

# Educator's Guide for Family and Caregiver Activities for *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide*

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# *Educator’s Guide for Family and Caregiver Activities for Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide*

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## Introduction

The goal of the nine family and caregiver activity sheets is to provide families and caregivers with simple, fun activities they can use with their children to strengthen their language. The activities were designed using recommendations from the 2014 What Works Clearinghouse practice guide, *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School* (EL Practice Guide). This companion guide for educators is designed to provide you with (a) a brief summary of the EL Practice Guide and its recommendations and practices, (b) an understanding of how the activities help scaffold children’s language and literacy development across the content areas, and (c) specific supports and strategies to help families and caregivers make the most out of the activities.

### The EL Practice Guide Recommendations

“A practice guide is a publication that presents recommendations for educators to address challenges in their classrooms and schools. They are based on reviews of research, the experiences of practitioners, and the expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts.” ([WWC practice guide](#) summary)

In 2014, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) published the practice guide, *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*.<sup>1</sup> The guide includes four research-based

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1 Source: Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Available online at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/19>.

recommendations that apply to K-8 teaching across subject areas, which, if learned and implemented by teachers, could improve the quality of instruction for English learner (EL) students in their classrooms. See appendix A for a summary of the four recommendations.

Of the four recommendations for supporting ELs provided in the practice guide, three can be easily translated into the non-school context and be used by the families and caregivers of English learners while at home:

1. Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intentionally across several days using a variety of instructional activities,
2. Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching, and
3. Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.

The fourth recommendation, *provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development*, is not included in the activity sheets for families and caregivers as it requires a small group of children to implement.

## Family and Caregiver Activity Sheets

The activity sheets are designed to be standalone activities that take very few materials to complete and do not require access to the internet. Educators can make the activity sheets available to families and caregivers as they are written or can provide additional instructions or materials to better align them with classroom activities. Additionally, they can differentiate the activities, for example, for the students' age or language proficiency level.

Although the EL Practice Guide provides recommendations for engaging students from kindergarten through 8th grade, the family and caregiver activities are most appropriate for students in kindergarten through grade 3, and in some cases through grade 5. In some of the activity sheets, ideas for differentiation for older or younger children have been provided. Educators can offer more specific instructions for students at different grade levels. Educators can also differentiate the activities by content; the same activity can be implemented using different content areas to align with the science, math, or social studies focus in the classroom.

In addition to adapting the activity sheets for grade level and content area, educators can also differentiate them for language proficiency level. You can reference your state's English language development standards for differentiation recommendations based on each student's English proficiency level and adjust your instructions or additional materials for the activity accordingly. In some cases, families and caregivers may choose to implement the activities in the student's home language; in this case, differentiation by English proficiency level may be less relevant.

Each of the activities can be implemented in either English or the student's home language. Developing oral and written academic language in a student's home language has been shown to contribute to the development of academic language in English, and families and caregivers should be encouraged to use the language(s) with which they are most comfortable. When students learn new vocabulary, engage in complex conversations, and practice writing skills in any language, those skills contribute to the acquisition of academic English language (NASEM, 2017).<sup>2</sup>

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2 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Each of the nine activity sheets is directly aligned with one of the recommendations and associated practices in the EL Practice Guide. See appendix B for a crosswalk on how the activities align to the practice guide recommendations. Rather than being a curriculum or a module, each activity sheet provides stand-alone activities that promote the development of academic language using the EL Practice Guide recommendations. In some cases, the activities can be integrated into families' and caregivers' daily interactions with their children, and in other cases, they require a small amount of time for preparation and additional time to complete them. Some are designed to be highly interactive, while others encourage children to work more independently. The goal is not to make teachers out of family members, but to provide suggestions for creating opportunities for learning or taking advantage of teachable moments as they interact with their children and to build on the activities they are already doing. Importantly, the activities take an asset-based approach. Families and caregivers already do language-building activities with their children every day. The intent of these sheets is to capitalize on that interaction to strengthen language through fun and engaging activities.

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## General Tips for Making the Most of the Family and Caregiver Activity Sheets

This section provides general tips for preparing and disseminating the activity sheets, supporting families in using the activity sheets, and following up with families and caregivers.

