Writing Short Stories Based on Key Words in the Method of Process Writing

Diploma Thesis

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I declare that I worked on this thesis independently, using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography. I agree with this diploma thesis being deposited in the Library of the Faculty of Education at the Masaryk University and being made available for study purposes.

Brno, 9 December 2009  
Bc. Veronika Komínková
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Introduction

The main theme of this diploma thesis is to study teaching writing short stories in the method of process writing, today a widely spread method to teach writing. Once writing is viewed as process, much more attention is paid to the text creation with a chance to change its content, the order of ideas, or correct a wrong word. The writer has an opportunity to rethink what has already been written while the teacher reacts to the writer’s work-in-progress. Giving feedback becomes an important feature in the process, thanks to which the teacher or other readers help a student writer to reshape the text to its final version. In this way, student can experience the whole craft of text creation, from the stage of planning, through the stages of drafting, editing to the final version.

When talking about English as a Foreign Language, writing is one of four skills, apart from listening, speaking and reading, which language students are supposed to master. Undoubtedly, writing is the most exacting skill of the four, which brings a large number of problems. English spelling, word order, or grammar tenses can be included among the most frequently mentioned problems. From the methodological point of view, there are many techniques how to teach writing concentrating on different language aspects. Process writing is one of the methods used to develop the skill of writing, which concentrates on the process rather than the final product of writing. At the same time, the process approach enables the students to practise a wide range of genres, for instance, a story, a letter, an advertisement, or poetry. As most of us are familiar with short story genre since our childhood, I have decided to try teaching writing short stories to promote my students’ writing. I think that short stories provide an opportunity to learn various aspects of the language: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, coherence, or cohesion of a text in a very creative way.

Some time ago, I asked my students to write a short story based on five key words chosen from our textbook to see how these words the students implemented into their texts. The results were unsatisfying because the key words were not used correctly in most cases although the students knew their meaning. In addition to this fact, the stories were confusing or obscure for the reader in many points. It was obvious that most of these texts needed improving. That is why I started to search for a suitable method through which I could help my students to become better writers. Finally, the process approach, according to the theories, seemed to be the right method
to use. I wanted to show my students that they do not have to feel desperate while a written task is ahead.

In my diploma thesis, I have set a basic goal to answer the question whether the method of process writing would help to enhance writing short stories based on five key words. The theoretical part is based on literature dealing with writing from general point of view, followed by a deeper investigation of process writing and finished by the study of the genre of short stories. More specifically, Chapter One talks about the importance of writing in our lives, the reasons for teaching writing in language classes or possible problems, which teaching writing brings. Chapter Two is devoted to the method of process writing, including a deep study of individual stages of the process and possible ways of feedback. In Chapter Three, I try to outline some distinctive features of short story genre accompanied with a set of useful ideas how to manage to write short stories more successfully.

The theoretical part provides a background for the practical part, which is developed in the form of action research. A group of fifteen-year-old students was asked to produce their own short stories based on five key words written in the method of process writing. The key words were carefully chosen from the textbook, which was commonly used in the lessons. I worked with two groups of students of the same age to compare their final results. The target group used to write one short story in the method of process writing per two weeks on average. At the end of the research, the students from the target group published their own books of short stories. The control group, which was taught by a colleague of mine, did not undergo this long-term project and they followed their common syllabus.

I collected and studied the results of the research during six months. In the practical part, I analyze the method of process writing applied to short stories. I also study the usage of five key words within the stories and I provide an analysis of the questionnaires answered before and after the research. The appendices include questionnaires before and after the research, a lesson plan, a worksheet and the examples of some drafts and final versions of short stories written by the students from the target group.
1. Writing

1.1 The skill of writing

Generally speaking, writing does not mean simply a record of spoken language, but it is a way how to express ideas, feelings, or experiences. In other words, it is a way how to communicate with other people via a writing system. In the course of time, writing has become an important way of human communication. What is more, a written message can survive quite long, which means that we can return to it and read it again. A written text is usually more coherent and “polished” than spontaneous speech. That is why it is more demanding to produce a written text than to read, speak or listen. Learning to write takes time and a lot of practice, from mastering the hand-eye-coordination, letter-writing level, word level, sentence level and finally a text level as Jackie Reilly and Vanessa Reilly (2005: 9-15) mention.

