WORLD WIDE WIKI

LEVEL

High-Beginner to Advanced

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading, writing (primary focus); speaking (secondary)

GOALS

Students will increase their reading and writing abilities through the building of a class wiki page on other nations and current events.

MATERIALS

- Teacher: whiteboard/chalkboard, markers or chalk, world map, computer lab access (if possible).
- Students: pencils or pens, notebooks or writing paper.

PREPARATION

Collaborative writing is an effective way to engage students in authentic communication tasks. In collaborative writing tasks, students work together to create written texts. This allows them opportunities to brainstorm ideas, co-author texts, and proofread their shared writing.

It can also be a fantastic way to get students interested in world affairs. Working in collaborative teams, students can create their own world fact books using the collaborative spaces of *wikis*.

Wiki is a Hawaiian word meaning quick, but in an Internet context a wiki is a website that can edited by many different people working together. Wikis can be an effective introduction to collaborative writing, working in online spaces, and knowing more about the world. The best aspect of wikis is how simple they are. Most are similar in appearance to word editing software such as Microsoft Word or Open Office but with a collaborative component for additional writing and speaking practice.

1. Read through all the materials carefully.
2. This activity works best as a follow-up to the February Teacher's Corner Week 1 on Fantasy Politics. If your class played (or is currently playing) fantasy politics, have teams write their reports about their team's countries.
3. This activity, like fantasy politics, works if best played over at least five weeks. This length gives students the time needed to find and read information on countries around the world.
4. Hang a map of the world in the classroom, or bring a map to class each time for students to access as a reference.
5. This activity encourages students to pay attention to and read news stories. Prior to using the activity in class it is recommended that you compile a list of possible sources to be used in the activity. For lower level students, the activity could be focused on a specific news website such as [Voice of America's Learning English](#).
6. Collaborative writing works best in pairs or small groups of no more than four students. If your class played (or is currently playing) fantasy politics, have the students keep the same teams.

7. If your class did not play fantasy politics, this activity can be done as a stand-alone class project. Just begin the activity with students selecting countries from a list. They can then spend a week gathering information about these countries from the news and write wiki pages based on that information.

USING WIKIS

Wikis are web-based writing tools that allow multiple writers to help create the same document or web page. There are many widely available wikis; each one is slightly different, but overall they are quite similar. The most important consideration when choosing a wiki is classroom fit and student access. Below is a list of the most popular wikis on the web.

Media Wiki - https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki

PBWorks - https://plans.pbworks.com/academic

Wiki Dot - http://www.wikidot.com/

Wikispaces - http://www.wikispaces.com/content/classroom

Besides wikis, other online tools can be used for collaborative writing activities. Online course management systems, such as Moodle, usually contain their own wiki tools, and online tools such as Google Docs can be used just like wikis. Below is a list of non-wiki alternatives.

Moodle – http://moodle.org

Google Docs – http://drive.google.com

Regular Paper – If computers are not an option for your class, students can still engage in collaborative writing with paper and pencil. Remember technology is never as important as the skill being learned!

PROCEDURES – FANTASY POLITICS EXPANSION

The procedures for this activity are based on your class playing fantasy politics from Week 3 of this month's Teacher's Corner.

Pre-Writing Phase
1. After student teams have drafted their nations for fantasy politics, have students begin searching for news stories online that feature the countries on their team. Remind students that only current news stories can be counted.
2. As students collect news stories, have them keep a journal. Each student should keep his/her own journal as he/she cannot predict when she/he will find a news story. Remind students that the more stories they find, the more points they earn! These journals should track the stories they read.
    a. Journal entries should contain the name of the news article, the author of the article, the name of the website/newspaper where they found the article, and the date (day, month, and year).

    b. The journal entry should also include a summary of the article that highlights the main points about the country of interest to them. Documenting sources and summarizing articles serves as a great introduction to academic writing in English.

Writing Brainstorm Phase
1. At the end of the first week of fantasy politics, have the students gather in their teams for group work.
2. Each team member should bring his/her journal to class and share it with the other members of the team.
3. Give the teams time to look through their journals at the stories each student documented. If students documented the same story, encourage them to discuss the article with one another to clarify their understanding of the topic and any new vocabulary.

Collaborative Writing Phase
1. After students have had time to sort through their team's articles for the week, have them visit the class wiki page. If computers are not possible have them get out sheets of paper.
2. Using the wiki space, have the students write a weekly report for the countries. The team should collaborate to include the information they learned from the articles collected by the team.
    a. If students have many countries on their team, they can choose several to write about, such as those that earned the team the most points that week.
3. If class time permits, have the students engage in this collaborative writing activity at the end of each week of fantasy politics or make it a required homework assignment each week.

POTENTIAL EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

Depending on classroom goals or student abilities, it is possible to expand upon this collaborative writing activity. Below are just a few ideas.

- Team Peer Edit – After the teams have written their country reports for the week, have the teams trade wiki pages and engage in peer review. Teams can check the pages of other teams for issues of grammar, spelling or even factual correctness. You can even allocate bonus fantasy politics points each week for the team with the fewest grammar mistakes on their wiki page!

- Oral Reports – After student teams have written their country reports for the week, have them come to the front of the class and give a presentation on what they learned that week. This gives the students a chance to speak and learn new information from other teams. You can do this at the end of each week.

- News Reports – If classroom time for students is not an option, have students create audio or video journals in the form of news reports. These can be submitted as homework and shared amongst the class for additional listening opportunities.