### Preparing the Activity Sheets

- Review the activity sheets and choose one or more that aligns with and/or extends the learning in the classroom.
- Review the learning goal carefully and consider the needs and skills of your students and those of the families and caregivers, if known. Consider how you might structure classroom learning to support students and families in using the activities and/or develop additional instructions or materials to share with the activity sheet. Remember to think about support or differentiation in three areas: language proficiency level, content area, and/or grade level. See the supports for each activity sheet for specific suggestions.
- Plan additional materials or instructions to align with, extend, or reinforce classroom learning to accompany the activity sheets. The additional language supports on the back of each activity sheet are particularly useful in helping families and caregivers extend students' language.

Refer to the [Language-Based Supports](#) as well as the specific supports for each activity sheet below for ideas to share with families and caregivers.

### Disseminating the Activity Sheets

- Communication may take multiple forms depending on what works best for each family or caregiver. You likely have already established a communication system, but if not, begin by asking families and caregivers what works best for them. Each activity sheet has been formatted to be able to be printed and provided directly to families and caregivers for them to use at home.
- If possible, ask your district to translate the documents, including any additional instructions or materials you create, into the different languages of your students' families or caregivers.



- Consider whether some students may also need the materials suggested for the activity, such as magazines, books, paper, crayons, pencils.
- Distribute the sheets as you have been distributing all materials to your students, whether in hard copies or electronically.
- There may be other sites outside the home, such as child care centers, after-school programs, or tutoring programs, where the activity sheets could be used. To the degree it is appropriate, provide copies of the activity sheets with or without additional instructions to these groups as well.
- In addition to the distribution process, offer ongoing communication with families and caregivers to provide them with some additional supports—provided below—to make the sheets useful and to follow up afterward.

### Supporting Families and Caregivers in Using the Activity Sheets

- Clarify with families and caregivers that these activity sheets are not required, but are suggestions to incorporate language-building activities into daily interactions with their children.
- Remind them that the activities can be done in the language that the family or caregiver (including the student) is most comfortable using, and that when the student builds language skills in their home language, it contributes to building English skills.
- Communicate to families and caregivers that these are fun activities that don't require specialized knowledge. Encourage them to build on their own wealth of experiences and knowledge in implementing the activity sheets.
- With their permission, contact families and caregivers before, during, and after activities to provide tips and encouragement, answer questions, and celebrate successes.

### Follow-Up Activities

- Invite families and caregivers to share with you particular successes to be celebrated together with the students.
- Strategize together which additional activity sheets might be used with their children.
- Ask families and caregivers for feedback about which activities worked well and which did not work so well. If possible, strategize together (co-plan) follow-up activities with their children.
- Encourage families and caregivers to continue applying the strategies informally in their daily activities with their children.

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## Language-Based Supports

The [EL Practice Guide](#) notes that students benefit from the use of language-based supports such as cognates, graphic organizers, sentence frames, and word lists as they acquire academic English. In order for students to get the most benefit from the activity sheets, most of the activity sheets include one or more of these supports especially on the back of the page. Introducing students to language-based supports during classroom instruction will make it easier for families and caregivers to use them with their children. Remember that families and caregivers are not the teacher; only provide instructions about the use of specific supports that have already been taught and practiced in the classroom prior to using them at home.

## Frequently Used Language-Based Supports:

**Cognates:** The EL Practice Guide recommends using cognates (words such as *enormous* in English and *enorme* in Spanish that share a common origin and help ELs link English words to words in their primary language) when selecting vocabulary words as a support to EL students learning new words.

**Graphic Organizers:** The EL Practice Guide advocates for students to use concrete representations, such as a word map, as a means to show their understanding of a word or concept. It also recommends using language-based supports like graphic organizers to provide students the support they need to initiate, maintain, and complete writing assignments.

**Sentence Frames:** The EL Practice Guide recommends providing students with sentence frames to maintain and sustain a conversation about a topic or text. Students can use the sentence frames when having a conversation with families and caregivers. Several activity sheets have sentence frames on the back in the section called Additional Language Supports.