1.2 The importance of writing

Let me devote a few words to the role of writing and its influence on our lives. As Former Senator, Bob Kerry, from American National Commission on Writing said:

From poetry to letters to stories to laws, we must learn to write in order to participate in the range of experiences available to us as human beings. Our spiritual lives, our economic success, and our social networks are all directly affected by our willingness to do the work necessary to acquire the skill of writing. In a very real way neither our democracy nor our personal freedoms will survive unless we as citizens take the time and make effort needed to learn how to write. (Kerry qtd. in “Every Child a Reader and Writer”: 3)

In the 21th century, literacy has become one of the fundamental human rights. Despite this fact, Jeremy Harmer (2004) points out that: “according to the Canadian organisation WLC (World Literacy Canada), there are at least 875 million illiterate adults in the world” (Harmer 2004: 3).
Harmer (2004) continues and says that: “education transforms lives and societies and the ability to read, and write, and being numerate gives adults and children a huge advantage over those who are not so fortunate” (Harmer 2004: 3).

“Writing was a very useful invention for complex and high-pupulation cultures” (“Writing Systems”: 1). Thus, it can be said that literacy, the ability to read and write, might be considered as the milestone in the progress of both ancient and modern civilizations and the key to the success in all areas of human life. That is why writing should not be neglected, even in the time of digital media and new technologies including, for instance, computing. I find teaching writing very important both in the mother language and foreign languages. Writing develops not only language itself, but it promotes thinking and creativity as well. On the contrary, it should be highlighted that writing is a demanding skill, which has to be learned and practised. The ability to write correctly helps to achieve better results in other school subjects and other areas of our lives.

1.3 Reasons for teaching writing in English language classes

Writing, from a foreign language learning viewpoint, is the skill which the teachers have to deal with to promote language development of their students. Ann Raimes (1983: 3) mentions at least two main reasons for teaching writing. Although she was engaged in teaching English as a Second Language, I think that her ideas are valid for classes, where English is taught as a Foreign Language as well. Primarily, she talks about communicative reasons while meeting a new culture. Secondarily, she highlights that writing can work as an important learning tool. More specifically, she says that:

Writing helps our students learn. How? First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students. Second, when our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. (Raimes 1983: 3)
I must agree with Raimes that writing is a powerful learning tool in English. Writing can be used for different purposes, for instance, learning new structures, using vocabulary in a meaningful context, or creating highly communicative texts like messages or letters. Similarly, Harmer (2004) adds that: “being able to write is a vital skill for ‘speakers' of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language. Training students to write thus demands the care and attention of language teachers” (Harmer 2004: 3-4).

To summarize the reasons for developing the skill of writing in English language classes, it can be said that writing is an essential part in the process of learning a foreign language. Writing helps to enhance vocabulary and grammar while it enables the students to produce their own structures and do experiments with the language. The teachers are those ones who should help the students to master the skill of writing and the students themselves should think about the importance of writing in studying a foreign language. I am convinced that students, who are shown that writing for a specific purpose or specific audience is worth doing, will soon get used to the habit of writing. In the following chapter, I would like to explain, why being a good writer is not easy for the students of English.

