



# GIVE THEM THE FIRST SENTENCE

*Scaffold the start, not the thinking.*



## THE IDEA

Starting is often the hardest part for EAL learners.

A first sentence gives them a clear launch pad so they can focus on their ideas, not how to begin.

It reduces anxiety and creates more confident writers and speakers.



## IN THE CLASSROOM

Use sentence starters that are flexible, not predictable.

Keep the thinking in the student's hands.

Remove the scaffold gradually.

Celebrate the ideas and the attempts.

Make starting easier so ideas can fly.

## THE 4 STEPS

1



### LAUNCH

#### Provide a starter.

Offer a sentence stem that opens the door.  
Model how it can be used.

*I think ... because ...  
One reason is ...*

2



### THINK

#### Students add their ideas.

Encourage them to complete the sentence with their own words.  
Remind: there is no single 'right' idea.

*I think the character ... because ...  
One reason is that ...*

3



### SHARE

#### Talk it out.

Students say their sentence or share with a partner/group.  
Build confidence and polish language.

*I agree with ... because ...  
Another idea is ...*

4



### EXTEND

#### Grow the response.

Add details, evidence and examples.  
Move from one sentence to a full response.

*This is important because ...  
For example, ... This shows that ...*



## WHY IT WORKS

Reduces the barrier of starting.  
Releases thinking and content.  
Builds confidence and increases response length.



## EAL UPGRADE

Use stems that include key vocabulary and connectives.  
Change stems to suit content and language level.  
Display stems visually for ongoing reference.



## TRY IT TOMORROW

Pick a task.  
Write 2–3 strong first sentence starters.  
Use one. Review how it helped students begin.



## TEACHER LANGUAGE

"Here's a way to start ..."  
"Now make it your idea."  
"Can you add more detail or an example?"

**DUNCAN  
ROSE**

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