**Word Lists:** The EL Practice Guide calls for the teaching of academic vocabulary that can be broken down into two categories: general academic vocabulary and domain-specific vocabulary. Many of the activity sheets ask families and caregivers to generate a list of words; however, consider sending home a list of both general academic words as well as domain-specific words tied to classroom instructional units or standards across content areas (e.g., 2D and 3D shapes, life cycles, and holidays).

# Specific Supports for Each Family and Caregiver Activity

This section provides tips on how to support families and caregivers with implementing the activities. For each activity, there is a brief description of the activity, suggestions for how to connect classroom content and practice to the home in grade-appropriate ways, and ways to differentiate the activity for content, language proficiency, and grade level.

Read further or **click on the activity below** for more detailed tips for each of the activity sheets.

Supporting Young English Learners Through:

- Asking and Answering Questions About a Story, a Topic or Informational Text, and/or an Experience
- Word Play
- Guessing an Object
- Becoming a Word Detective
- Making a Meal Together
- Interviewing a Special Person
- Writing Notebooks

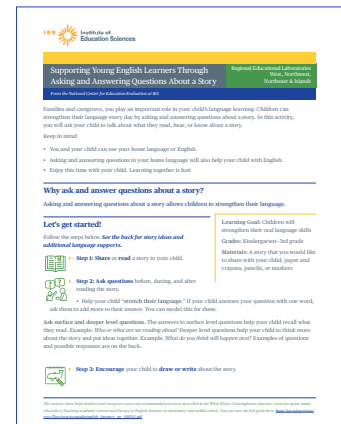
## → Activity: Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About a Story, a Topic or Informational Text, and/or an Experience

Ties to EL Practice Guide: Recommendation 2, Practice 3

Learning Goal: Students will strengthen their oral language skills.

Grade Span: Kindergarten-Grade 3

Description: The purpose of these three activity sheets is to help families and caregivers of English learners (ELs) in kindergarten through grade 3 to think more deeply about what they hear, read, or know by asking and answering questions about spoken narratives (e.g., folk tales) or written narrative text (e.g., narrative fiction), from an informational text, and based on experiences they have had inside and outside the home. Each activity provides examples of open-ended surface as well as deeper-level questions families and caregivers can ask. Sentence frames are provided



so students also can stretch their language in response to the questions. To further the conversation, students also write or draw about what they discussed. These activities can be done by the family member or caregiver and student in the home language or in English.

### **Additional Supports and Differentiation:**

**Suggesting a Narrative or Informational Text or Experience:** These three activity sheets focus on asking and answering questions about either a story, a topic or informational text, or an experience. Each activity sheet has suggestions for different types of narratives, informational texts, or experiences, and associated language supports to use during the activity. Instead of relying on the suggestions, consider sending out lists of or actual narratives or informational text selections that have already been taught in class or are aligned with the adopted curriculum or a current content area. Similarly, suggest experiences that align with content areas covered in the classroom so students have background knowledge to bring to the conversation. Whatever is suggested, be sure to include various types of texts or experiences that represent the cultural diversity of the community.

**Differentiation Tips:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, you might: include pictures or images that align to the text or experience that families, caregivers, and students can use to talk and write about; send home a partially completed graphic organizer and instructions on how to use it for families and caregivers to use when talking and writing about the text or experience; or, record yourself asking and answering questions about the text or experience so that family members or caregivers and students can emulate the process.

**Asking and Answering Questions:** The EL Practice Guide recommends providing students with thought-provoking questions along with low inference and factual questions to encourage quality interactions. Each activity provides a set of surface and deeper-level questions for families, caregivers, and students to use when talking about a narrative, topic or informational text, or experience (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheets for examples). In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, be sure to explicitly teach them how to ask and answer questions using textual evidence about a narrative, topic or informational text, or an experience. Consider sending home additional questions that are aligned to specific narratives, topics, or experiences that families and caregivers can use during this activity.

**Sentence Frames:** These activities provide samples of questions to ask and possible responses in the form of sentence frames (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheets for examples). Consider sending home additional sentence frames that are aligned to specific narratives, topics or informational texts, and/or an experience. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or a word bank to go along with the sentence frames.

## → Activity: Supporting Young English Learners with Word Play

Ties to EL Practice Guide: Recommendation 1, Practices 2 and 3

Learning Goal: Students will learn and practice new words.

