

Foreign language collaborative writing through the use of Web 2.0 tools. A Wiki assisted- Writing Lesson in the EFL/ ESL class

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Abstract: The purpose of the particular assignment is to design a writing lesson integrating the use of technology and more specifically, a webtool 2.0 that is wiki. In the 21st century, the use of webtools in the EFL class is considered of paramount significance, while learners should be familiar with their effective use so as to deal with many constraints, developing at the same time their skills (Pennington, 1996: 137). In the first part of the article, there is a brief description of the current teaching situation with reference to learners' profile, the curriculum, the coursebook and the writing instruction practices used. In the second part, there is a presentation of the advantages of wiki and collaborative writing. Then, in the third part there is a rationale of the writing lesson, while then there is a detailed presentation of it and justification upon numerous choices (texts, tasks, procedures). In the last part, there is a conclusion summing up the ideas mentioned in the previous parts.

1. Description of the current teaching situation

The particular class consists of 16 Greek junior high school students, aged 12 to 13, attending the first grade of a Greek junior high school. All learners are monolingual. According to the CEFR (2021), the group's competence level ranges from intermediate to upper-intermediate (B1-B2). The majority of students exhibit strong motivation to participate fully in all activities and tasks throughout the lesson, while they also show a favorable attitude towards English as a foreign language. The writing book employed is 'B1 Writing for all' and it has been designed to guide learners upon writing and prepare them for all B level exams. It includes 20 writing lessons, each one of them corresponding to a double lesson (1a/1b), composed of writing, reading, vocabulary and grammar exercises, while there are plenty of model texts, vocabulary banks, plans and exercises. Writing is taught in a 60-minute-lesson each time, where the entire focus is on it exclusively.

2. Aims and objectives

The purpose of the particular original writing lesson on hobbies (Appendix I, p. V) is to encourage learners through the use of a wiki (PBWiki.com) to focus on the whole writing process following all the steps smoothly than just the final product (writing itself), improve their writing and digital literacy skills, foster greater learner autonomy, independence and collaboration skills (Pennington, 1996:137). It is composed of three parts, the pre-writing stage, the while-writing one and the post-writing stage, while writing is central in this 60-minute-lesson than merely being one of its components. Additionally, there is integration of other skills, including reading in the while-writing stage.

3. Advantages of Wiki

Technology and communication play a fundamental role in our life and they contribute significantly to learners' learning in numerous ways. In other words, the integration of technology in the EFL classroom is considered to be really useful and of paramount importance for both learning and language learning because it provides learners the chance to develop their communicative skills, learning how to work independently (Kuimova & Zvekov, XX), be creative and flexible (Papadopoulou, S. & Vlachos, K., 2014), socialize, collaborate and exchange recursive feedback.

Regarding Wiki, it is a webtool that offers teachers the chance to integrate technology in their lessons encouraging learners to engage in collaborative writing tasks (Abrams, 2019). More specifically, wikis help learners to create e-portfolios (Mexi & Vlachos, 2014), while they offer learners- users the chance to use, edit, add, or delete the contents of a website and they can maintain all the changes they have made. So, Wikis are a very effective tool, especially for collaborative writing because they motivate learners' cooperation, collaboration and interaction (Mexi & Vlachos, 2014), they can be enriched with authentic language and culture material and develop learners' critical thinking (Tsotsoli, 2004). Moreover, through wikis learners can collect useful data navigating online (Leuf & Cunningham, 2001), while they are able to express their thoughts freely, revise their peers' work and create posts familiarizing themselves with the notion of collaborative writing, developing thus their interaction and cooperation skills (Chawner & Gorman, 2002), while at the same time they become directly involved as active participants in the whole teaching/ learning process (Wagner, 2004). Lastly, wikis foster learners' confidence in writing and increase their motivation (Mak & Coniam, 2008 ; Kovacic, Budas & Zlatovic, 2007).

