

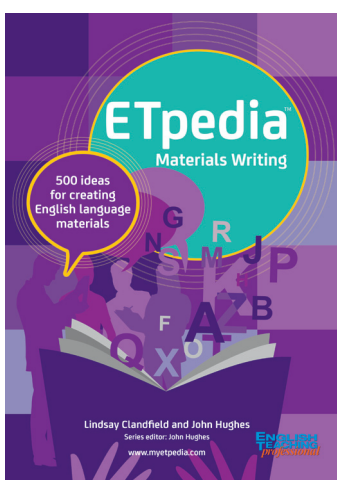
ETpedia Materials Writing

500 ideas for creating English language materials

LINDSAY CLANDFIELD & JOHN HUGHES

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REVIEWED BY MEREDITH MACAULAY



Most teachers, at some time or another, find themselves needing or wanting to write their own materials. Day to day, this could involve creating worksheets or quizzes to cater to the needs of a particular class. On a larger scale, teachers are sometimes asked by their institutions to develop materials for a course, often as part of a team. However, materials writing can sometimes be daunting as many teachers lack formal training in this area. *ETpedia Materials Writing*, therefore, addresses a real need in the ELT industry, offering comprehensive and practical advice for both novice materials writers and the more experienced.

This unique resource is the latest offering in the ETpedia series of resource books, which was shortlisted for the Innovation in Teacher Resources Award at the 2017 British Council ELTons. Its 500 ideas are neatly organised into 50 units, which include 10 ideas each. The units are grouped into seven sections, which together cover the range of materials an ESL teacher is likely to write. In addition to these 50 units, the book begins with an excellent introduction providing reasons to read the book and ways to utilise it. This introduction also contains '10 Facts about the Authors', an inspiring inclusion which outlines Clandfield and Hughes's wealth of experience and their journey from classroom teachers to well-known, published writers.

ETpedia Materials Writing will have broad appeal and, since the book starts with the basics and progresses to more complex concepts, will also address the needs of

teachers with different levels of writing experience. For example, the first section, called 'Writing Materials for the First Time', includes units such as '10 Key Terms and Categories in ELT Materials Writing' and '10 Skills and Qualities of an ELT Writer'. The final section, for the more experienced, includes tips on editing and improving materials, and information on copyright, permissions and the key features of a materials writing brief. The book culminates with two units for those who wish to take materials writing beyond their own classroom.

The sections in between provide invaluable tips for writing different types of materials. These include recommendations for different ways to present and practise grammar and vocabulary, guidelines for selecting and adapting reading and listening texts, and advice on writing an effective teacher's guide. There are also a number of units on constructing different types of questions. This can be a challenging area for writers but Clandfield and Hughes give clear, accessible advice to those with various degrees of writing experience. '10 Types of Reading Comprehension Questions', for example, explains the rationale for using different question types, including True/False statements, open and multiple-choice questions, and summary writing. Their explanations, along with the examples provided, help the materials writer to make an informed decision about the validity of the question types they include in the exercises they write. Importantly, the wide range of task types and exercises introduced in the book, including '10 Tips for Practising Writing Sub-Skills', '10 Types of Listening Text' and '10 Types of Pronunciation Exercise,' will allow all materials developers to experiment with new ideas and so keep their materials fresh and interesting for both themselves and their students.

At the end of the book, there is an appendix with photocopiable materials. These include example activities to complement specific units. For the chapter on supplementary materials, there are sample domino games, lexical set cards and a snakes and ladders game along with a blank template. There is also an example worksheet, complete with teacher's notes, to exemplify the principles of worksheet design.

In terms of format, I wondered at first whether having units of 10 ideas would become tedious as I worked my way through the book. However, I found that I enjoyed the organisation. The ideas are clearly numbered 1–10 with bold print and a larger font for the name of the idea and one or two paragraphs underneath giving easy-to-read explanations and examples. Teachers could perhaps 'tick off' the ideas that they have applied from a unit such as '10 Ways to Present New Language', which could be motivating for those wanting to challenge themselves and expand their teaching repertoire. To add flavour, there are thoughtful quotes throughout by ELT authors including Scott Thornbury

Overall, I really enjoyed reviewing this book and look forward to using it myself and sharing it with colleagues. It is comprehensive in terms of topics and advice, and is written clearly. The sheer number and variety of ideas will make it a source of inspiration for all materials developers, especially those who have writer's block or are stretched for time. It would definitely be a handy addition to the resources used for curriculum development projects. It could also be used as a training tool and for teacher professional development. It would even be an accessible resource for trainee teachers on a pre-sessional course. Though the example activities tend to focus more on General English and lower levels, the principles used are pedagogically sound and can be applied to higher levels and other areas, especially EAP. In fact, a colleague of mine recently used this book to ensure that he was including a range of question types in an EAP writing project he was working on. I would strongly recommend *ETpedia Materials Writing* for any (and every) ELT staffroom.

Meredith MacAulay currently teaches EAP at UNSW Institute of Languages, where she is also a teacher trainer and has developed materials for EAP and teacher training courses. She has recently written an activity book called *Energising EAP*. Her professional interests are learning transfer and learner motivation.

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