Grade Span: Kindergarten-Grade 3

**Description:** The purpose of this activity is to help students learn and practice a small set of new words over time, making them part of their vocabulary. Each day the family member or caregiver will introduce their child to a new word that the teacher provides or they find in content such as books, videos, or pictures, and ask them to use it in speaking, writing, and listening. The activity can be done in English or their home language, whichever is strongest for the family member or caregiver.



### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Word Lists:** This activity sheet asks families and caregivers to generate a list of words, however, consider sending home a list of words tied to classroom instructional units or standards across content areas (e.g., 2D and 3D shapes, life cycles, or holidays). **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, in addition to the word list, provide pictures or images that represent the words or content themes.

**Cognates:** Consider pre-selecting and sending home some cognate suggestions for family and caregivers to use in this activity. **Differentiation Tip:** For older students or students at the expanding and bridging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to research and discover new cognates.

**Graphic Organizers:** In this activity sheet, completing a word map is a challenge activity because families and caregivers may not have used a graphic organizer like this before. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, be sure to explicitly teach them how to use a word map or other graphic organizers before they engage with a new word with their family. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide a partially filled out graphic organizer.

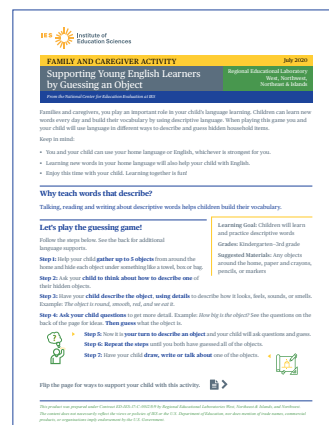
## ➔ Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Guessing an Object

Ties to EL Practice Guide: Recommendation 1, Practice 3

**Learning Goal:** Students will learn and practice descriptive new words.

**Grade Span:** Kindergarten-Grade 3

**Description:** In this activity, the family member or caregiver will play a game with the kindergarten to third grade student to guess hidden household items, learning new descriptive words in the process. The goal is to use as much detail as possible to describe in English or their home language how the object looks, feels, sounds, or smells and how it is used. The activity includes lists of descriptive words that could be used as well as sentence frames to structure the conversation. At the end, students draw or write about the object using some of the descriptive language.



### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Thematic Word Lists:** This activity sheet asks families, caregivers, and students to choose their own items to describe. To better align with classroom content, encourage them to select household objects of a common theme, for example, objects from the kitchen, articles of clothing, etc. Consider sending home a list of familiar objects tied to a thematic unit (e.g., oceans, lifecycles, or other instructional units). **Differentiation Tip:** For older students or students at the expanding and bridging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to describe more complex or less common objects which require more detailed descriptions.

**Sensory Words:** This activity sheet provides families, caregivers, and students with ways to describe objects using all of the senses including how it looks, feels, sounds, or smells. Consider sending home additional sensory word lists with descriptive language for students to use. The lists can be ones previously taught in the classroom so that students are familiar with how to use them to describe objects. **Differentiation Tip:** For older students or students at the expanding and bridging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to write their descriptions of the object for the family or caregiver to guess.

**Sentence Frames:** This activity sheet provides a general sample of sentence frames to describe an object (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional sentence frames that are aligned to describing an object. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or a word bank to go along with the sentence frames.

## ➔ Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Becoming a Word Detective

**Ties to EL Practice Guide:** Recommendation 1, Practices 1, 2, and 3

**Learning Goal:** Students will build their vocabulary by using new words.

**Grade Span:** Kindergarten-Grade 5

**Description:** In this activity for kindergarten to grade 5 students, a family member or caregiver is provided instruction on how to identify an informational text (sources are suggested) and then with the student identify a small set of words to learn. The family member or caregiver helps the student learn the word(s) through explicit instruction using methods described in the EL Practice Guide (e.g., define the word, provide examples). The student then independently practices these new words over several days (e.g., looking for the word in text, listening in conversations over the course of the day) with follow-up discussions with the family member or caregiver. Discussion prompts for the family member or caregiver and sentence frames for the students are provided to support the learning in the pre- and post-conversations.



### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Word Lists:** This activity sheet asks families and caregivers to generate a list of words. Instead, consider sending home a list of words tied to classroom instructional units or standards across content areas (e.g., 2D and 3D shapes, life cycles, or holidays). **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or images that represent the words or content themes.