Moreover, wikis are the offspring of a key concept in cognitive development first articulated by Vygotsky (1978). According to it, people are sociable creatures that learn best through social exchanges and interaction and they communicate with others to achieve their goal under the guidance of a tutor (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, wikis are the extension of social constructivism (Mexi & Vlachos, 2014). They also follow the Multiple Intelligences Theory as they can trigger many of learners' intelligences (visual-spatial, etc.) to deal with the tasks/ activities assigned. Finally, various learning theories (socio-constructivist, multiple intelligences, experiential learning and critical inquiry) assert that the use of webtools, such as wiki in the EFL class has many advantages, including psychological, sociocultural and cognitive ones (Papaefthymiou- Lytra, 2014) that contribute to the development of learners' skills (Peachey, 2019).

4. Advantages of collaborative writing

Collaborative writing has a wide variety of benefits for learners (Williams, 2012; Torch, 2011). Through it, learners are able to write, read and share written texts with their peers, developing in this way their skills and expanding their knowledge (Swain & Lapkin, 2002), while the need for collaborative work leads them to engage in learner-to-learner interaction by exchanging constructive feedback with their peers (Torch, 2001), absorbing thus information more easily (Watanabe & Swain, 2007), as learning is a social process according to Vygotsky (1978).

5. Rationale of the writing lesson

There are numerous reasons why the writing lesson was chosen. First and foremost, writing skills are really significant for both academic career and professional advancement. In addition, writing gives the chance to learners to comprehend vocabulary more easily, as learners become active explorers of the target vocabulary.

6. Presentation of the original writing lesson

This writing lesson includes three stages, the pre-, while- and post-writing one and it follows the steps of process writing, that is brainstorming, focusing, drafting, re-drafting, editing and publishing (Richards & Renandya, 2002). The topic of the particular writing has been selected according to learners' needs and interests, activating in this way their background schemata (Pastarmatzi, 2015).

In the pre-writing stage, where learners' background knowledge is activated, there are two activities. In the first one (Appendix II, ex.1, p.VII), learners are given a picture to guess its content, discuss it with their partners and draw conclusions on its content (brainstorming part) writing down their comments on the comments section of wiki. Its purpose is to activate their content and background schemata, so as to familiarize them with the topic of their writing, foster their prediction skills and encourage their interaction with others. In the second activity (Appendix II, ex.2, p.VII), which is a brainstorming- group creativity technique (Ibnian, 2011) and a quick-writing activity (Macrorie, 1976; Elbow, 1973; Cowan, 1983; Lane & Perrin, 1984), learners are supposed to work in pairs to write down in the wiki their ideas in the space provided upon the picture of the previous exercise, integrating technology in the writing process and increasing in this way their interaction and quick-writing skills, which are quite helpful for the writing process. Regarding webtools, they motivate learners to work collaboratively even when dealing with writing (Oskoz & Elola, 2014; Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012) as they are an essential part of staged and structured collaborative writing. Furthermore, brainstorming is considered to be crucial to generate learners' ideas for writing (Spivey, 2006:1), while at the same time it offers them the necessary time to plan their writing by collecting all the necessary ideas and make connections (Blystone, 2009: 3).

In the while- writing stage, there are three stages, the structuring, the revising, which is integral to writing and the editing one, which is an ongoing process. The while-writing stage includes five activities, among which the actual writing. In the first activity (Appendix II, ex.3, p. VIII) learners are supposed to read the extract of an authentic reading text and more specifically, an article on hobbies called 'How to find a hobby' from The New York Times newspaper (focusing part), focus on extracting specific information and write a letter to the editor of the newspaper, mentioning the vital importance of hobbies in people's life. In this way, there is integration of skills (Harmer, 1991), as learners are required to read the text and perform a task. Concerning reading in the pre- or while-writing stage, it is claimed that it contributes significantly to the writing process, as learners are offered plenty of information and they are given the chance to collect the necessary for the task's purposes (Leinbersperger, 2003). In the second task of the writing stage (Appendix II, ex.4, p.IX), they are supposed to answer some relevant questions to the writing task, such as the person they will have to address through their letter, or some of the advantages of hobbies, in order to structure and plan their writing about the effects of hobbies in people's lives, enhancing in this way their writing skills, as well. Additionally, in the third activity (Appendix II, ex.5, p.IX) based on their notes and the stimuli from the previous tasks learners are supposed to write their first draft on different wiki pages on the topic within 20 minutes. This happens because the wiki does not give learners the opportunity to write simultaneously. The first draft is the learners' first attempt to writing and it may contain many mistakes. The particular task's purpose is to enhance their writing skills and it is the first step towards the final writing (recursive writing), while learners know that their teacher is not the only recipient of their written texts leading to a constant procedure of revising, editing and writing again and again (Zamel, 1982). Then, in the fourth activity (Appendix II, ex.6, p. IX), they are asked to work in pairs and exchange papers/ their first drafts in order to provide each other with meaningful and useful peer feedback completing a table with some questions on their drafts (Alnasser & Alyousel, 2015). In general, feedback is necessary as it offers the chance to reshape their writing, while when learners are assessed by their peers, they feel less anxious and stressed (Hyland, 2003). So, their interaction and collaboration skills are developed, while at the same time the feedback they exchange upon the

