

Chicago Experience-Based Writing to Read Aloud

Students will read aloud fluently most easily if they use the Language Experience in Reading—Writing based on their experience and then reading what they have written.

PRIMARY GRADES [Can be adapted for higher grades.]

A Chicago Glossary

- Make a list of words that people need to know to travel in the city. These include: street, car, taxi, boat [for traveling on the river], downtown, neighborhood.
- Have children find pictures in the newspaper and/or draw pictures that illustrate these words with Chicago scenes.
- Make a list of words that people need to know to get a job in the city. Include names of jobs and places people work. Then help children make a job chain--put words on pieces of paper they arrange to tell the story of getting something made, like a cake.

Chicago People

- Have students use pictures and words to tell about a day in the life of a Chicago person. First, they should interview that person. Then they should put the events of a day into a story. They can add clock faces or time notes to show the progress through the day.
[You could ask a school worker or a parent to help with this project.]

Chicago Places

- Every time a student goes to a new place, like a museum, have them write about it. Then put those stories into a book.

A Chicago Alphabet

- Make a Chicago alphabet book. For every letter, have students draw or use a newspaper photo) a Chicago person or place that starts with that letter, from Addison Street (where the Cubs play) to the Zoo.

READING/WRITING/THINKING CHICAGO PART 2: INTERMEDIATE GRADES [Can be adapted for upper grades.]

Chicago News

- Ask students to watch the news and choose one story about a Chicago event. Have them make an outline: Who, What, When, Where, Why. Then ask them to answer those questions about that event.

Chicago Sports

- Ask students to choose one Chicago sports team and to keep track of it by watching the news and collecting sports news from the paper. Have them write a weekly report on where the team has been, what teams it has played, and how well it did. As an extra project, have your students write to the team with suggestions for improving.

Chicago Crossword

- Have students make up a crossword puzzle with Chicago words (and words that are important in any city, such as "mayor " "traffic"...),. Then have them take the puzzle home to figure out the answers with their families.

PART 3: UPPER GRADES [Can be adapted for lower grades.]

Chicago Futures

- Ask students to predict what kinds of jobs people will do, toys children will have, and other changes they will see in the year 2020. To get started, talk about changes that have taken place in the last ten years, such as the use of computers with screens you touch instead of keyboards. Then have the students write about the future, in essays, stories, plays.

Chicago Jobs

- Give the students a copy of the Sunday want-ads. Ask them to choose one job they'd like to have. Then have them look for jobs that are connected to it. For example, if they choose "doctor," they should look for other health workers and for jobs in the pharmaceutical industry. Then have them write about their day when they have that job in the future.