**Developing Words at Home:** This activity sheet requires families and caregivers to prepare students to work independently by talking and writing about the words they encounter throughout the day from a story or informational text. Providing opportunities for students to play with words allows them to practice new vocabulary. Consider sending home different types of games such as word bingo or word matching (word and definition or picture) that families and caregivers could play with their students that requires them to focus on the identified words. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, encourage families and caregivers to have students draw or dramatize the word.

**Cognates:** Consider pre-selecting and sending home some cognate suggestions for family and caregivers to use in this activity. **Differentiation Tip:** For older students or students at the expanding and bridging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to research and discover new cognates.

**Sentence Frames:** This activity sheet provides a general sample of sentence frames to describe an object (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional sentence frames that are aligned to learning new words. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or a word bank to go along with the sentence frames.

## → Activity: Supporting Young English Learners While Making a Meal Together

Ties to EL Practice Guide: Recommendation 3, Practice 1

Learning Goal: Students will learn and practice new words.

Grade Span: Grade 2–Grade 5

**Description:** In this activity, students will have an opportunity to learn and practice vocabulary about cooking, ingredients, measures, and processes by talking about and writing down a family recipe as they cook together. The activity can be done in English or their home language, whichever is strongest for the family member or caregiver.

### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Structure and Academic Language of a Recipe:** This activity provides students an opportunity to talk and write about the structure and use the focused academic language feature of a recipe. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, they must be familiar with the structure and the academic language that make up a recipe. One example of an academic language feature within a recipe is the use of transitional and linking phrases. Encourage students to use their knowledge that has been taught in class about recipes or a sequential explanation to successfully complete this activity. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, consider providing a list of transitional and linking phrases with pictures that supports them when talking about and writing a recipe.

**Word Lists:** The activity sheet provides families, caregivers, and students a word list to consider when talking and writing about a recipe (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional word lists that students have encountered in the classroom to practice at home with their families or caregivers, for example, words that focus on measuring, sequencing, or doing an action. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide images to go with the word lists or a word bank.

**Graphic Organizers:** The structure of a recipe consists of a title that tells the reader what is being prepared, followed by a list of ingredients which includes the amount or portions needed, and concludes with a sequential explanation of the procedures to make the food. Consider sending home a recipe card template or even 3x5 index cards that can be used as a graphic organizer as students begin to write the recipe in the activity. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, be sure to explicitly teach them how to use a graphic organizer of a recipe. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to use pictures to represent the ingredients and steps.

**Sentence Frames:** This activity sheet provides a general sample of sentence frames to talk about the steps of a recipe (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional sentence frames that are aligned to writing the steps of a recipe. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or a word bank to go along with the sentence frames.





## → Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Interviewing a Special Person

Ties to EL Practice Guide: Recommendation 2, Practices 3 and 4

**Learning Goal:** Students will strengthen their oral and written language skills.

**Grade Span:** Kindergarten-Grade 5

**Description:** In this activity, family members or caregivers help students develop their speaking, listening, and writing skills by interviewing a special person. The student first develops and practices questions with the help of a family member or caregiver and then, except for the youngest learners, independently interviews a family member or friend. Following the interview, they have a conversation with a family member or caregiver who helped with the planning. The student then summarizes the interview in picture and/or word form and shares this with the family members and the interviewee. The age range for this activity is from kindergarten to grade 5. For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, they may need help with the entire activity.



### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Academic Language to Conduct and Write Up an Interview:** This activity sheet encourages students to develop written language skills anchored in specific content, in this case an interview of a special person. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, they must be familiar with the academic language features that make up an interview and how to summarize it. To conduct an interview, for example, students need to know how to ask a question and then use follow-up questions to get more information. An example of an academic language feature to summarize an interview is the use of transitional and linking phrases. Teach these academic language features explicitly and encourage students to use their knowledge of these skills that have been taught in class to successfully complete this activity.