structure, purpose, and organization of their written text is valuable for the actual writing that follows. The fifth task (Appendix II, ex.7, p.IX) of the while-writing stage is focused on the actual writing (15 minutes), as learners perform the writing task taking into consideration the peer feedback they received and gave in the previous activities. Their final draft is written in separate pages on the wiki page.

In the post-writing stage, there is one activity which has the form of peer- evaluation (Appendix II, ex.8, p.IX). In this task, learners are supposed to engage actively in a group discussion upon the whole writing process, the structure used, the difficulties they dealt, their strengths and weaknesses or even the changes they would make in order to improve it, enhancing in this way group work through their cooperation and exchanges of constructive feedback and peer evaluation. As mentioned before, the integration of numerous skills is necessary so as to smoothen the language learning procedure (Calfoglou, 2019). Additionally, learners have the opportunity to write their comments on the comment section of the wiki, which will be shown to all the participants and they can interact as each student can write on the other's comment exchanging information about the wiki, the actual writing, the re-drafting, the language tools, and generally the whole lesson itself.

The particular writing lesson is a process-oriented lesson (focus on the process during which learners create their writing product- Brown, 2001: 336) with some reader related elements. It includes brainstorming and quick-writing, which help learners discover and get into the topic, structuring of ideas, note-taking, revising, editing (Tribble, 1996:9), the first draft and the final draft rather than a finished product (multiple drafting/ recursiveness), discussion and peer evaluation (cognitivism) (Applebee, 1986: 95; White & Arndt, 1991:7). So, this writing lesson is divided into many stages till the final draft (Cramer, 2001) which proves that the learner as a writer and not the written work produced is of outmost importance. More specifically, learners in pairs or groups (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012) produce their own work freely without imitating or following a specific model text, which minimizes control (White & Arndt, 1991: 7), but instead they exchange feedback (peer feedback) in order to improve their work through multiple drafting or editing. At the same time peer feedback and peer editing provide learners with authentic audience offering them the chance to respond to an authentic situation. Furthermore, learners may sometimes go back and forward (non-linear process, Zamel, 1983: 165) to rearrange their ideas (Silva, 1990) and make any necessary changes (text recursiveness), as writing is an ongoing process, where the main focus should be on content instead of form and accuracy. Additionally, regarding feedback, learners evaluate each other's work, provide and receive purposeful peer feedback (meaning, content and organization) and not form-focused, dealing exclusively with grammatical or spelling mistakes. In other words, feedback is recursive as it is provided before (pre-text), during (real-time) and after any kind of activity. Finally, the teacher serves as a facilitator and non-directive, who guides learners only when necessary, encourages and assists them in the writing process (Emig, 1983). Thus, learners can interact freely without any control for the writing task's purposes focusing on content before form, exchange peer feedback in all writing stages instead of receiving authoritative feedback from their teachers and revise their work many times (multiple drafting).

7. Evaluation of the writing lesson/ justification of choices

The particular writing lesson (Appendix II) was designed and presented to learners with the use of a wiki, that engages learners in the learning process (Koutsogianni, 2014), while according to Harding (2007: 8) it creates a real-life context in learners' classroom. It was suitable for learners' CEFR level (B1-B2) and their needs, while at the same time they were motivated and active throughout the whole writing process. It followed the non-linear writing process approach, which according to Barnett (1992) contributes to the development of learners' interaction (Nunan, 1991) and writing skills (Brown, 2001). Through it, learners cooperated in meaningful ways with their peers, engaged in peer editing and peer evaluation (Applebee, 1986: 95; White & Arndt, 1991: 7), they were led to

discoveries through their interactions (Freedman, 1992; Reid, 1992), explored and finally, developed their personal approach to writing and writing practices (Sutikno, 2008) using technology meaningfully through a web-based collaborative webtool (Hsu & Lo, 2018: 104).