1.4 Language aspects in writing

Generally, writing well combines several language aspects. If the writer fails in one of these aspects then the text can be obscure or incorrect. Raimes (1983) specifies a set of aspects, which are involved in the production of a piece of writing. These areas are: syntax, grammar, mechanics, organization, word choice, the writer’s process, purpose, and audience. When all these areas are engaged, then a “clear, fluent, and effective communication of ideas” is reached, as it can be understood from the diagram describing the production of a piece of writing presented by Raimes (1983: 6). But to cope with all eight areas concurrently is not easy, that is why I am convinced that writing needs a lot of practice. In the online article “Teaching Activities: Writing”, we can find a similar set of language areas, which are closely connected with creating a correct piece of writing and they are: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, layout conventions, and a range of sentence structure. Apart from accuracy, the writer has to take into account the linkage of information across sentences and paragraphs to develop a topic, appropriate register for the type of
writing, and he/she has to be aware of the conventions in different genres of writing. On the contrary, Harmer (2004: 4) introduces only three aspects that influence a piece of writing. The first aspect is the content (subject matter), the second aspect is the type of writing, for instance, a shopping list, letter, essay, report, or novel and the third aspect is the medium (pen and paper, computer word files, live chat, etc.).

Nevertheless, we must distinguish between two terms: accuracy and fluency of the text. Accuracy is connected with the correctness of the text from grammatical and structural point of view while fluency is aimed at the flow of ideas in the text. Of course, our aim is to teach the students how to produce a text, which is both fluent and accurate, with respect for an intended reader. Andrew Wright (1997) says that: “accuracy and fluency need not be in conflict” Wright (1997: 4). Further, he explains that: “interesting and relevant ideas need to be clearly expressed, and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are part of this” (Wright 1997: 4).

But I think that still a certain number of teachers tend to focus on accuracy more than on fluency. We should realize that overwhelming attention to correctness and accuracy can block the flow of ideas, which may be counterproductive in creating a text. I would like to highlight that the method of process writing enables the students to work on the content of the text first and then to focus on the accuracy, which should lead to the production of both fluent and accurate texts.

1.5 Written exercises

Before the teacher chooses a written exercise, it would be appropriate to think about the goals, which the students are supposed to achieve. Marianne Celce-Murcia (2001) distinguishes between early writing tasks, when the students have to cope with the mechanics of writing and more advanced tasks. According to Celce-Murcia (2001), “more advanced writing tasks which start shifting their goal from the focus on the mechanics of writing to basic process-oriented tasks will need to incorporate some language work at the morphological and discourse level” Celce-Murcia (2001: 211). In other words, when the children manage to write mechanically, they can start with exercises aimed at developing content and accuracy of the text.

A little different approach to writing activities in the English language classroom is provided by Tricia Hedge (1988), who talks about “sentence level reinforcement exercises”, the term introduced by Ron White, as she mentions (Hedge 1988: 7).
Further, Hedge (1988) adds that sentence level reinforcement exercises serve for learning grammar and other new things within the language. Thanks to them, the students can see the progress or the teachers can identify problems (Hedge 1988: 7). Although Hedge (1988) deems sentence level reinforcement exercises important, she prefers exercises that concentrate on activities which train the production of the whole texts with a real communicative purpose (Hedge 1988: 8). I must agree with Hedge that activities involving writing the whole texts are more valuable for language development. I believe that the students will benefit more from writing real things, for instance, letters, postcards, shopping lists, advertisements, or stories because this is a way how to experience writing in a context. That is why I find writing short stories a suitable writing exercise, through which the students practise writing complete and meaningful texts.

1.6 Writing versus speaking

This chapter is aimed at the main differences between writing and speaking. Although Harmer (1994) refers to both speaking and writing as “productive skills” (Harmer 1994: 16), I would like to outline, why the production of a written text must be treated differently in comparison with the production of a spontaneous speech.

Firstly, it is claimed that: “whereas spoken communication operates in the here-and-now world of immediate interaction, writing transcends time and space” (Harmer 2004: 7). Further, as for the participants, Harmer (2004) points out that: “a lot of spoken communication takes places between people who can see each other” while during writing, we cannot see the addressee (Harmer 2004: 7). The addressee can be either known or unknown. What is more, the role of the audience in writing needs to be taken into consideration. That is why Harmer (2004) highlights that a skilled writer manages to realize who he/she is writing to (Harmer 2004: 7).

