a map of the inside of your house, or a map of the children's room, for example.

Step 3: Ask for suggestions, and suggest some of the different kinds of maps the children could make:

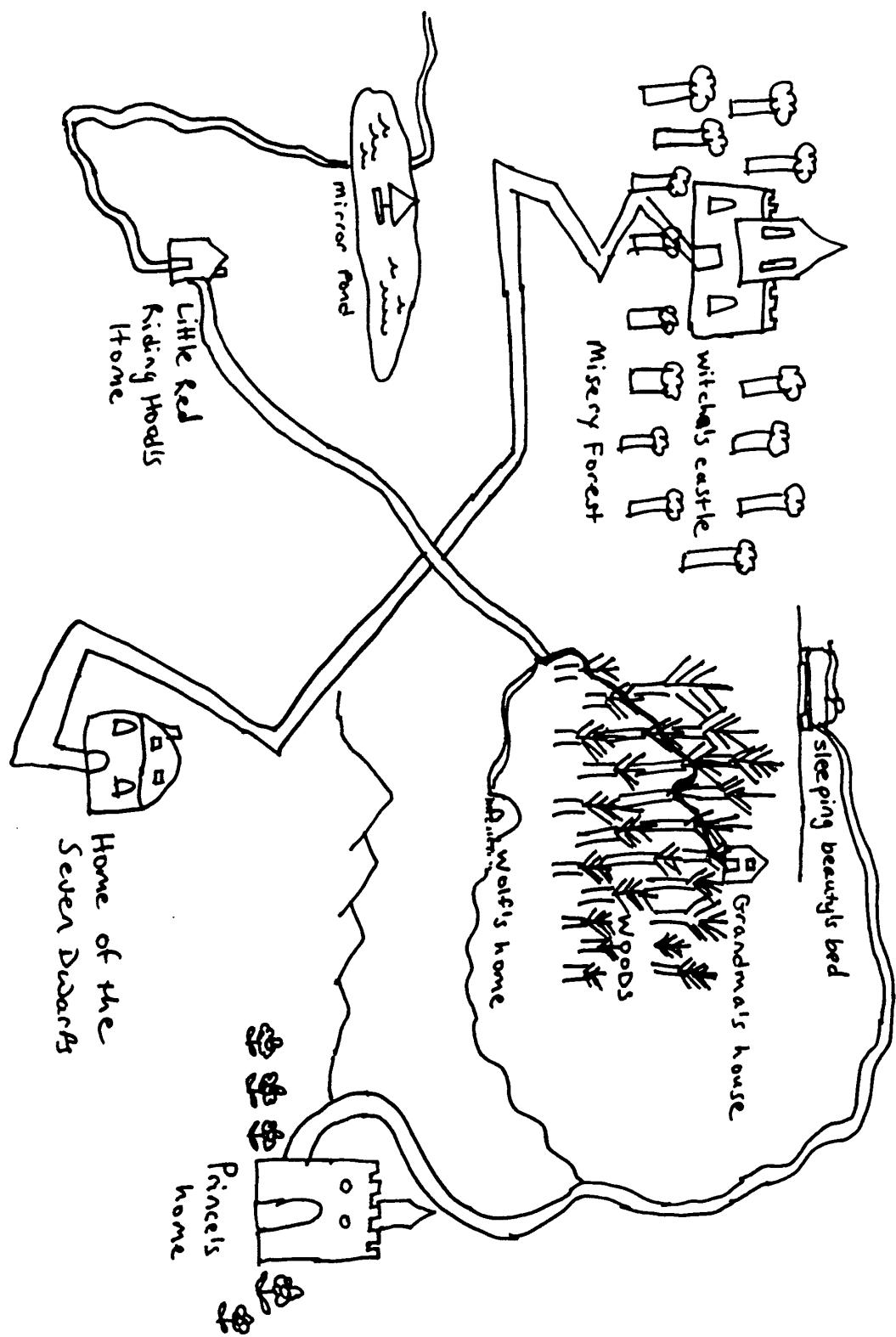
- A map of their neighborhood
- A map of their body
- A map of the inside of their house
- A map of an imaginary land or planet
- A map of a fairytale: Where exactly is Sleeping Beauty sleeping?

- A map of a story they like: Where is Harry Potter's aunt and uncle's house? What do the grounds of Hogwarts look like: How far is Ramona's house from school?
- A map of a buried treasure.

Step 4: Give children markers, crayon and paper Help them with labeling or with suggestions, if they are stuck for ideas.

Step 5: Give a five-minute warning for clean up. Remind children when the Writing Boxes are available to use in the library. Clean up, and put away supplies.