**Interview Questions:** This activity sheet offers families, caregivers, and students sample interview questions to use to complete the activity (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional interview questions that students are familiar with and have been used in the classroom to conduct interviews or learn more about each other. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide sentence frames to support taking notes when interviewing the special person and allow them to draw a picture of the person being interviewed with a short description. For older students or students at the expanding and bridging levels of English proficiency, encourage them to develop a longer write-up of the interview (e.g., chapters of a person's life, a graphic novel), create a poster, or video presentation that can be presented to the family or caregiver.

**Graphic Organizers:** Consider sending home a graphic organizer that helps students summarize what they learned in the interview. Consider sending home samples of interviews that have been written up in the form of a biography or a news report that they can read or model their writing after. The activity sheet also provides ideas for summarizing the interview (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples) so the graphic organizer might be different for a comic strip as compared to a biography. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide a word bank with images to complete the graphic organizer.

## ➔ Activity: Supporting Young English Learners with Writing Notebooks

**Ties to EL Practice Guide:** Recommendation 3, Practice 1

**Learning Goal:** Students will build oral and written language skills.

**Grade Span:** Grade 2-Grade 5

**Description:** In this activity for grade 2 to grade 5 students, family members and caregivers help students express themselves with creativity while establishing writing routines. Using the suggestions provided, the family member or caregiver helps the student think about different types of writing they might do (e.g., tell a story, instructions for a game, opinion piece) and how the structure might vary. They also help the student plan the writing, discussing words, ideas to incorporate, and language they might use. The family member or caregiver and student also have a post-writing conversation to reinforce the pre-writing conversation teaching points such as use of certain vocabulary or language such as transition phrases.



### Additional Supports and Differentiation:

**Supporting Independent Writing:** This activity sheet encourages families and caregivers to motivate students to independently maintain a writing notebook (or a journal) about what they've learned or experienced inside or outside of the home. The EL Practice Guide, p. 48, communicates the need to connect writing with content, so encourage families and caregivers to support students to write about what they know, read, or experience. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, they will benefit from explicit and multiple practices with the writing process, as well as writing as a response to classroom content or experiential instruction. This activity sheet provides several resources for families and caregivers to be successful with this activity, from setting up the writing activity by providing ideas on how to start the activity, suggesting different ways to write independently, and completing the writing task with ways to strengthen the writing artifact with feedback (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home a list of additional ways for students to write independently with some examples that they can emulate. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, encourage families and caregivers to have them draw about what they know, learn, or experience.

**Graphic Organizers:** Consider sending home a graphic organizer that exemplifies a structure that is aligned to a particular writing prompt. In order for students to make the most of this learning opportunity, be sure to explicitly teach them how to align a graphic organizer to various purposes of writing. Consider sending home samples of writing artifacts that they can model their writing after. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide a word bank with images to complete the graphic organizer.

**Sentence Frames:** This activity sheet provides a general sample of sentence frames to talk and write about a topic or experience (refer to the Additional Language Supports on the back of the activity sheet for examples). Consider sending home additional sentence frames that are aligned to writing. **Differentiation Tip:** For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, provide pictures or a word bank to go along with the sentence frames.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide Recommendations*

**Recommendation 1:** Teach a set of academic vocabulary words intensively across several days using a variety of instructional activities.

- Choose a brief, engaging piece of informational text that includes academic vocabulary as a platform for intensive academic vocabulary instruction.
- Choose a small set of academic vocabulary for in-depth instruction.
- Teach academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities (writing, speaking, listening).
- Teach word-learning strategies to help students independently figure out the meaning of words.

**Recommendation 2:** Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.

- Strategically use instructional tools—such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers—to anchor instruction and help students make sense of content.
- Explicitly teach the content-specific academic vocabulary, as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it, during content-area instruction.
- Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups.
- Provide writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content material.

**Recommendation 3:** Provide regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills.

- Provide writing assignments that are anchored in content and focused on developing academic language as well as writing skills.
- For all writing assignments, provide language-based supports to facilitate students' entry into, and continued development of, writing.
- Use small groups or pairs to provide opportunities for students to work and talk together on varied aspects of writing.
- Assess students' writing periodically to identify instructional needs and provide positive, constructive feedback in response.

**Recommendation 4:** Provide small-group instructional intervention to students struggling in areas of literacy and English language development.