Another significant difference is connected with the final output of speaking and writing. Harmer (2004) points out that the final product of writing is not usually so “instant”, but the writer has time to plan and change the final output. This special feature of writing is called “the writing process, with its recursiveness and multiple drafting” (Harmer 2004: 8).

To consider these facts, we can say that the product of writing should be more correct, comprehensible, and better developed than the product of speaking with the
slips of the tongue, incomplete sentences, informality features, and a large number of repetitions.

1.7 How to promote writing

It is said that writing well requires setting appropriate conditions. I would like to mention a list of ideas, which was suggested by Blanche Perotta (1994), who says that:

- Writing activities are integrated with reading, listening and speaking within a meaningful social context.
- Writing activities build cooperation and self-esteem and encourage experimentation and risk taking.
- Children have frequent opportunities and long blocks of time to write extended texts.
- Writing is treated as an act of communication, rather than practice or drill language form.
- Children write for their own purposes, about topics that are of personal interest to them, and the teacher shows genuine interest in the ideas expressed.
- Children talk about and reflect on their writing.
- Children receive extensive language input through reading and being read to, as well as through oral and written interactions with the teacher or their peers.
- Children receive feedback about their writing through oral or written interactions with the teacher or their peers. This feedback focuses first and primarily on content and secondarily on writing conventions and language form. (Perotta 1994: 237)

Although Perotta talks primarily about very young learners and second language acquisition, I think that her ideas are valid for teenage learners of English as a Foreign Language as well. To sum up Perotta’s words, the students should be prepared for a forthcoming writing activity. Based on my own teaching experience, I agree with Perotta that other skills provide a rich language source for writing. There is a wide range of pre-writing activities, which help the students to prepare for a certain writing task. For instance, when the students are asked to write a short story, they can read a
similar story, listen to it and then retell it in their own way. I share Perotta’s idea that writing exercises with highly communicative purpose promote better results than drilling exercises. Students’ individual experiences, creative ideas and experimentation within the language should be highly appreciated by the teachers. Later, when a certain text is produced, teachers are supposed to read a text and react to it because feedback provided by teachers and other students play an important role, especially in process writing. For that reasons, I think that the method of process writing, which is studied more deeply in Chapter Two, integrates the above mentioned points in a very good way.

1.8 The teachers’ problems

Some teachers still neglect writing for various reasons. For instance, they complain that writing is difficult for their students to master, because of its complexity, difficult spelling, or grammar. But I think that from the teacher’s viewpoint, feedback and the evaluation of the final output represent the most problematic areas, which teaching writing brings. Let me cite Yuewu Wang, a Chinese teacher of English at Shanghai Maritime University, who talks about the problems the teachers meet while teaching writing:

Writing is a headache for many teachers; they spend considerable time correcting their students’ compositions only to find their corrections and comments ignored. Despite teachers’ hard work, many students’ written English remains non-idiomatic, poorly organized, insufficiently developed, grammatically awkward, devoid of sentence structure variety, and weak in vocabulary usage. (Wang 2004: 24)

The teacher’s amount of time spent on correcting does not correspond to the students’ results and progress. I think that such discrepancy between the teachers’ effort to help and the students’ “poor” results might be frustrating. I am convinced that the imbalance can be surmounted when writing is viewed as process, based on several stages, supported by the mutual teacher/student cooperation during the text creation. When the students are shown how to work with the teacher’s comments, a lot of time
and effort will be saved. I believe that the appropriate way of teacher’s feedback and the students’ motivation are the keys to better writing results.

