



# **The Language Experience Approach**

What Is It and How Do You Use It?

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# About Us



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# Definition

The Language Experience Approach is a teaching method that uses learners' personal experiences to build literacy skills.

This method is designed to integrate all four language skills, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening.



# What is the Language Experience Approach?


1. The tutor creates a Framed Story or the learner shares a story
2. The tutor writes the learner's response exactly as she says it
3. The story is read (using echo, duet, alternate, or solo reading)
4. The tutor asks if the learner would like to make any changes
5. The tutor makes changes to the story
6. Tutor and learner read the final story together



# What is the Language Experience Approach? (Continued)

This technique allows learners to develop print awareness, since they see the direct connection between the written and spoken word.

A story that is learner generated and contains vocabulary and ideas that are familiar to the learner is potentially much more *meaningful* and *accessible* than stories found in teaching materials and books.



# **Who is this Technique for?**

**Low literacy, native English speakers**

**ESL learners who are learning English**

# The Language Experience Approach for Group Settings

Create a Framed Story, perhaps of a shared experience, such as a trip the group took or an event they all attended together. Break into pairs and have learners take turns filling out the responses. Everyone will have a different response, helping learners to recognize that the same experience will look very different through the eyes of others.

For group settings, students can read in small groups or pairs, then read the story again individually.


# Tips for Creating Your Own Framed Story

1. Choose a topic of interest to your learner
2. Use open-ended sentences
3. Choose vocabulary to fit learner's literacy level
4. Keep your Framed Story to around 4-5 sentences
5. PRACTICE your Framed Story with friends or family



# **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!**

Repetition is key. Using the LEA technique more often with your learner will give her the framework for organizing her thoughts and ideas. Over time, with repeated use of Framed Stories, she can practice organizing her thoughts in writing on her own.