~ MAP of FAIRYTALE LAND ~

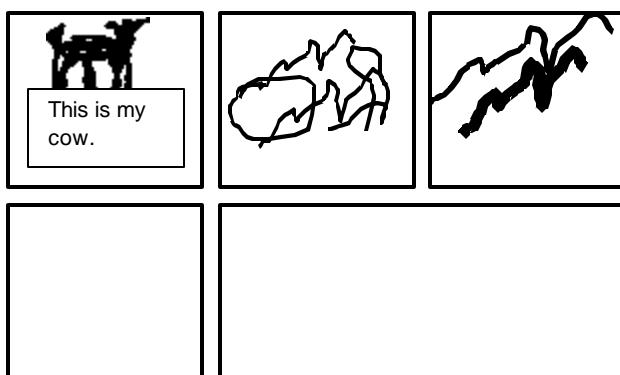


Discover Cartoons

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather books on cartooning, drawing, and books in cartoon format such as (*How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*, *Draw Fifty Dinosaurs*, *Calvin and Hobbes*). Cartoon pages from newspapers and magazines that use a cartoon format like *Zillions* are also good resources.

Step 2: Reproduce the cartoon frames provided in these pages. Draw an example with a caption, or invite one of the staff or a child hanging around the reference desk to help make example cartoons.



Step 3: Check Writing Box supplies.

B. Discover Cartoons Program

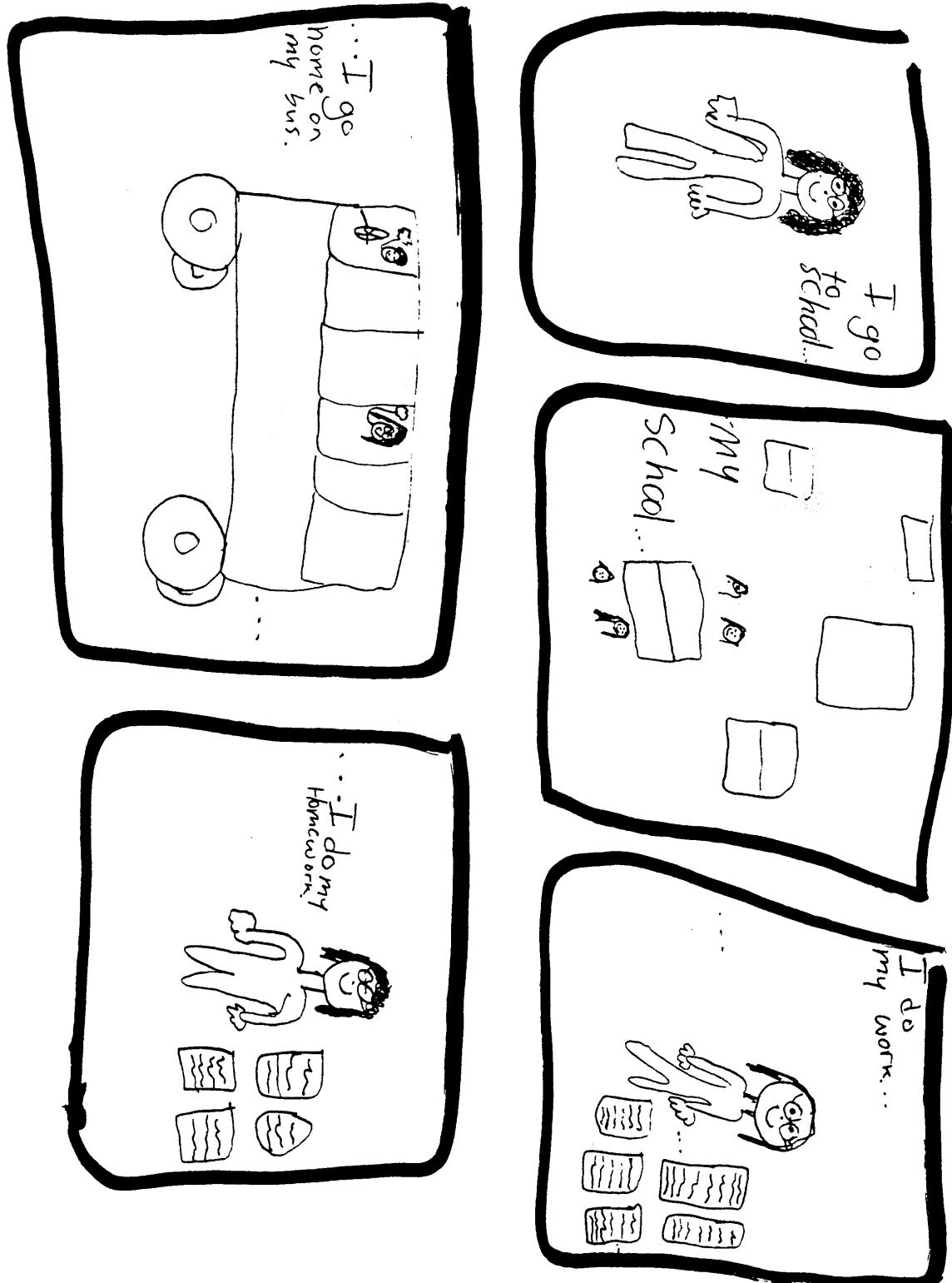
Step 1: Distribute books, magazines, and comics. Talk about the different kinds of cartoons that there are, and where we find them.