1.9 The students’ problems

Teachers are not the only complainers about writing. For many students, a writing activity, especially at the text level, can be rather problematic. Let me introduce one of possible reasons, why the students consider writing difficult by citing Harold Rosen (1981):

> The writer is a lonely figure cut off from the stimulus and corrective of listeners. He must be a predictor of the reactions and act on his predictions. He writes with one hand tied behind his back, being robbed of gesture. He is robbed too of the tone of his voice and the aid of clues the environment provides. He is condemned to monologue; there is no one to help out, to fill the silences, put words in his mouth, or make encouraging noises. (Rosen 1981 qtd. by Hedge 1988: 5)

I think that many students “struggle” during writing. Sometimes the writer is “paralyzed” in front of a white sheet of paper not knowing how to start. Peter Elbow says that:

> Most people’s relationship to the process of writing is one of helplessness. First, they can’t write satisfactorily or even at all. Worse yet, their efforts to improve don’t seem to help. It always seems that the amount of effort and energy put into a piece of writing has no relation to the results. (Elbow 1973: 12)

Despite all the complaints by teachers and students, we must do our best to overcome the obstacles. Now, it is logical to ask how to solve the above mentioned problems. The answer might be connected with setting meaningful written tasks, building a writing habit, discussing a text in progress, or positive support by the teachers to make writing less stressful. Finally, I am convinced that only continuous practice will surmount the above mentioned problems.
2 Process Approach

2.1 Definition of process writing

Process writing is one of the methods how to teach writing. Wright (1997) states that: “this is the term applied to the idea of emphasizing the whole craft of writing rather than the production of mistake-free texts for the teacher” (Wright 1997: 6). A similar definition is provided by Raimes (1983), according to which the process approach brings a new way of viewing a written text. The process of writing is in the centre of attention, while the final output becomes less important. Students are shown that writing means development and exploration of new ideas and language forms. The process starts by thinking about the topic, making drafts, changing ideas, rewriting, and reading drafts until the final version is produced. The process involves teacher, who provides the feedback, and students, who train writing and actively cooperate with the teacher and other readers. During the process approach, two main things are necessary. The first one is time for writing and the second one is feedback provided by the teacher on the drafts (Raimes 1997: 10-11).

Today, the term process approach can be viewed in a more general context. Celce-Murcia (2001) talks about the process approach as currently a “dominant trend” in teaching writing (Celce-Murcia 2001: 220). She defines the process approach in these words: “the process approach serves today as an umbrella term for many types of writing courses, each offering a curriculum shaped by other considerations” Celce-Murcia (2001: 220). The courses can be aimed at academic writing or at personal writing. Despite the genre diversity, the courses work according to the principles of process approach. In other words, the students’ written assignments undergo the stages of planning, drafting, receiving feedback from their peers or teachers leading to the stage of editing and writing the final version (Celce-Murcia 2001: 220). Sometimes the whole process is extended by the stage of publishing or presenting a text to an intended reader.

Sarah Hudelson highlights that writing is a “social activity” (Hudelson 1989: 29-30). To be more precise, while the students create a piece of writing, they are allowed to interact with others, especially their teacher and other students. These “face-to-face interactions” happen in the class during the “writing workshop”, the term used by Calkins (1986) as Hudelson (1989: 29-30) mentions. During the writing workshop, the
students are asked to comment other students’ drafts or they ask others to comment their own work. Further, Hudelson (1989) mentions that: “sharing of work in progress invites comments and questions from the listeners/readers, and provides input that the writer may use to make substantive changes” (Hudelson 1989: 30). Therefore, it can be said that writing viewed as a social activity helps to reshape the text before the final version is finished. In this way, writing is not the matter of an individual, or let me say a “lonely” writer, but it becomes a shared activity.

Undoubtedly, writing process is currently a widespread method used in many schools to develop writing skills despite the genre variety. When the students master the mechanics of writing, they can be exposed to process writing. The method of process writing is based on several stages from sketching the first ideas, drafting, to the stage of editing and publishing. The concentration on the accuracy and writing conventions to the end of the process provides the writer a unique opportunity to be devoted to the ideas first. Otherwise, if the writer paid too much attention to accuracy at the very beginning of the process, the flow of ideas would be interfered or blocked. Thus, in the process approach, the writer’s creativity can be expressed in a larger extension.