# Settings to Use LEA

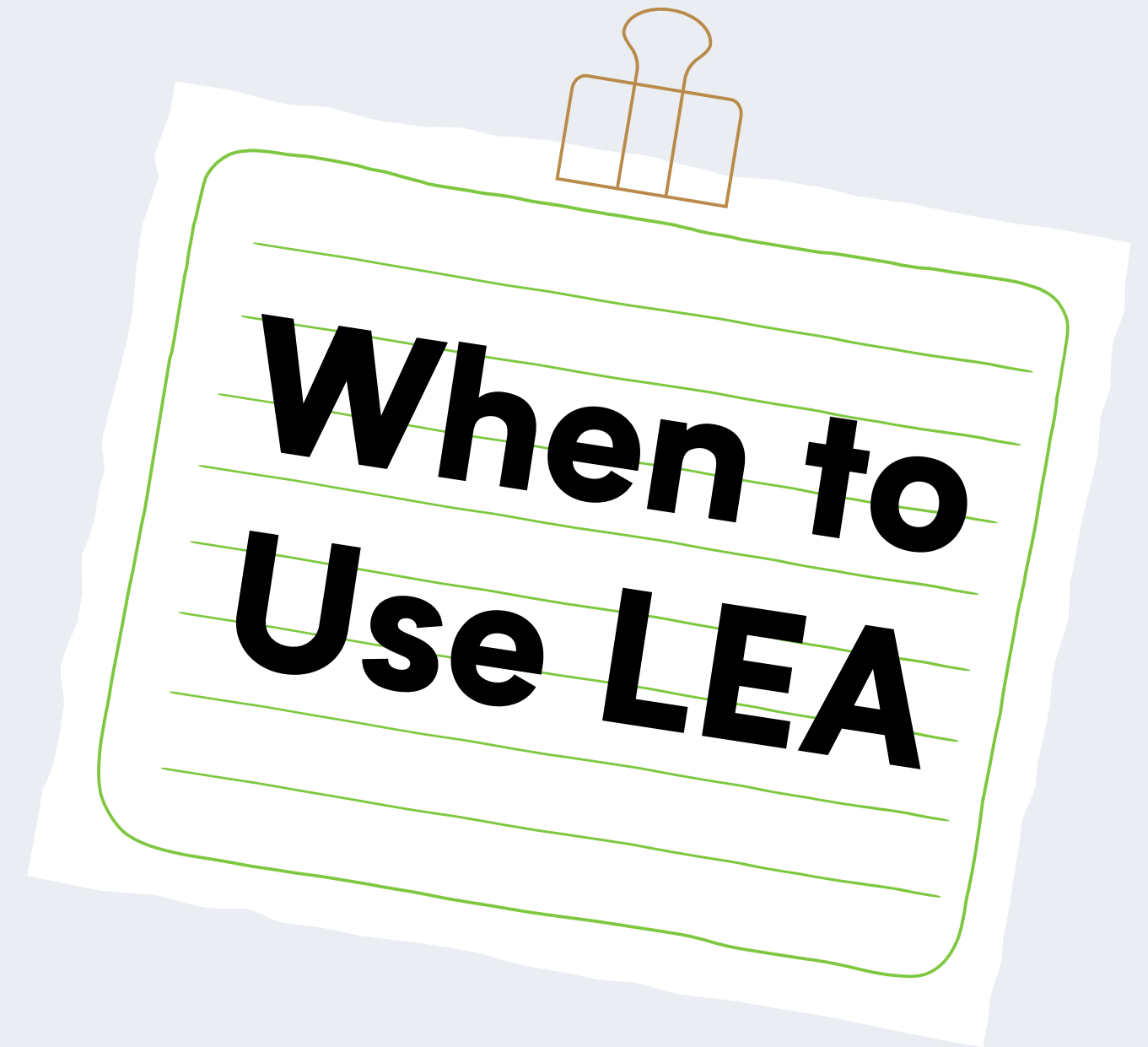


1. One-on-one in a tutor-learner pair.

2. In a group setting by creating pairs of learners who will write down what each other says.

3. With ESL learners, either one-on-one or in a group setting

- During the first few sessions with a new learner, in order to get to know the learner better while also introducing reading and writing immediately into the curriculum.
- In an established tutoring relationship as a way to introduce new topics or assignments that could intimidate the learner.
- As a way to help a learner learn how to organize thoughts and ideas. Provide a framework for the learner, then the learner can take the story home and practice reading on his own.



# Reading Comprehension vs Remembering Facts

## Reading Comprehension:

- **Definition:** This involves understanding, interpreting, and analyzing the content of a text. It's not just about remembering details but grasping the meaning behind them.
- **Focus:** The emphasis is on understanding the overall message, themes, and ideas presented in the reading material.

## Remembering Facts:

- **Definition:** This refers to the ability to recall specific, concrete details or information that have been learned or observed.
- **Focus:** The emphasis is on retaining factual information, such as dates, names, definitions, or figures, from a text or experience.

# Framed Story Examples

The first person who inspired me was \_\_\_\_\_.

They inspired me by \_\_\_\_\_.

It affected my life by \_\_\_\_\_.


What I would like to say to them now is \_\_\_\_\_.



A meal I love to cook is \_\_\_\_\_.

I learned to make it when I was \_\_\_\_\_ years old. What I like about it is  
\_\_\_\_\_.

What I find difficult about it is \_\_\_\_\_.



## **Examples of Ways to Use Framed Stories**

- To explain differences in weather to people from other places with different climates (especially ESL learners, but not just them)
- Can talk about food/culture. Next session(s) learner can write out a favorite recipe
- Geography. How to use a map or a globe. Talk about directions. GPS

**Get creative with Framed Stories!**  
**Don't limit your learner to fact-based-only Framed Stories.**

Allow for more creativity with Framed Stories about a scary animal.

Can have "Choose Your Own Adventure" stories. What would YOU do if?

Open up new ways of introducing grammar or vocabulary  
Ex: good, better, best.

# Sample Learner Profile

**Bernice** is 21 and the single mother of a five-year-old son. She works part time at a daycare care as an assistant. She reads at an intermediate level and wants to improve her skills to help her son with his homework and read with him. Her long-term goal is to become a lead teacher.