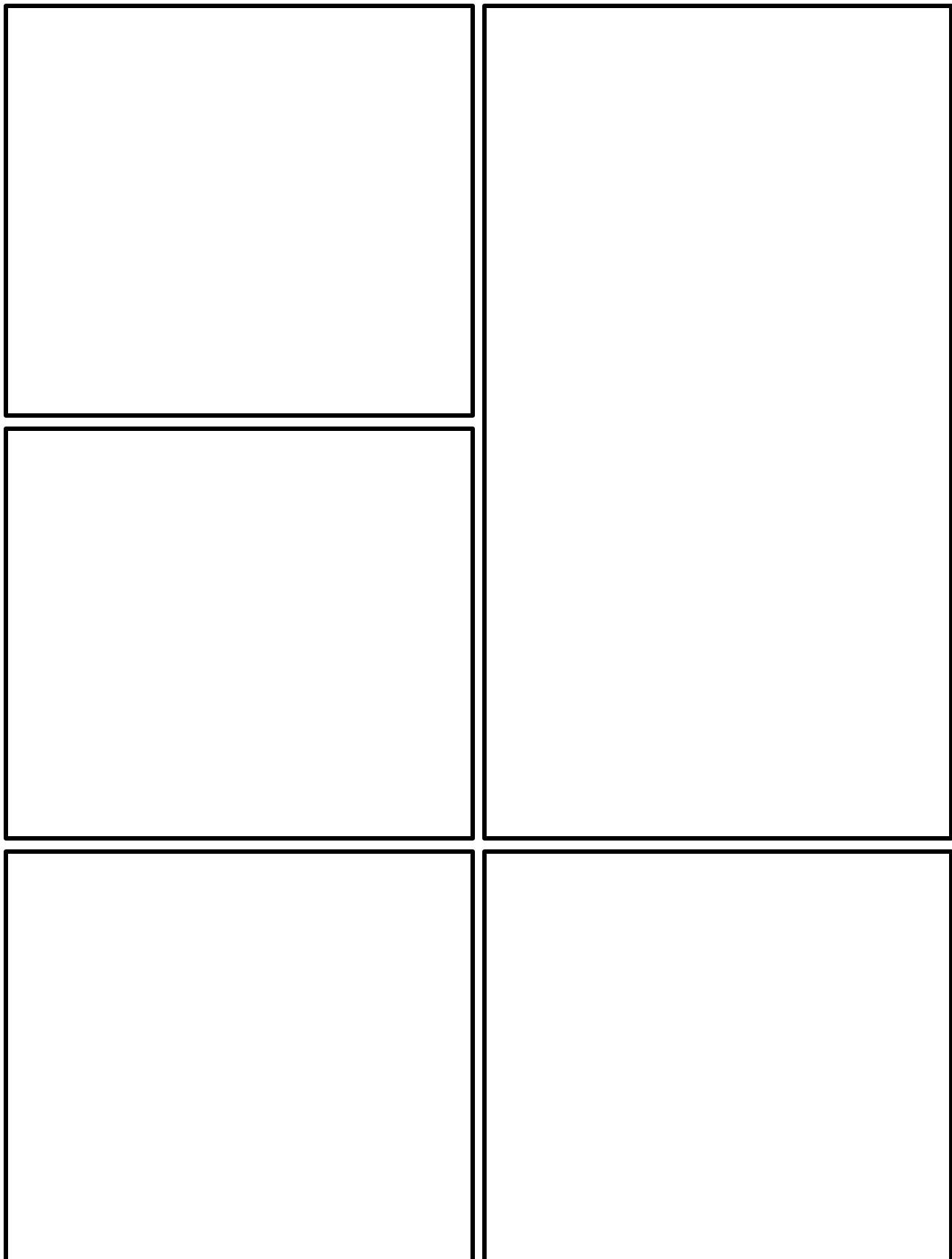
Step 2: Show your example and, if you can, create one or two frames of a cartoon as the children watch. Emphasize that you don't have to be an expert or a "good" artist. Cartoons don't have to be funny. A cartoon can be about anything that happened that day.