2.2 Reasons for process writing in teaching

There are many reasons for teaching writing in the method of process writing. As it was outlined in the previous chapter, process writing is a process, through which the writer progresses from the first draft to the final version. For instance, Raimes (1983: 10) explains that:

Student writers in particular need to realize that what they first put down on paper is not necessarily their finished product but just a beginning, a setting out of the first ideas, a draft. They should not expect that the words they put on paper will be perfect right away. A student who is given the time for the process to work, along with the appropriate feedback from readers such as the teacher or other students, will discover new ideas, new sentences, and new words as he plans, writes a first draft, and revises what he has written for a second draft. (Raimes 1983: 10)
Similarly, Harmer (2004) confirms that: “for many years the teaching of writing focused on the written product rather than on writing process. In other words, the students’ attention was directed to the what rather than the how of text construction” (Harmer 2004: 11). That is why Harmer (2001) distinguishes between the process approach and the product approach to teach writing (Harmer 2001: 257).

Here comes the time to show the students that writing does not mean the production of a perfect and polished text once after the first attempt. Here comes the time to show the students that writing can be a very interesting and creative way of expressing ideas and thoughts practised by the stages of planning, drafting, redrafting, leading to the final version. According to Harmer (2004), we can say that drafting and redrafting are essential steps for learning to write successfully (Harmer 2004: 86). Such claim can be supported by Hedge (1988), who believes that: “we need to encourage our students to go through a process of planning, organizing, composing, and revising” (Hedge 1988: 9). What is more, she is convinced that good writers think about the intended reader, the purpose of a text and have a notion about “direction in their writing” (Hedge 1988: 9).

The process approach is based on the sequence of drafts when every draft is aimed at the different language aspects. Firstly, we concentrate on the ideas, and later on grammar, lexis, and other writing conventions. In addition, the students are able to manipulate with their drafts, change their mind while receiving a valuable feedback from the teacher or other readers during the process of writing before their texts are finished. Despite the length of the whole process, I think that these arguments defend the process approach in our classes. Next chapter shows how the teachers can prepare for the writing process.

2.3 Teacher’s preparation before the writing process

Before the teacher starts to apply process writing in the classroom, it would be appropriate to be prepared for this way of work. Among the areas the teachers should be familiar with, Harmer (2004) mentions the following points:

- The timetable according to which the teacher works.
- The flexibility of work from lesson to lesson.
- The amount of work which the students will manage to do in one lesson.
• The number of students the teacher will manage to work individually during the lesson.

• Extra responding time per a student the teacher will have to spend outside the ordinary class (Harmer 2004: 12-13).

It is very important to think about the timetable because as the process approach needs a lot of time, it should be planned and incorporated into the syllabus. The teacher should be able to adapt the planned work in the lessons according to the immediate situation and immediate needs of the students, thus, sometimes the lesson plan has to be changed. Lesson planning is closely influenced by the students themselves, especially their productivity of work. The process approach can be rather problematic in large classes, where individual consultations must be treated in a special way. That is why the teacher will have to spend some extra time with the students outside the ordinary class.

The teacher can influence the process approach in many ways. Celce-Murcia (2001) specifies a general set of areas, through which the teacher can help their students to become successful writers. The areas are:

• Task Description: the teachers inform the students about the goals of the tasks and explain its usefulness.

• Content Description: the teacher shows the students what content would be appropriate for the task.

• Audience Description: the teacher helps the students to understand the intended reader.

• Format Cues: the teacher guides the students to organize the structure of a piece of writing.

• Linguistic Cues: the teacher helps the students with using grammatical structures and suitable vocabulary.

• Spelling and Punctuation Cues: the teacher helps the students work on spelling, work with a dictionary to check accuracy and guide the students how to use right punctuation and capitalization (Celce-Murcia 2001: 211).