# So Much More than Fill-in-the-Blank

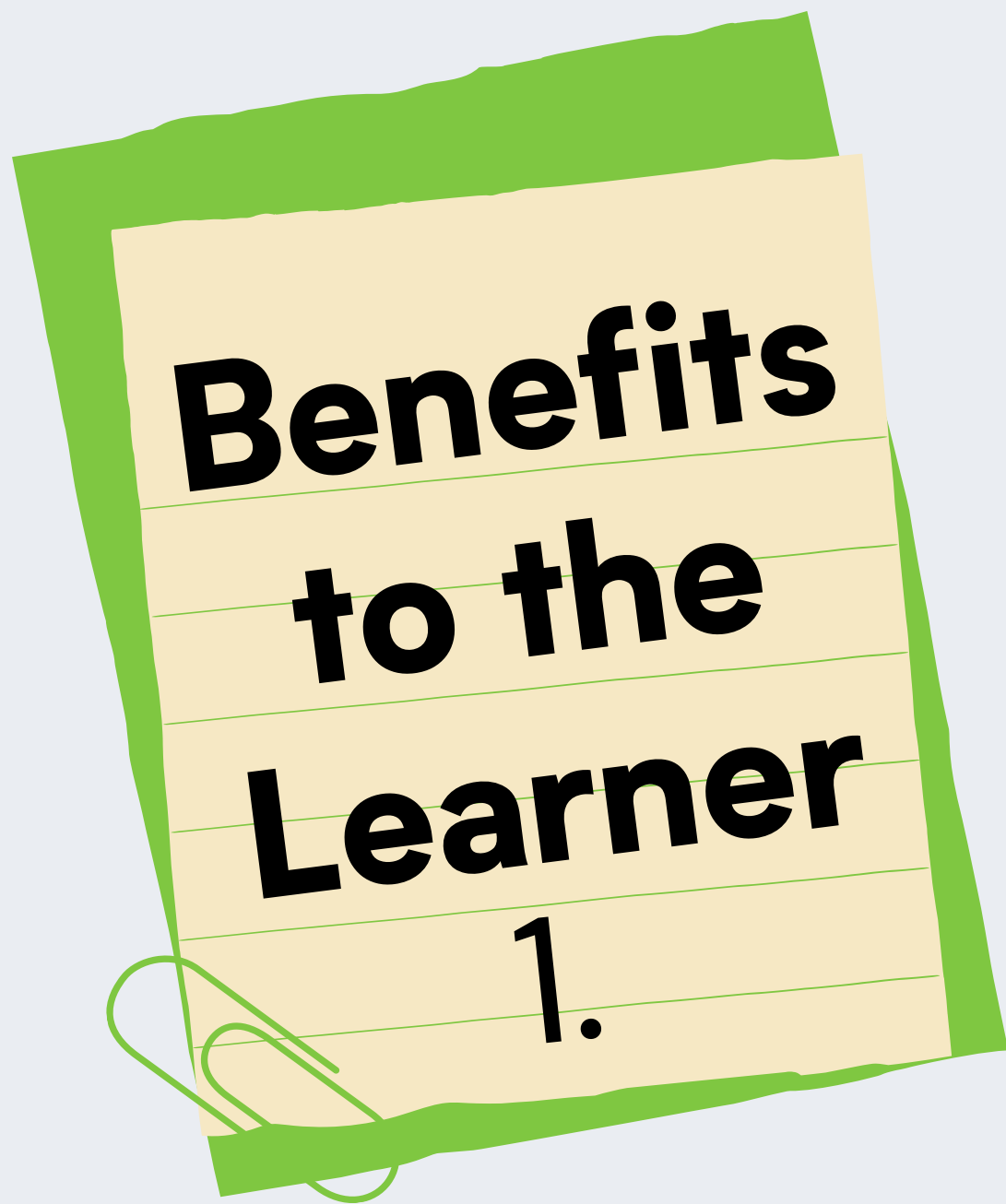
My last job was \_\_\_\_\_.

My main duties were \_\_\_\_\_.