The topic (hobbies) was chosen as it was familiar to learners and quite engaging, key element for successful writing. For this reason, the teacher paid attention to her choices, so as to develop learners' skills.

The online reading text on hobbies (Appendix III, p.X) was relevant to learners' interests (Krashen's). Additionally, learners developed their vocabulary skills, by being exposed to various vocabulary items, revising concepts (linguistic input). Finally, the reading text offered a meaningful reason for reading to learners.

Furthermore, the tasks made a major contribution to the objectives set. First of all, they stimulated learners' background schemata. Additionally, they provided learners with the opportunity to work independently and collaboratively (Grabe & Stoller, 2011:10), helping them to develop their skills (cognitive, metacognitive). To put it in other words, these activities provided a communicative purpose for the entire class (goal- oriented), gave learners chances for practice (emphasis on doing) and engagement in peer discussion. Additionally, the integration of skills across the entire learning process was profound. Last but not least, a learner- determined strategy was used, since on the one hand the teacher chose the topic and provided learners with guidelines, but the learners were required to engage in writing activities, work on their own or in groups and explore (Vlachos, 2020b).

Overall, the objectives set in the particular writing lesson were accomplished. Learners participated actively throughout the whole writing process by providing and receiving information, producing drafts, editing (making any necessary changes) and assessing their own and their classmates' progress with the use of a wiki.

In other words, successful and purposeful writing requires learners' active participation in the whole writing process, use of authentic material (reading text) in all writing stages, pair and group-work (Bahrani & Soltani, 2012), specific writing purpose, exchanges of meaningful peer feedback and focus on the process through multiple drafting where learners develop their ideas and not on the writing product itself. Finally, teachers should be seen as facilitators, assistants and motivators, providing learners with positive reinforcement (Anuradha et al., 2014), integrating technological tools in their teaching so as to adapt to the 21st century's needs and prerequisites. Additionally, through this lesson learners' collaboration and interaction skills were developed, since they cooperated a lot with their classmates, exchanging peer feedback while at the same time, their metacognitive skills were enhanced since they focused on the process of writing and not on the final product and that is the reason why, they got even more independent and autonomous. Regarding peer feedback, it increased their writing skills (Bijami et al., 2013; Gielen et al., 2010; Li et al., 2012; Yu & Wu, 2013) and the quality of their writing (Hu, 2005; Yangel et al., 2006), developed their social skills (Liu & Hansen, 2002; Hu, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006), played a key role in the development of their metacognitive skills as they could manage their writing on their own (Brown, 2001: 336) and enhanced their positive stance towards writing (Nunan, 1991). All in all, the particular process-oriented lesson offered learners the chance to become aware of their learning process (Legutke & Thomas, 1991: 202-210) and develop their writing, interaction, collaboration and metacognitive skills.

8. Conclusion

In this article, a writing lesson was designed and delivered to learners through the use of a webtool, wiki. Additionally, collaborative writing and its steps have been followed and learners had the chance to use technological tools in order to perform various processes among which, brainstorming, drafting, re-drafting/ editing, assessing and publishing their writing. Finally, they were given the chance to familiarize themselves with a technologically assisted lesson.

Finally, we must emphasize the important and effective role that all digital technologies play in the field of education. These technologies, which include mobile devices (49-53), a variety of ICTs (54-77), AI & STEM ROBOTICS (78-94), and games (95-98), facilitate and enhance educational procedures such as assessment, intervention, and instruction. Additionally, the use of ICTs in conjunction with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence cultivation [99-143], as well as with environmental factors and nutrition [45-48], accelerates and improves educational practices and outcomes more generally, especially for language learning through ICTs.