Geoffrey Broughton et al. (1980) point out that the teacher is able to adapt the written task in many ways, so that the goals are achieved. The authors mention that the teacher can:

• Control the length of the text.
• Raise the amount of preparation in the class.
• Guide how to form the final text.
• Support students’ mutual cooperation during process writing.
• Permit the editing of a text between drafting and final version.
• Control the complexity of the task.
• Control the amount of time for finishing the text (Broughton et al. 1980: 121).

Further, the authors recommend that: “any combination of these methods can be used to bring the task to the level of the class” (Broughton et al. 1980: 121). I think that there are many ways how the teacher can influence the students’ writing, and it is the teacher who should be aware of these methods.

2.4 The stages of process writing

The method of process writing consists of several stages. Generally, we distinguish four main stages of the process, which are: planning, drafting, editing, and publishing. Different authors, for instance, Judy Davis and Sharon Hill, come with seven stages while Harmer works with a shortened model consisting of four stages.

2.4.1 The first stage of process writing: Planning

Harmer (2004) talks about the first stage of process writing as “planning” because he supposes that experienced writers make plans (Harmer 2004: 4). Harmer (2004) introduces various types of planning and he says that: “for some writers this may involve making detailed notes. For others a few jotted words may be enough. Still others may not actually write down any preliminary notes at all since they may do all their planning in their heads” (Harmer 2004: 4). Further, Harmer (2004) highlights three main areas which influence the planning of a piece of writing, which are:

• The purpose that affects the type of the text, the language and the information.
• The audience that influences the shape of writing (the layout) and the level of formality.
• The content structure that has an impact upon the sequence of facts, ideas, or arguments (Harmer 2004: 4-5).
Apart from the above mentioned areas, Harmer (2004) points out that the genre analysis is “an integral part of the planning stage in a process approach” (Harmer 2004: 86). In other words, the students who write within a certain genre should have a notion of genre constraints. The awareness of the genres is one of the things helping the reader to understand the purpose of the text. It is highly advised to consider the purpose of the text, in other words, to decode the message of the text and recognise the reader, to whom it was intended. Genre, as Harmer (2004) explains, is the term describing “different writing constructions” (Harmer 2004: 17). Further, Harmer (2004) explains that, for instance, prose, poetry, a letter, or an advertisement, are the examples of various genres. But we can find that these genres can be further divided into sub-genres, such as a story is a sub-genre of prose (Harmer 2004: 17). The genre is connected with another important area, which is “the specific choice of vocabulary” within the genre labelled as register (Harmer 2004: 17). Before asking the students to write within a certain genre, we should investigate its text construction connected with the study of the topic, the register, the level of formality labelled as the tone, the length of the sentences, lexical and grammatical cohesive devices, or the sequence of ideas called the coherence of the text. As for short stories, I think that we could analyze the main problem of the story, the sequence of events, the main characters, or the setting. We can ask the students to study the grammatical cohesive devices more deeply, for instance, the use of pronoun and possessive reference, linkers, or the tense agreement. Moreover, I think that we could analyze what makes a short story interesting, or we could aim at how the writer succeeded in expressing the ideas in an economical way. I agree with Harmer that the text analysis is very important for the students because it provides rich background for their further writing. The analysis of various short stories could be used as a pre-writing activity and for that reason it can be integrated into the stage of planning. I am convinced that we must show the students how other authors construct their short stories while we respect our students’ creativity.

From methodological point of view, there are many ways of generating ideas. Harmer (2004: 87) comes with the following methods, through which the planning can be realized. The planning can be done:

- in buzz groups
- by pyramid planning
- by note taking
The buzz group planning means that the students generate ideas together in an informal and fast way. Sometimes the class can be divided into groups, where the students think about the topic and they can write quick notes. Later, this way of generating ideas can be used by the students for individual planning.

Pyramid planning by Hedge is, as Harmer (2004: 87) mentions, “a more elaborative version of the buzz group”. The pyramid planning starts with the student’s individual work, later pair work and it is finished in groups.