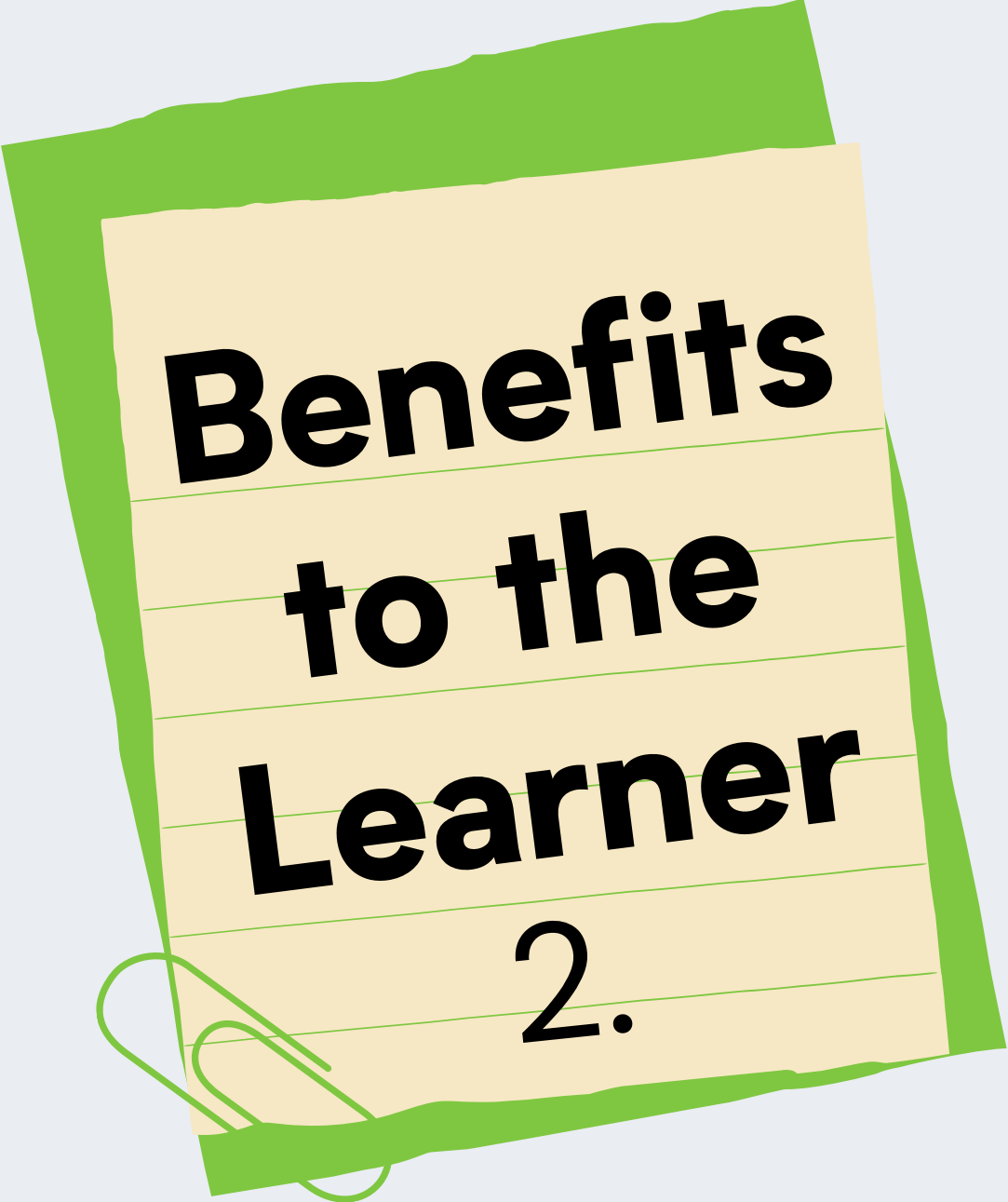
What I did well was \_\_\_\_\_.

This framed story can help Bernice with content for a cover letter and/or resume, and practice for a job interview.