- Use available assessment information to identify students who demonstrate persistent struggles with aspects of language and literacy development.
- Design the content of small-group instruction to target students' identified needs.
- Provide additional instruction in small groups consisting of three to five students struggling with language and literacy.
- For students who struggle with basic foundational reading skills, spend time not only on these skills but also on vocabulary development and listening and reading comprehension strategies.

## Appendix B. Family and Caregiver Activity Sheets and EL Practice Guide Recommendations Crosswalk

Each of the activities is directly aligned with one of the recommendations or practices from the EL Practice Guide. These tables provide a brief description of the alignment between each activity and the Guide.

### Asking and Answering Questions

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>1. Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About a <b>Story</b></p> <p>2. Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an <b>Informational Text</b></p> <p>3. Supporting Young English Learners Through Asking and Answering Questions About an <b>Experience</b></p> <p>The purpose of these three activity sheets is to help families and caregivers of English learners (ELs) in kindergarten through grade 3 to think more deeply about what they hear, read, or know by asking and answering questions about <b>spoken narratives (e.g., folk tales) or written narrative text (e.g., narrative fiction), from an informational text, and based on experiences</b> they have had inside and outside the home. Each activity provides examples of open-ended surface as well as deeper-level questions families can ask. Sentence frames are provided so students can stretch their language in response to the questions. To further the conversation, students also write or draw about what they discussed. These activities can be done in English or their home language, whichever is strongest for the family member or caregiver.</p>	<p>These three activities are based on <b>Recommendation 2, Practice 3</b>. Recommendation 2 suggests integrating oral and written English language instruction into the content areas, and Practice 3 says to provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups, in this case between a family member or caregiver and the student. Specifically, the activities draw on suggestions from pages 40 and 41 where teachers present students with two or three thought-provoking questions. In order to help students stretch their language, the teacher might provide sentence frames as a scaffold for student responses. In translating this practice for home use, we chose to provide different kinds of questions and suggestions of types of text for various genres. Families and caregivers are encouraged to take advantage of what texts might be available in the home and make connections to the student’s content knowledge per the recommendation. Knowing that English may not be their strongest language, families and caregivers are encouraged to ask questions in either their home language or English.</p>

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## Word Play

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>The purpose of this activity is to help students learn and practice a small set of new words over time, making them part of their vocabulary. Each day the family member or caregiver will introduce their child to a new word that the teacher provides or they find in content such as books, videos, or pictures, and ask them to use it in speaking, writing, and listening. The activity can be done in English or their home language, whichever is strongest for the family member or caregiver.</p>	<p>This activity supports <b>Recommendation 1</b>, which focuses on teaching academic vocabulary words intensively. Specifically, it utilizes some of the approaches in <b>Practice 3</b> (teaching academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities—writing, speaking, and listening) by, for example, facilitating “structured discussions to increase opportunities for students to talk about academic words” (p. 20).</p>

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## Guessing an Object

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>In this activity, the family member or caregiver will play a game with the kindergarten to third grade student to guess hidden household items, learning new descriptive words in the process. The goal is to use as much detail as possible to describe in English or their home language how the object looks, feels, sounds, or smells and how it is used. The activity includes lists of descriptive words that could be used as well as sentence frames to structure the conversation. At the end, students draw or write about the object using some of the descriptive language.</p>	<p>This activity supports <b>Recommendation 1</b>, which focuses on teaching academic vocabulary words intensively. Specifically, it utilizes some of the approaches in <b>Practice 3</b> (teaching academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities—writing, speaking, and listening) by, for example, facilitating “structured discussions to increase opportunities for students to talk about academic words” (p. 20).</p>