Step 3: Give out pre-printed frames and crayons, pencils, markers, and erasers. Give out as many frames as the kids want.

Step 4: Give a five-minute warning for cleanup. Remind children when the Writing Boxes will be available to use in the library. Clean up and put away supplies.

Note: Leftover cartoon frames can be put with the Writing Boxes for future use.





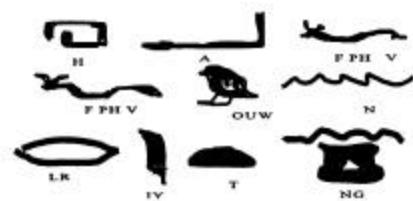
Discover Hieroglyphics

A. Preparation

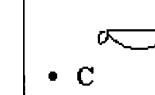
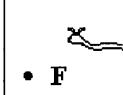
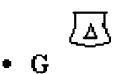
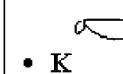
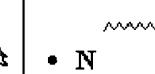
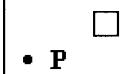
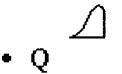
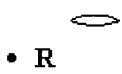
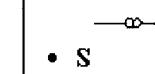
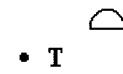
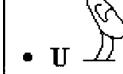
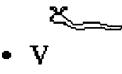
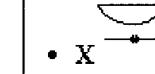
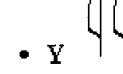
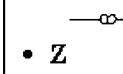
- Step 1.** Gather books on ancient Egypt, mummies, pyramids and fiction books such as *Under the Mummy's Spell* by Kate McMullan and *Cat Mummies* by Kelly Trumble.
- Step 2.** Reproduce a hieroglyphic key sheet and hieroglyphic design sheet.
- Step 3.** Create an example by drawing the hieroglyphics on the design paper creating a simple secret message like: *Keep Out!!* or *Brian's Desk* or *Give Me Pizza*.
- Step 4.** Check Writing Box supplies.

B. Discover Hieroglyphics Program

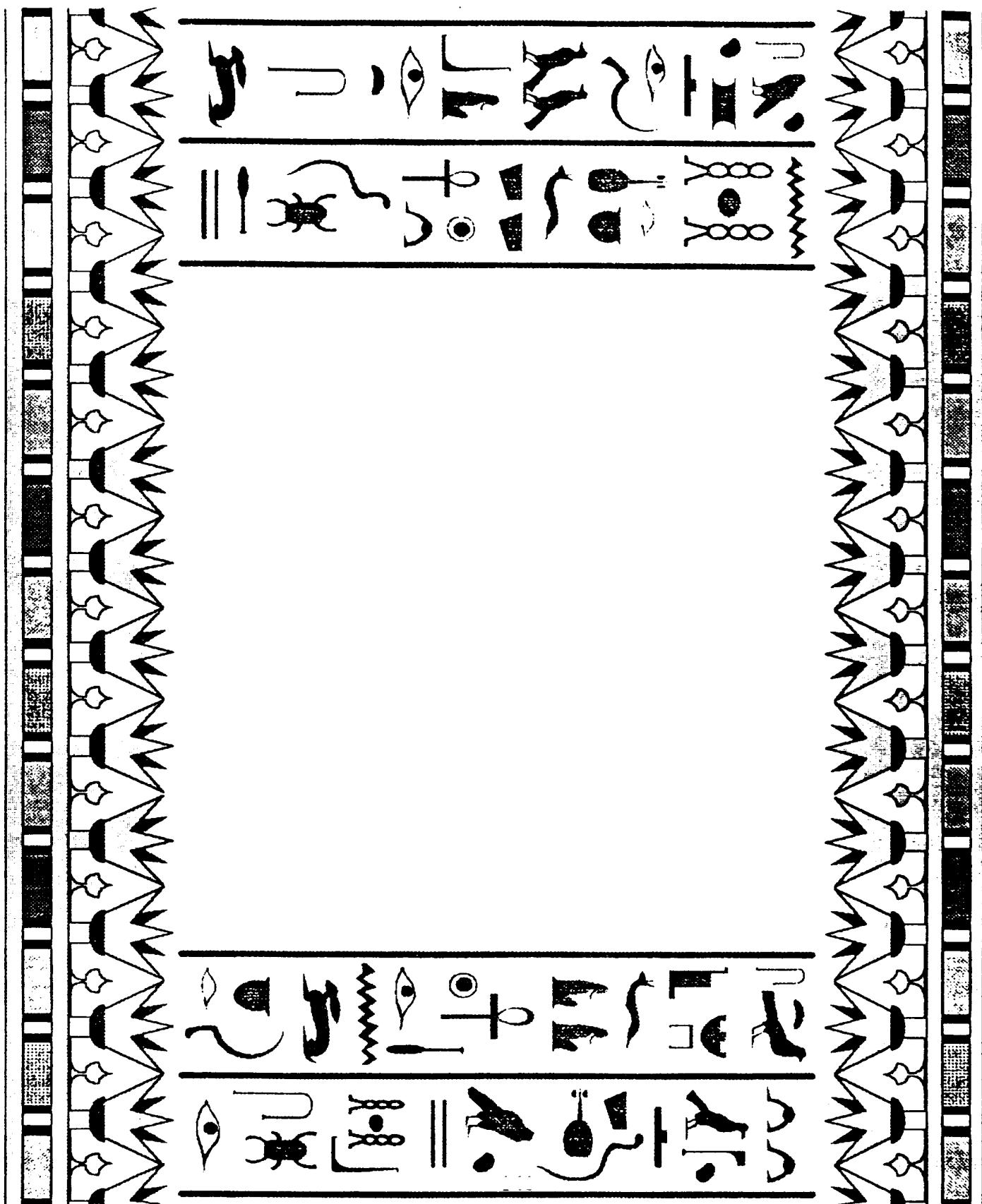
- Step 1.** Talk about the ancient Egyptians and about how their writing was different from ours. Demonstrate how we can write in hieroglyphics by using the symbols that correspond with the sounds of the letters. The words don't have to be spelled right, they just need to sound right. 'Keep' can be spelled 'Kep' because the symbol for a long "e" can be written only once.
- Step 2.** Show the example sheet. Have all the children decode the message together.
- Step 3.** Hand out key sheets, design sheets, scrap paper (for trying out messages) and markers, crayons, pencils, and erasers.
- Step 4.** Give a five minute warning for clean up. Remind the children at what times the Writing Boxes will be available. Clean up and put away supplies.