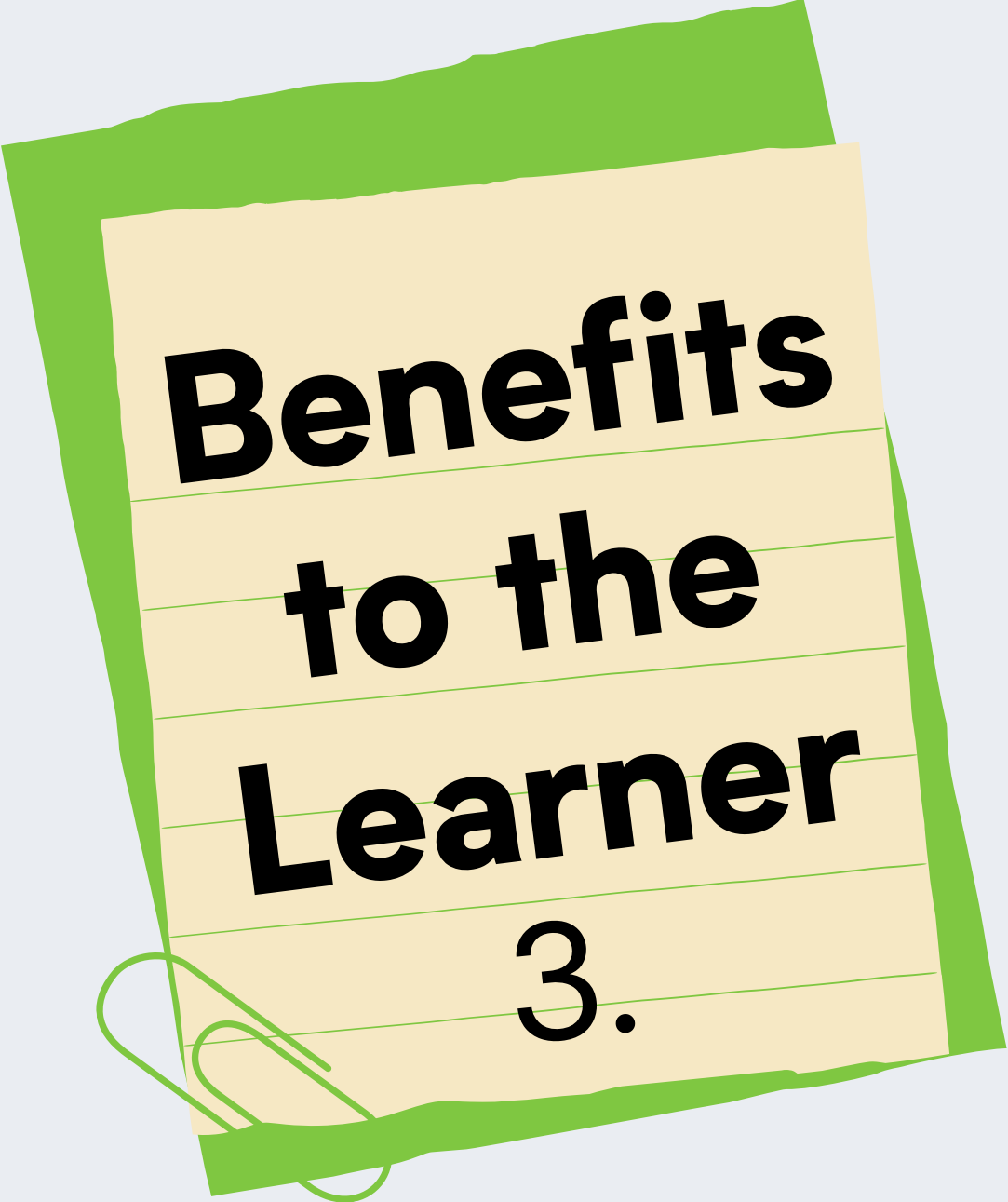


- Learners learn to recognize words in print that are already part of their everyday vocabulary. They learn to link a word they already know and use to its print equivalent.
- The tutor can model ways of turning experiences into language – both oral and written – that can boost writing abilities.



## Benefits to the Learner 2.

- Learners can read their own work for practice, reinforcing their reading skills and building confidence in their own writing abilities.
- Learners see language in its entirety. Working on phonics is a vital part of the process of learning how to read and write, but here we encounter language as a whole – ***speaking, writing, reading, and listening***. Learners are immersed in their own whole-language approach.



