

## Once Upon a Time – Creative Writing

- Material:** sheet of paper, pencil  
**Time:** approx. 15 - 25 minutes  
**English level:** intermediate or B 1/ B 2  
**Setting:** subgroups of approx. 4 - 5 participants rotating a sheet of paper
- Step 1:** Student A writes 'Once upon a time' on the top left corner of the page and a random adjective, verb, and noun on the right margin and passes it on to Student B.
- Step 2:** Student B writes the beginning of the story (approx. 3 - 4 lines) integrating the 3 words. Below his or her paragraph, Student B writes another 3 words, an adjective, verb, and a noun in the right margin and passes the sheet of paper on to the next student.
- Step 3:** Student C reads the beginning of the story and continues it by integrating the three words. Student C folds back the first paragraph of the story, adds 3 words and passes on the sheet to Student D.
- Step 4:** Student D reads (only) the second paragraph, writes the third paragraph integrating the three words given, adds another three words, folds back the second paragraph, and with a group of 5 students passes on the paper to Student E or with 4 students back to Student A to finish the story, integrating the last three words. Again, Student E/A is only allowed to look at the previous paragraph.

This is what students of mine came up with 'once upon a time':

*Once upon a time ...*

*poor  
pregnant  
horse*

*Once upon a time there was a pregnant woman who didn't have a husband to raise her kid with. She was so poor that she had to live in a stable next to a horse called 'Magic'. Her baby was born in this stable.*

*poor  
pregnant  
horse*

*curtain  
brave  
decorate*

Once upon a time there was a pregnant woman who didn't have a husband to raise her kid with. She was so poor that she had to live in a stable next to a horse called 'Magic'. Her baby was born in this stable.

poor  
pregnant  
horse

She wanted to create a real home for her young son and so she put some curtains on the barn windows and decorated the hay with flowers and pictures. The pictures showed heroes like Superman and Batman, because she wanted her son to grow up to become a brave man.

curtain  
brave  
decorate

girl  
yellow  
hurt

*She wanted to create a real home for her young son and so she put some curtains on the barn windows and decorated the hay with flowers and pictures. The pictures showed heroes like Superman and Batman, because she wanted her son to grow up to become a brave man.*

*curtain  
brave  
decorate*

*But her son grew up and became interested in lots of things. One day he had an accident with his yellow bicycle and hurt his leg. A big girl from his neighbourhood had made a deep hole in the ground and he fell right into it.*

*girl  
yellow  
hurt*

*shy  
ambulance  
rushed*

*But her son grew up and became interested in lots of things. One day he had an accident with his yellow bicycle and hurt his leg. A big girl from his neighbourhood had made a deep hole in the ground and he fell right into it.*

*girl  
yellow  
hurt*

*A very shy little girl half his age saw the accident. She wanted to help the boy but was also worried that she would get into trouble with the big girl and her gang. But she rushed over to the boy, called the ambulance and stayed with him until the ambulance arrived. She was his super-hero! They have been friends ever since.*

*shy  
ambulance  
rushed*

*Once upon a time there was a pregnant woman who didn't have a husband to raise her kid with. She was so poor that she had to live in a stable next to a horse called 'Magic'. Her baby was born in this stable.*

*She wanted to create a real home for her young son and so she put some curtains on the barn windows and decorated the hay with flowers and pictures. The pictures showed heroes like Superman and Batman, because she wanted her son to grow up to become a brave man.*

*But her son grew up and became interested in lots of things. One day he had an accident with his yellow bicycle and hurt his leg. A big girl from his neighbourhood had made a deep hole in the ground and he fell right into it.*

*A very shy little girl half his age saw the accident. She wanted to help the boy but was also worried that she would get into trouble with the big girl and her gang. But she rushed over to the boy, called the ambulance and stayed with him until the ambulance arrived. She was his super-hero! They have been friends ever since.*