9. References

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<https://www.nytimes.com/guides/smarterliving/how-to-find-a-hobby>

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Original Lesson Plan

'Hobbies'

Class profile: 1st grade of a Greek Junior High School

Age: 12-13 years old

Number of learners: 16

Level: B1-B2

Time: 45 min

Materials: a laptop, a picture, a newspaper article on Hobbies (authentic text), tasksheets

Specific objectives:

1. To focus on the writing process
2. To reinforce learners' writing skills
3. To increase learner autonomy
4. To develop learners' collaboration and interaction skills
5. To develop learners' digital literacy skills

Procedure	Aims	Time
Pre-writing stage Teacher (T) hands in the tasksheets to all learners (Ls). Then, she shows them a picture to guess what is it about, justifying their answers in pairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To activate Ls' background schemata. • To foster their prediction skills. • To motivate Ls to interact with their classmates. 	2 min
Brainstorming/ quickwriting Ls are supposed to write their ideas upon the picture in order to find out the topic and then, discuss them in pairs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase Ls' motivation and collaboration skills. 	5 min

<p>writing down their comments on the comment section of wiki.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To foster their prediction and quickwriting skills. • To increase Ls' digital literacy skills. 	
<p>While-writing stage</p> <p><u>Structuring ideas</u> Ls are asked to read an extract from a newspaper article on hobbies and write an article to the editor of the newspaper talking about the positive effects of hobbies in our lives.</p> <p>Ls are asked to answer the questions regarding the writing task in the table provided with their partners, so as to structure their writing in the wiki page.</p> <p>Ls are asked to write their first draft based on their notes on different wiki pages.</p> <p><u>Revising</u> Ls are asked to exchange papers with their partners and provide useful feedback, taking into consideration the questions that follow.</p> <p><u>Editing</u> Ls are asked to write their final draft based on the first draft and their classmates' feedback on it on separate pages on the wiki page.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills integration (reading). • To check comprehension. • To encourage Ls to give an overall presentation of the importance of hobbies in people's lives based on the article. • To check comprehension. • To enhance learners' writing skills. • To promote Ls' interaction. • To enhance learners' writing skills. • To develop their digital literacy skills. • To provide and receive feedback (peer feedback). • To promote Ls' interaction. • To enhance learners' writing skills. • Develop their digital literacy skills. 	<p>5 min</p> <p>4 min</p> <p>20 min</p> <p>4 min</p> <p>15min</p>
<p>Post-writing stage</p> <p>Ls are asked to discuss in groups the whole writing process, the strategies they used and the changes they would</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide and receive feedback (peer feedback). • To enhance group work. 	<p>5 min</p>

make to improve it and write their comments on the comment page of the wiki provided to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote Ls' interaction. • To develop their digital literacy skills. 	
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Appendix II

Tasksheet

Pre-writing stage:

Brainstorming

1. Warm up! Look at the picture carefully and in pairs, discuss what it is about. Justify your answers.



2. Look at the above picture again and write the ideas that come to your mind.

Then, check your answers with your partner.

While-writing stage:

Structuring ideas

Focusing

3a. Read the following extract from a newspaper article called ‘How to find a Hobby’ in The New York Times and do the task below.

How to Find a Hobby

By [Tara Parker-Pope](#)

Hobbies Are Good For You

Need some convincing that you need a hobby? Let's start with some science. A large body of research suggests that how you spend leisure time matters to your health, and that your hobbies are good for you in many ways. In 2010, a team of researchers from universities in Kansas, Pittsburgh and Texas published the results of four large studies with a total of 1,399 participants, including men and women with various health problems, such as upper respiratory illness, arthritis and breast cancer.

Better physical health. People who scored higher on the enjoyable activities test

had lower body mass index, smaller waists, lower blood pressure, lower stress hormones and better overall physical function.

More sleep. While you may think that a hobby will take up too much of your leisure time or cut into your sleep, the Pittsburgh study showed that people who spent more time on their hobbies actually got better sleep.

Lower stress. A large body of research shows that [leisure activities](#) can help reduce stress. The Pittsburgh study showed that people who took part in a lot of enjoyable activities dealt better with stressful life events. People who scored high on the enjoyable activities test showed lower levels of negative moods and

depression, and higher positive attitudes than their low-scoring counterparts.

Happiness. People who said they participated often in enjoyable activities also had greater life satisfaction and felt their lives had a greater sense of purpose and

meaning.

More friends. Notably, spending more time on hobbies and leisure pursuits was

associated with having a larger and more diverse social network. And we know that a [strong social network](#) is a key factor in healthy aging.

Improved work performance.