## Benefits to the Learner 3.

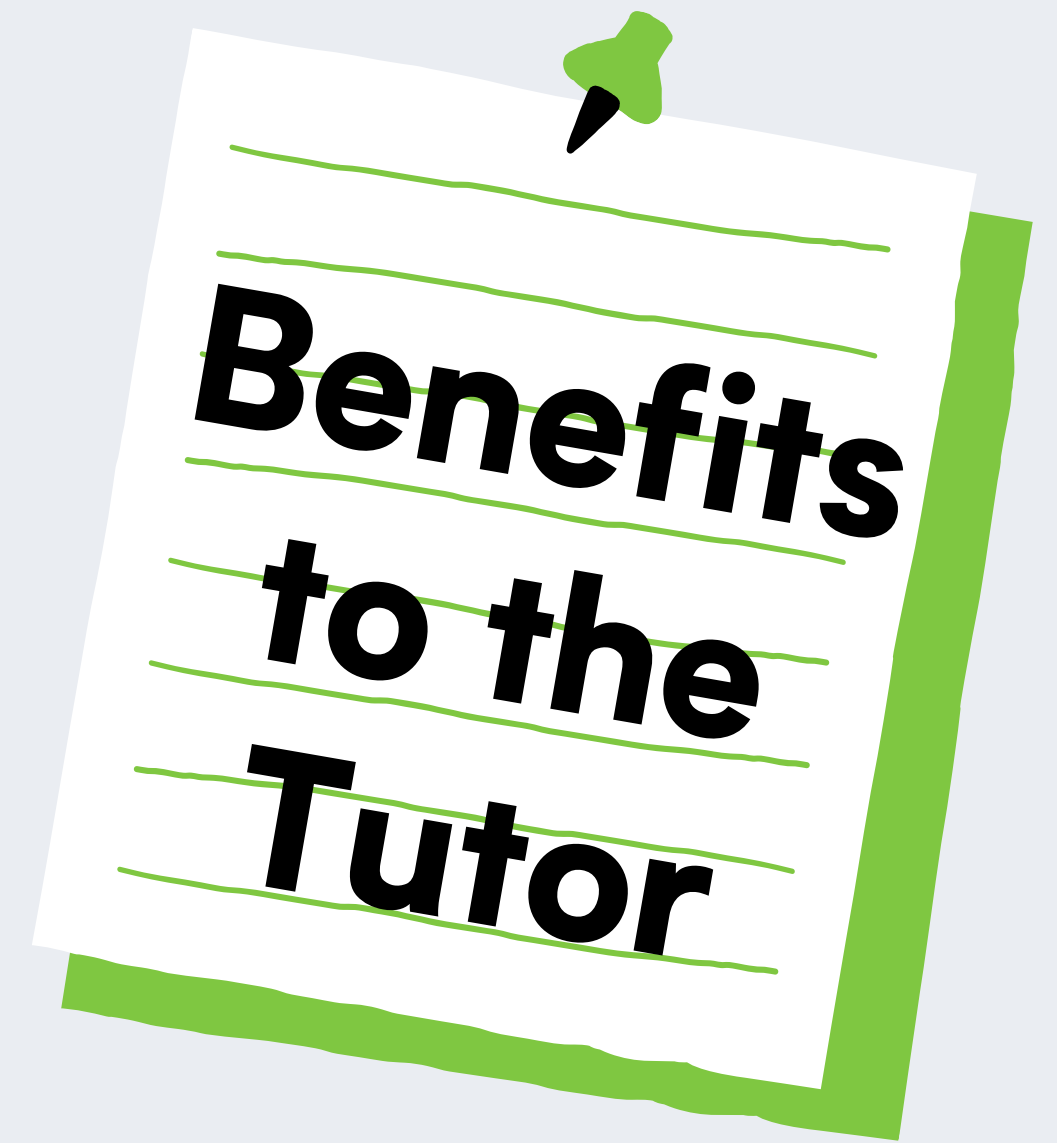
- Immediately get learners reading and writing during the first session.
- After one session a learner walks away with something he “wrote” and can use to practice reading.
- Removes the dread of a large task such as “learning to read” or “learning to write.” Rather, the learner will see that he already has those abilities. They are not strange or unfamiliar tasks he has never done before, but rather skills he already has that he is going to improve upon.

# 1.

Learn more about the learner.

Creating a written piece together will allow the tutor to find out more about the learner's experiences, as well as likes and dislikes.

The tutor can also share her experiences and ideas. Creates a bond between two adults, rather than reinforcing the idea of "teacher" and "student."