## Becoming a Word Detective

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>In this activity for kindergarten to grade 5 students, a family member or caregiver is provided instruction on how to identify an informational text (sources are suggested) and then with the student identify a small set of words to learn. The family member or caregiver helps the student learn the word(s) through explicit instruction using methods described in the EL Practice Guide (e.g., define the word, provide examples). The student then independently practices these new words over several days (e.g., looking for the word in text, listening in conversations over the course of the day) with follow-up discussions with the family member or caregiver. Discussion prompts for the family member or caregiver and sentence frames for the students are provided to support the learning in the pre- and post-conversations.</p>	<p>This activity supports <b>Recommendation 1</b>, which focuses on teaching academic vocabulary words intensively using a variety of instructional activities and <b>Practices 1, 2, and 3</b> under that recommendation. In Step 1 of the activity, the family member or caregiver identifies an informational text (Practice 1) to read to the student and in Step 2, they choose a small number of words from the text utilizing strategies suggested in Practice 2 (e.g., frequently used words, words that have a cognate). Step 3 uses approaches from Practice 3 (teaching academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities—writing, speaking, and listening) by, for example, providing a child-friendly definition and reinforcing definitions using examples, non-examples, and concrete representations (p. 18). Finally, Steps 4 and 5 use some of the additional activities to promote word learning from Practice 3 (pgs. 20-21) such as engaging children in structured discussions and looking for and practicing the word over the course of the day.</p>

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## Making a Meal Together

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>In this activity, students will have an opportunity to learn and practice vocabulary about cooking, ingredients, measures, and processes by talking about and writing down a family recipe as they cook together. The activity can be done in English or their home language, whichever is strongest for the family member or caregiver.</p>	<p>This activity utilizes features of <b>Recommendation 3, Practice 1</b>, providing opportunities to develop written language skills anchored in specific content, in this case a family recipe. Attending specifically to cooking vocabulary including the ingredients and measurement and associated process terminology, is considered the “content.” Instructional routines and support as described on page 48 of the guide are translated for home use. For example, discussion of the ingredients and amounts needed prior to cooking provides necessary scaffolding for this at-home writing task. During the writing of the recipe, the supporting family member or caregiver is encouraged to emphasize sequencing and include cooking terms. Lists of both are provided.</p>



## Interviewing a Special Person

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>In this activity, family members or caregivers help students develop their speaking, listening, and writing skills by interviewing a special person. The student first develops and practices questions with the help of a family member or caregiver and then, except for the youngest learners, independently interviews a family member or friend. Following the interview, they have a conversation with a family member or caregiver who helped with the planning. The student then summarizes the interview in picture and/or word form and shares this with the family members and the interviewee. The age range for this activity is from kindergarten to grade 5. For younger students or students at the emerging levels of English proficiency, they may need help with the entire activity.</p>	<p>This activity translates for home use <b>Recommendation 2, Practice 3</b>, providing daily opportunities for students to talk about content, as well as <b>Practice 4</b>, providing writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content. The entire activity can be conducted in the home language or English with the goals being to 1) better develop oral language by asking different types of questions in pairs (family member and child in planning, then interviewer and interviewee) regarding content (the life events, work, background, etc., of the interviewee), and 2) extend the learning and provide additional practice by summarizing key points from the interview orally or in pictures and writing.</p>

## Writing Notebooks

Activity Description	Links to Recommendations
<p>In this activity for grade 2 to grade 5 students, family members and caregivers help students express themselves with creativity while establishing writing routines. Using the suggestions provided, the family member or caregiver helps the student think about different types of writing they might do (e.g., tell a story, instructions for a game, opinion piece) and how the structure might vary. They also help the student plan the writing, discussing words, ideas to incorporate, and language they might use. The family member or caregiver and student also have a post-writing conversation to reinforce the pre-writing conversation teaching points such as use of certain vocabulary or language such as transition phrases.</p>	<p>This activity supports <b>Recommendation 3, Practice 1</b>, which promotes “writing assignments that are anchored in content and focused on developing academic language as well as writing skills” (p. 48). Acknowledging that family members and caregivers may not have time to sit with a child through the entire writing process, this activity is designed to be an independent writing activity with pre- and post-conversations with a family member or caregiver. In the pre-writing conversation, family members or caregivers help the student plan their writing topic and content using prompts in the activity and discuss how the structure of the piece might vary based on the type of writing (e.g., a narrative should have a beginning, middle, and end; several key points will need to be in a report). Per Practice 1 and the guidance in the activity instructions, the conversation might include ways to plan the structure and content such as writing some notes, acting out or telling the story orally, or creating an outline. Family members or caregivers also discuss target vocabulary as well as “transition and linking phrases” (p. 48) that the child might include. After the student completes their writing, the family member or caregiver meets with the child to discuss the writing and reinforce the elements of structure and vocabulary from the pre-writing conversation.</p>