A [study at San Francisco State University](#) found that employees who had

creative outlets outside of the office were better at creative problem-solving on the job. The findings were based on studies of 430 workers and military personnel.

Pick a hobby that makes you happy, and any improvement in your work will just be a bonus!

Drafting

3b. Writing task: You have read the article above. Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper about the advantages of hobbies in people’s life and their importance in it. State whether you have a hobby and if yes, mention some of its effects in your life. Give reasons.

4. Pair work: Plan your ideas with your partner.

Who are you going to write to?	
What will the writing be about?	
What are the advantages of hobbies in people’s lives?	
Have you got any hobbies?	

5. Using your ideas and notes, write your first draft in about 150-180 (20 min.).

Revising/ Re-drafting

6. Exchange papers with your partner. Read each other’s first draft and provide feedback based on the questions that follow.

Is the purpose of the draft clear?	
Is the message of the draft clear?	
Is there logical order?	
Is the writing well-organized?	
Is language used appropriately?	
Is the style/tone used the appropriate one?	
Does the writing start/ end appropriately?	

Editing

7. Write your final draft based on your partner’s feedback.

Reminder: Check your letter carefully and pay attention to the language used and the organization of paragraphs.

Post -writing stage:

8. Group discussion: Reflect on the writing process and strategies you have used. What was easy/ demanding? What would you change? Discuss with your classmates and your teacher.

Appendix III

1. Reading text

In your quest for a balanced life, have you neglected your hobbies? As children, we are experts at finding hobbies. We play sports, take dance and music lessons, collect action figures and spend our days learning everything from languages to wood shop. But somewhere on the path to adulthood, we stop trying new things and spend less time on our non-career interests. It's not too late. Use this guide to get inspired, spark your interests and follow your passion toward a new hobby.

Hobbies Are Good For You

Need some convincing that you need a hobby?

Let's start with some science. A large body of research suggests that how you spend leisure time matters to your health, and that your hobbies are good for you in many ways.

In 2010, a team of researchers from universities in Kansas, Pittsburgh and Texas published the results of four large studies with a total of 1,399 participants, including men and women with various health problems, such as upper respiratory illness, arthritis and breast cancer. The researchers developed a scale called the Pittsburgh Enjoyable Activities Test to measure the effect of hobbies and leisure pursuits on overall health. Here's what they found:

Better physical health. People who scored higher on the enjoyable activities test had lower body mass index, smaller waists, lower blood pressure, lower stress hormones and better overall physical function. While it's possible that people who start out healthy are more likely to engage in hobbies, the findings are consistent with other research showing that having hobbies and other leisure pursuits is associated with a variety of benefits, including less severe disease and [greater longevity](#).

More sleep. While you may think that a hobby will take up too much of your leisure time or cut into your sleep, the Pittsburgh study showed that people who spent more time on their hobbies actually got better sleep.

Lower stress. A large body of research shows that [leisure activities](#) can help reduce stress. The Pittsburgh study showed that people who took part in a lot of enjoyable activities dealt better with stressful life events. People who scored high on the enjoyable activities test showed lower levels of negative moods and depression, and higher positive attitudes than their low-scoring counterparts.

Happiness. People who said they participated often in enjoyable activities also had greater life satisfaction and felt their lives had a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

More friends. Notably, spending more time on hobbies and leisure pursuits was associated with having a larger and more diverse social network. And we know that a [strong social network](#) is a key factor in healthy aging.

And there's one additional benefit to having a hobby that may surprise you.

Improved work performance. A [study at San Francisco State University](#) found that employees who had creative outlets outside of the office were better at creative problem-solving on the job. The findings were based on studies of 430 workers and military personnel that found that having a hobby gave workers a chance to recover from the demands of their jobs, increased their sense of control and in some cases challenged them to learn new skills that were transferable to work.

A word to the wise: Don't pick a hobby because it will help you at work. **Pick a hobby that makes you happy, and any improvement in your work will just be a bonus!**

How to Make Time for a Hobby

Yes, we know you are busy, but hear us out. There is time for a hobby.

Most of us have been taught that when it comes to time, productivity is what matters most. As a result, we've structured our lives around work rather than play. But with a little thought, you should be able to find more time in your schedule to do the things you love.