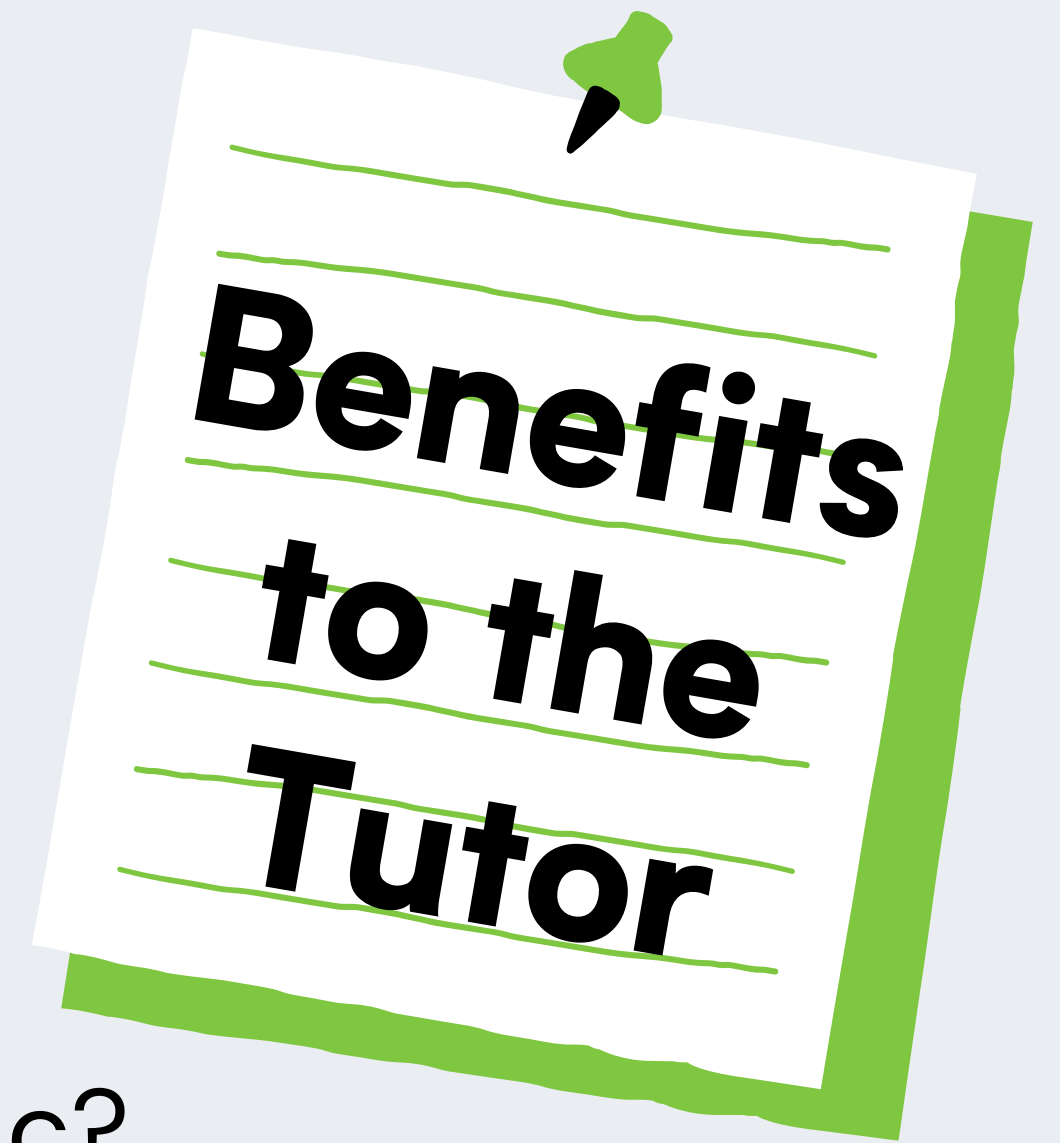


# 2.

Can provide additional ideas for future sessions.