Transformation Key of English Letters to Hieroglyphics from
 Egypt's Tourism Net, http://www.tourism.egnet/cafe/tor_trn.htm

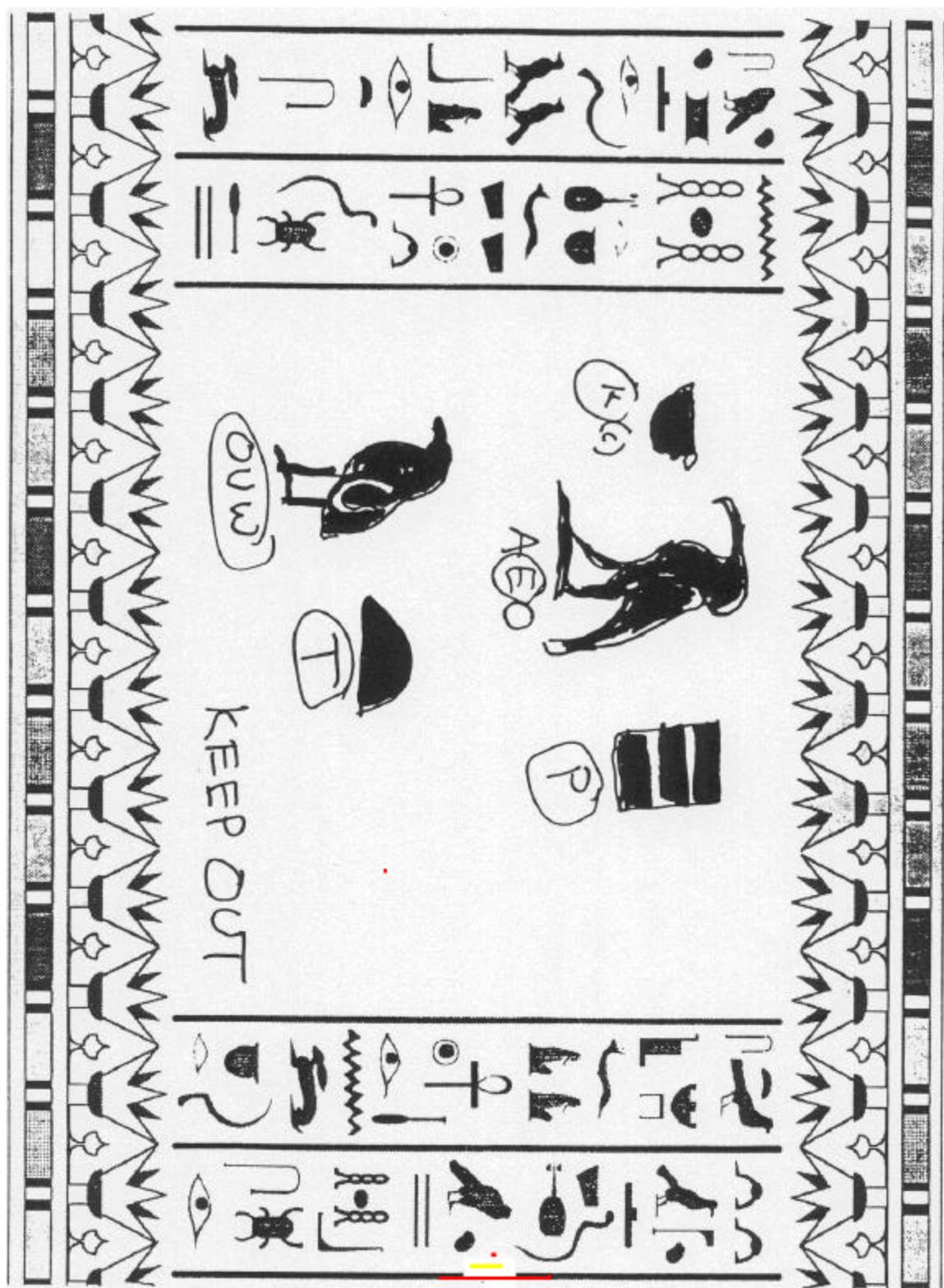
• A 	• B 	• C 	• D 	• E 
• G 	• H 	• I 	• J 	• K 
• L 	• M 	• N 	• O 	• P 
• Q 	• R 	• S 	• T 	• U 
• V 	• W 	• X 	• Y 	• Z 