Most of us have free time, we just don't spend it wisely.

The American Time Use Survey measures the amount of time people spend doing various activities, such as paid work, child care, volunteering and socializing. This chart shows how much time full-time employed people spend on various activities during the work week.

[Average Hours Per Work Day on Various Activities](#) (Among people who work full time)

- Household chores*: 0.96 hours
- Eating and drinking: 1.11 hours
- Leisure and sports**: 3.04 hours
- Sleeping and personal care: 8.64 hours
- Caregiving (for both children and parents): 0.53 hours
- Shopping: 0.43 hours
- Working: 8.80 hours

**It's worth noting that the 0.96 hours (58 minutes) spent on household chores is an average. Men spend 49 minutes a day on chores, compared to 80 minutes for women.*

***Leisure and sports is another category with a gender difference. Men spend 3.5 hours on leisure and sports, while women spend 2.3 hours.*

But those are averages! That's not me. I'm really busy!

Yes, we believe you! But looking at your time a little differently may help you find that free time you crave.

Think in Weeks, Not Days

Laura Vanderkam, a writer and speaker on work-life balance, recommends thinking of time in weeks rather than days to learn where some extra time might be hiding in your schedule. A week "is really the cycle of life as people actually live it," she said. Each week is made up of 168 hours. If you work 40 hours and sleep eight hours each night, that still leaves 72 hours. "Maybe you can carve out a few hours of really fun, cool stuff per week. That will make the other 165 hours that are in a week feel a lot more doable," she explained.

To do that, Ms. Vanderkam [recommends tracking a week of your life](#). You can write down everything you do in half-hour blocks or [use these apps](#) recommended by [Wirecutter](#), the New York Times company that reviews products.

Or you can try this simple calculator to take a look at how you are spending your time. It was created by Erik Rood, a Bay Area analyst and founder of a data science service called [Data Interview Qs](#).

Being a data guy, Mr. Rood was using spreadsheets every few months to evaluate how he was spending his time. After talking with friends and co-workers who were also thinking about how they spent their time, he created a simple tool to track hours spent on various activities, including sleeping, working, commuting, gym, chores, grooming and parenting. He has shared the tool on various forums and with friends. Most people, he says, are fascinated. But after playing with the tool, he says, they sometimes get a bit frustrated about the results, because they don't think they have as much free time as it suggests.

Whatever your results, the calculator typically will show that there is some free time in your day, and that if you adjust a few factors, more free time can be found. "There's a ton of 'busy' time, no matter how most people cut it," says Mr. Rood. "But small changes can have huge impacts on overall free time when extrapolated out through one's life."

Are You Mindful of Your Downtime?

One of the reasons our calculations of free time don't match our reality is that we can lose time doing mindless things like checking email and social media, and clicking around the internet. And sometimes, we just do nothing.

In the book "What the Most Successful People Do Before Breakfast," Ms. Vanderkam says one problem is that people often are not mindful about how they are spending free time. Sometimes we come home and "crash" and do nothing after a busy day or week, but Ms. Vanderkam says that's a mistake. But we shouldn't spend all of our "free time" catching up on work either.

"Other kinds of work — be it exercise, a creative hobby, hands-on parenting or volunteering — will do more to preserve your zest for Monday's challenges than complete vegetation or working through the weekend," she writes.

And Don't Let Screens Become Your Hobby

We all know the internet, social media and emails can be a big time-suck. And at the end of a busy week, crashing in front of the television or the laptop might feel like relaxation, but often it's not. The Journal of Sleep Medicine recently reported that binge watchers get poorer sleep. And screens can be physiologically and psychologically stimulating, whether it's action sequences on the television or the artificial blue light [emitted by our devices](#). Another negative of screen time: It tends to be a solo pursuit that keeps us from engaging with our loved ones.

Finding time for hobbies in your day means being more thoughtful about how you spend the time you have. When you do have downtime, do you crash and do nothing? Or do you use that time for things you love?

Free Time vs. Too Much Free Time

Here's some good news. The fact that you don't have much free time to devote to a hobby is O.K. [A recent study found](#) that having too much idle time makes us just as unhappy as not having enough free time. The research, [based on two large datasets of 35,375 Americans](#), examined the relationship between our overall life happiness and the amount of discretionary time we have (defined as awake hours spent doing whatever we want to do). For people who have jobs, the sweet spot of discretionary time is 2.5 hours a day. For people who are retired or not working, the right amount of free time for peak happiness is 4.75 hours a day.