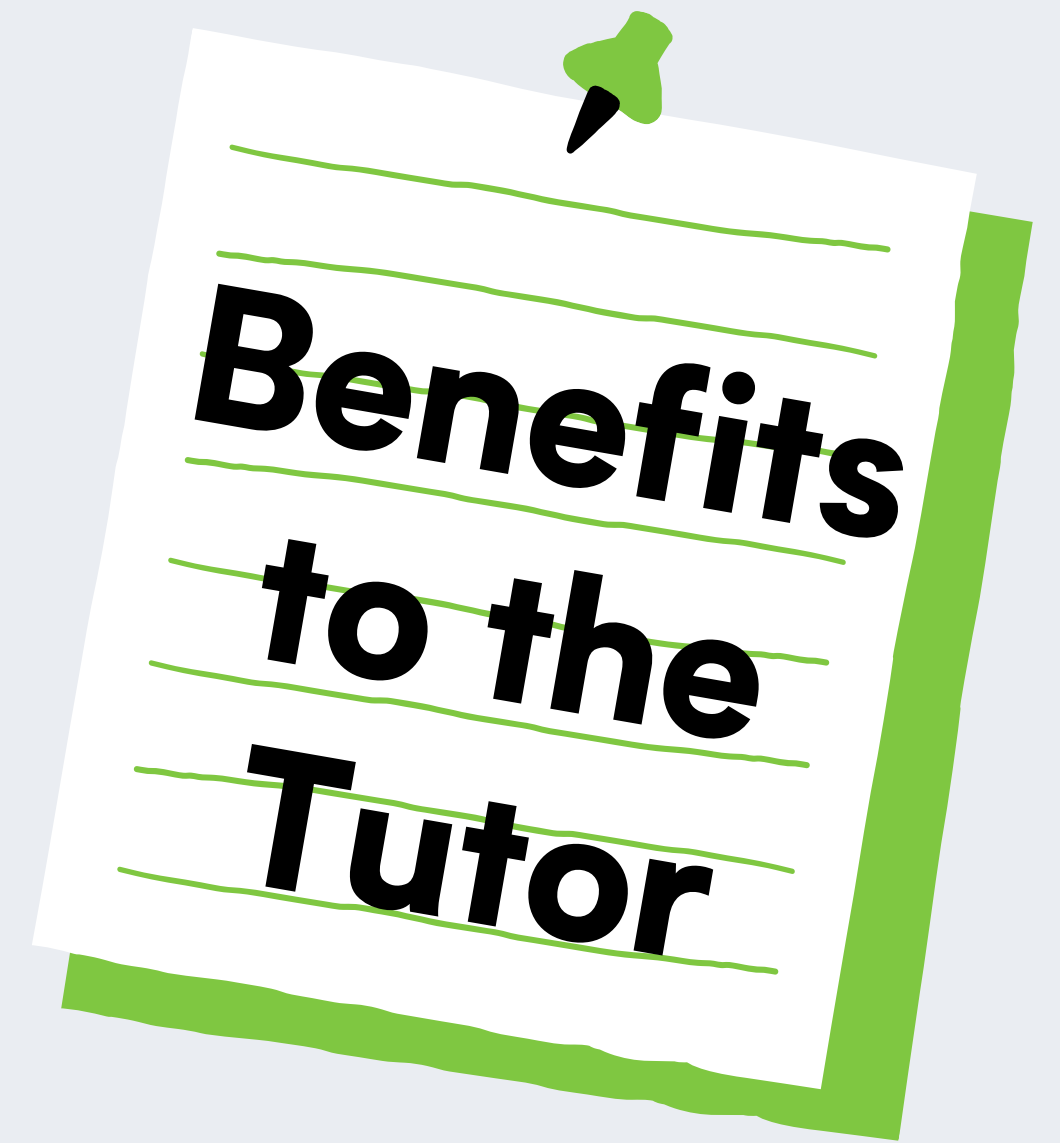
Is the learner interested in a particular topic?  
A particular location, such as Disneyland?

Use the info the learner provides to seek out materials that may appeal to that learner.



3.

Identify areas where a learner may need additional instruction, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc., without explicitly targeting those areas in front of the learner.



# Partner Practice

## Instructions

- Create a Framed Story on a topic you choose
- Find a partner and fill out each other's Framed Stories
- Read the story aloud using one of the reading techniques.
- Go over the story together and make any needed changes. Read the story again using a different reading technique.

## Reading Techniques

**Echo Reading:** The tutor models reading aloud, and then learner repeats the same passage of text

**Duet Reading:** The tutor and learner read the passage aloud together, line by line.

**Alternate Reading:** The tutor reads one line of the passage and the learner reads the next line. This continues for the entire passage.

**Solo Reading:** The learner reads the passage aloud alone.

# Feedback

What do you think of the Language Experience Approach?

Have you used this technique before?

What do you like or dislike about this technique?

What ideas do you have for using this technique?



**Questions?**



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# We Want to Hear from You!



Abbey Weathers  
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**Use the Language Experience Approach at your next tutoring session. Let us know what you think. Tell us about your experience using this teaching technique.**

**Thank You!**