Discover Hieroglyphics Sign Template



Discover Hieroglyphics Example





Discover Menus and Recipes

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather cookbooks such as *Pretend Soup* by Molly Katzen and menus such as Chinese take-out menus and books like *The Outside Inn and How To Eat Fried Worms*.

Step 2: Create three menus of your own. The first one can be a restaurant menu that has all the stuff you would love to eat. The first could be an all chocolate menu- chocolate shrimp, chocolate salad and chocolate chops. The second restaurant menu could be food that is deeply disliked. Say beets and cabbage and anchovies. The third could be a nonsense menu - stuff no one could eat, or imaginary delights such as mud pies. Create an example recipe outlining how to make one of the dishes real or imagined.

Step 3: Reproduce examples to handout. Check Writing Box supplies.

B. Discover Menus and Recipes Program

Step 1: Talk about different kinds of menus. Ask the kids what kind of menus and restaurants they know of. Show them the different sections (appetizers through dessert). Show them the menus you have made. Show them your recipe, and talk about its different parts, and how important it is to be accurate in giving directions in writing. Demonstrate how a plain piece of letter sized paper can be folded in thirds to create a menu.

Step 2: Give the children markers, crayons and paper. Help them with words or suggestions when they seem stuck for ideas.

Step 3: Give a five-minute warning for clean up. Remind the children that the writing boxes will be available at the reference desk. Clean up and put away supplies.

The Reptile Restaurant

APPETIZER

Inchworm paste on crackers
(salt and pepper to taste)

Salad

endive with earthworm ooze.

main course

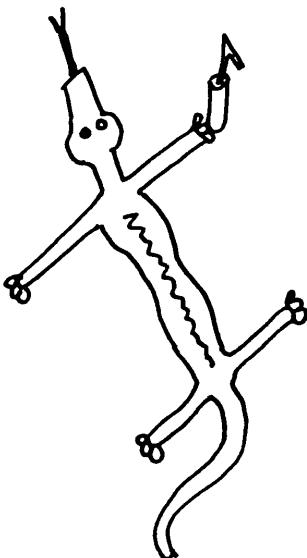
Caterpillar casserole
with croutons.

dessert

Cockroach creme

Beverage

Bug juice



Recipe example

HOW TO MAKE POPCORN RIGHT

Heat very well rounded tablespoon
of CRISCO IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN.
Add two (2) Kernels to sizzle

After two (2) explosions -
Add enough popcorn to cover the bottom
of the pan (and then some)

AND START SHAKING
AND KEEP SHAKING

When the top lifts off the saucepan -
Quickly pour off some of the popt corn
into a huge wooden bowl.

AND KEEP SHAKING
When popping slows to near stop -
Pour remaining corn out.
MAKE A BUTTER DECISION.