Schedule Your Free Time (But Don't Overschedule It)

In her book on successful people, Ms. Vanderkam found that the people she profiled all planned their weekends in advance. They didn't schedule every minute, but they did schedule "anchor events." One

key to making time for a hobby is to schedule time during your week and weekends for it, the same way you would schedule work appointments or social engagements. Now a caveat: While it's important to make time for your hobbies, you don't want to be too rigid in how you schedule them. Research suggests that too much scheduling of leisure time makes it feel more like work and less like fun. In a series of studies reported by [Ohio State University](#), researchers found that when people scheduled specific times and dates for fun activities (like a movie or a coffee break), they enjoyed them less. That doesn't mean you can't plan. The same research showed that "rough" scheduling of a leisure activity didn't steal the pleasure from it. For instance, students who were given a specific time for a coffee and cookie break during finals enjoyed it less than students who were given a two-hour window to stop by and enjoy free coffee and cookies. "People associate schedules with work," [Selin Malkoc](#), a co-author of the study, said in a statement about it. Dr. Malkoc is an associate professor of marketing at Ohio State University's Fisher College of Business. "We want our leisure time to be free-flowing."

2. Picture



Appendix IV

The link to the wiki is the following:

<http://angelapapadaki2022.pbworks.com/w/page/151376022/FrontPage>

Photos of the WIKI

Instructions :

In this writing lesson, you will work both in pairs and individually on a topic quite familiar to you : 'Hobbies'.

Each member is going to write on a wiki page. For this reason, the steps of process writing need to be followed (brainstorming, focusing, drafting, re-drafting, editing, publishing).

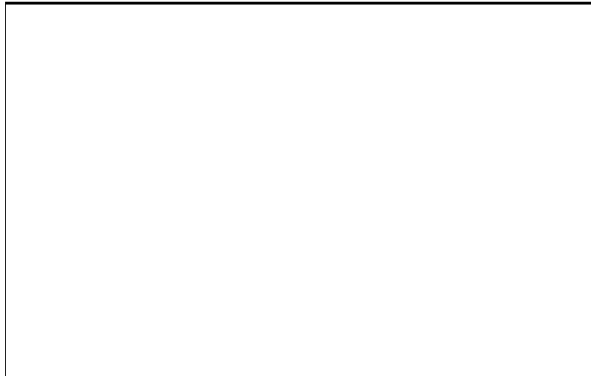
You will write your written text on a separate wiki page. After that, you will be given some time to check and evaluate it with your peers and write the final draft.

BRAINSTORMING

1. Warm up! Look at the picture carefully and in pairs, discuss what it is about. Justify your answers.

2. Look at the above picture again and write the ideas that come to your mind.

Then, check your answers with your partner.



FOCUSING

3a. Read the following extract from a newspaper article called 'How to find a Hobby' in The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/smarterliving/how-to-find-a-hobby>.

DRAFTING.

3b. **Writing task:** You have read the article above. Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper about the advantages of hobbies in people's life and their importance in it. State whether you have a hobby and if yes, mention some of its effects in your life. Give reasons.

4. Pair work: Plan your ideas with your partner.

Who are you going to write to?	
What will the writing be about?	
What are the advantages of hobbies in people's lives?	
Have you got any hobbies?	

5. Using your ideas and notes, write your first draft in about 150-180 (20 min.).

RE-DRAFTING

6. Exchange papers with your partner. Read each other's first draft and provide feedback based on the questions that follow.

Is the purpose of the draft clear?	
Is the message of the draft clear?	
Is there logical order?	
Is the writing well-organized?	
Is language used appropriately?	
Is the style/ tone used the appropriate one?	
Does the writing start/ end appropriately?	

EDITING

7. Write your final draft based on your partner's feedback.

Reminder: Check your letter carefully and pay attention to the language used and the organization of paragraphs.

PUBLISHING


8. **Group discussion:** Reflect on the writing process and strategies you have used. What was easy/ demanding? What would you change? Discuss with your classmates and your teacher.

 Comments (0)

Add a comment

Add comment

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