Enjoy

PV
MILW

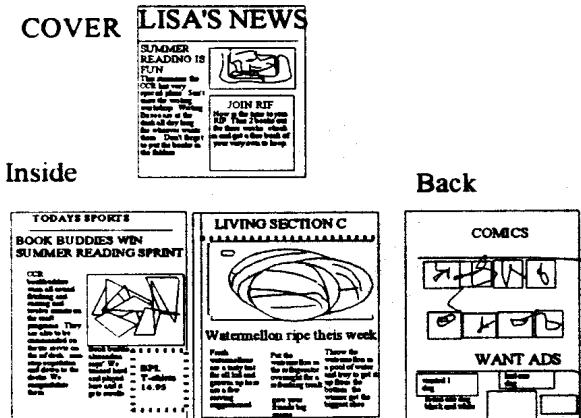
Discover Newspapers

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, local daily papers, and the library newsletter. Gather books about newspapers, such as *The Furry News*.

Step 2: Using an 8" X 14" piece of paper folded in half, create your own tabloid newspaper. Use fine point and thick markers to achieve the multi-typeface look. Remember all the different sections: the masthead, the lead story with a headline, advertisements, comics, sports, local news, announcements, entertainment, etc.

Step 3: Reproduce example newspaper, check Writing Box supplies.



B. Discover Newspapers Program

Step 1: Display the different kinds of newspapers and talk about their different sections. Ask the kids if they read any papers and which ones.

Step 2: Show them your homemade newspaper and describe the different sections. Read one of the articles aloud. Talk about what an interview is, and show how what a person says is placed inside quotations.

Step 3: Give the children markers, crayons, and paper. Help them with words or suggestions when they seem stuck for ideas.

Step 4: Give a five minute warning for clean up. Remind the children that the writing boxes will be available at the reference desk. Clean up and put away supplies.

LISA'S NEWS

1ST ISSUE

MARCH 17

Puppy Arriving Soon

by Lisa Von Drasek

After visiting a breeder of Wheaten Terriers Paul Von Drasek finally agreed that the Von Drasek household could have a dog. The Wheaten breed was chosen because it is less likely to cause an asthma attack. Paul says, "I have finally given in to the whole idea of a dog but I am concerned for the new carpet." Lisa promises to take full responsibility.



Karen Cushman Writes New Book

A Review

For those of us who loved Cathleen Called Birdy and adored Midwives Apprentice, The Bathtub of Lusy Cousins is a real treat.

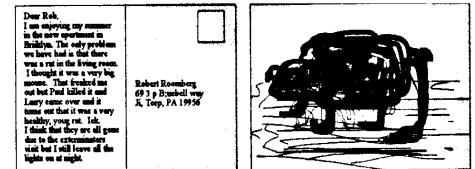
Discover Postcards and Letters

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather books that have letter-writing as a theme, such as Ezra Jack Keats' *Letter to Amy*, or *Stringbean's Trip to the Shining Sea* by Vera B. Williams or *Dear Mr. Henshaw*, by Beverly Cleary.

Step 2: Cut heavy stock into rectangles for postcards. They can be all sizes. If you like, draw imaginary postage stamps. If you have a die-cutting machine, folded stationary can be produced (or just use plain paper).

Step 3: Create your own letter and a post card.



Step 4: Reproduce examples. Check Writing Box supplies.

B. Discover Postcards and Letters Program

Step 1: Display different kinds of postcards and letters. Explain why we send them. Ask the kids if they have received or sent any letters or cards.

Step 2: Read your postcard and letter aloud and describe their different components: salutation, date, return address, etc.

Step 3: Give the children markers, crayons, and paper. This is a good project for bringing out the rubber stamps. Help kids with words, or offer suggestions when they seem stuck for ideas.

Step 4: Give a five minute warning for clean up. Remind the children that the Writing Boxes will be available at the reference desk. Clean up and put away supplies.

Discover Poetry

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather poetry books, making sure to get a good, broad selection, such as *Talking Like the Rain*, *Rolling Harvey Down the Hill*, *Joyful Noise*, *Something Big Has Been Here*, *Little Dog Poems*, *Mammalabilia* and some rhyming books, such as *Green Eggs and Ham*, *My Little Sister Ate One Hare* and *Maxi the Taxi Dog*.

Step 2: Choose a few poems that speak to you. Practice reading them aloud.

Step 3: Write a poem about something in your life like getting up in the morning or what you had for breakfast. Write one that rhymes, and draw a picture to illustrate it.

B. Discover Poetry Program

Step 1: Display various kinds of poetry books and talk about their differences.

Step 2: Read one or two of your favorite poems aloud. Talk about rhymes. Call out words and ask children for rhyming words, e.g., call out "Cat", and the children will give back mat, sat, at, pat, Nat, or bat.

Step 3: Read your own poem aloud or create one as the children observe.

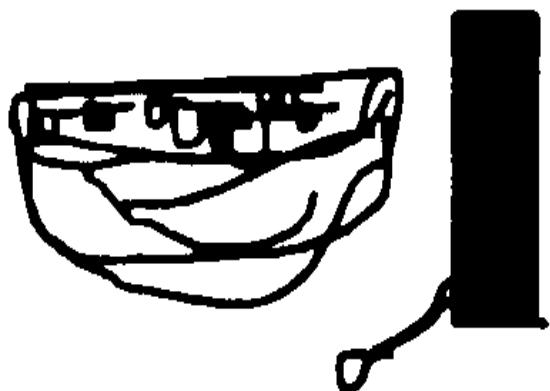
Step 4: Give the children markers, crayons, and paper. Help them with words or offer suggestions when they seem stuck for ideas.

Step 5: Children may want to read aloud. Poll the group and allow some time at the end of the workshop, if they do.

Step 6: Give a five minute warning for clean up. Remind the children that the writing boxes will be available at the reference desk. Clean up and put away supplies.

Every morning I eat
my mouth still tired
with sleep.

I don't like corn flakes
but that's what it takes
to get me to the bus
on the street.



Corn flakes , yellow
light, dry, crinkly
crumbs.

My husband asks
"would you like
some?"

I shake my head and
go back to bed.

I would really like an
egg, but we have
none.

Discover Handmade Books

A. Preparation

Step 1: Gather books about creating your own book, such as Aliki's *How a Book Is Made*, Sandy Asher's *Where Do You Get Your Ideas: Helping Young Writers Begin*, Donna Guthrie's *The Young Author's Do-it-Yourself Book; How to Write, Illustrate and Produce Your Own Book* or Marion Dane Bauer's *What's Your Story?: A Young Person's Guide to Writing Fiction*.

Step 2: Create a sample book. A book can be made simply by folding over plain paper, stapling or tying it together with yarn, or putting together colored sheets with cardboard covers, then hole-punching and tying them together with pipe cleaners- or, if you are more ambitious, you can follow the instructions attached to this manual to create your own blank book.

Step 3: Check Writing Box supplies. Make sure there are brass fasteners, paper hole punches, lanyard, string, ribbons, or yarn to tie pages together, and oaktag or cardboard for covers.

B. Discover Handmade Books Program

Step 1: Display the different kinds of books ,talk about how they are made, and describe their different sections.

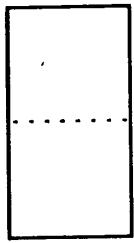
Step 2: Show your own handmade book.

Step 3: Give the children paper, covers, markers, crayons, and paper. Help them with taping, gluing, or tying. They may not have time to make a book and write in it, so remind them that they can write anytime.

Step 4: Give a five minute warning for cleanup. Remind the children that the writing boxes will be available at the reference desk. Clean up and put away supplies.

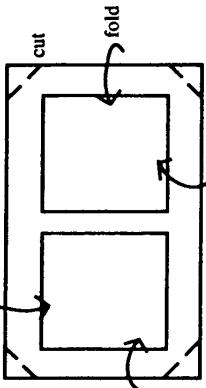
BINDING HARDCOVER BOOKS

Bound books are the most formally published. They take time to make, but they are attractive. Two pieces of the same size cardboard can be transformed by covering them with wallpaper or contact paper. After the cardboard is covered, pages are sewn together and glued to the inside of the cover. Here are the directions for this elegant book-making procedure.



fold ↗

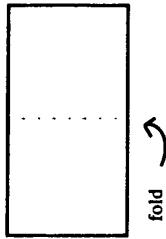
Measure a piece of construction paper to fit the inside of the cardboard covers, fold it in half, and sew it with the pages. This piece of paper will be glued to the inside of the cover to hold the paper pages inside the book.



cut

fold

Place two pieces of the same-size cardboard onto contact paper, leaving an inch border around the cardboard and in the middle between them. Before attaching the cardboard to the contact paper, cut off the ends of the four corners as shown. Fold the contact paper border over the cardboard smoothly.



fold ↗

Fold in half sheets of paper (sized to fit into the cardboard covers) to the desired thickness or to the number of pages you need to publish a story. Add extra folded sheets to be the title page in the front and the "About the Author" page in the back. Poke holes in the fold with a needle to make sewing them together easier.

"Publishing Gorgeous Books at Home" from **Kids Have All the Write Stuff...** pp. 293, 294 by permission of the authors.

Suggested professional reading

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