Note making is one of powerful ways of planning and Harmer (2004) explains that: “the effective making of notes can contribute to the generation of ideas themselves” (Harmer 2004: 88). On the other hand, he warns us not to exaggerate note making with the students because „the way we make notes is extremely personal affair” Harmer (2004: 88). Further, Harmer (2004: 89) suggests that the teacher should show the students a range of note making and then ask them to find their own way. Mind maps, spidergrams, or a spaghetti approach are the most frequently used ways of making visual notes. The model of a mind map or a spidergram means, as Harmer (2004) describes, that „in this idea-generating model students start with a topic at the centre and then generate a web of ideas from that“ while spaghetti approach is based on connecting interrelated ideas (Harmer 2004: 89). All these activities are very important because students have to contemplate their writing.

But in the methodology, we can find a little different model applied before the stage of drafting. I would like to refer to Davis and Hill (2003: 27-28), who introduce three stages, which were used to enhance writing a notebook. The stages, which are going to be discussed, are: generating, choosing an idea, and developing the idea. I think that these stages can be connected with the stage of planning.

- Generating
  In this stage, the teacher helps the students “find ideas for writing”, as Davis and Hill (2003: 28) explain. The students are helped to think about their ideas. In my opinion, the teacher can facilitate the task by specifying the topic, for instance, by setting key words which have to be used in a short story.

- Choosing an idea
  During this stage, according to Davis and Hill (2003: 28), the children are shown how to choose appropriate ideas which they have already written. The teacher helps students to find which of these ideas seem to be good for further writing and for the readers. It is a kind of preparation for writing for the audience. This step involves
rereading their writing, choosing an idea, or ideas and making decisions among several ideas. I find this step very useful because the students are forced to think about their writing.

- Developing an idea

Davis and Hill (2003: 28) say that during this stage, the writers develop their ideas more deeply. The stage is based on writing more and better. The students are taught to be critical about their writing. They should answer the questions about how much they explored all possible ideas connected to the topic.

Finally, I agree with Harmer’s words that planning is an individual matter. On the other hand, this could lead us to a conclusion that planning is not necessary to teach. But I find showing the students how to plan their writing very important. If the students are exposed to various ways of planning, they can choose the most suitable way of preparation, or they can develop their own strategy. I find Davis and Hill’s model too long by comparison with Harmer’s suggestions. As for writing short stories, I would prefer Harmer’s propositions, which seem to me more practical and easier for working in the classroom. Short story planning is studied more deeply in Chapter 3.4.

2.4.2 The second stage of process writing: Drafting

When the plans are finished, the writer is prepared to move to another stage of process writing labelled as drafting and the first version of a written text, which is labelled as a “draft” (Harmer 2004: 5). It must be emphasized that in process writing, the number of drafts is not set exactly. Harmer (2004) claims that: “a number of drafts may be produced on the way to the final version” (Harmer 2004: 5). Returning to Davis and Hill (2003: 29), the children have an idea of the content now, and it is the time for their first attempt to write the whole text. The writers try to concentrate on the content and the flow of ideas while using the notes made during the planning stage. According to Davis and Hill (2003: 29), drafting is connected with the following areas:

- Reading prepared notes and using these ideas in the draft.
- Organizing the ideas by using flowcards and other graphic organizers.
- Realizing what to express or focusing on new ideas.
The drafts can be written individually at school or at home. I think that the students should mind that a draft is not a finished output and so it can be full of mistakes, strokes, or notes. As it was mentioned by Harmer (2005: 5), more than one draft can be written, which causes that drafting can be really time-consuming.

2.4.3 The third stage of process writing: Editing

The next step in process writing is editing. According to Harmer (2004: 5), it is the time when the draft is finished and the writer rereads it to find out possible mistakes connected both with the content and accuracy. Further, Harmer (2004: 5) specifies possible problems within a text, for instance, unclear order of information, and ambiguous or confusing parts of the text. He also says that: “more skilled writers tend to look at issues of general meaning and overall structure before concentrating on detailed features such as individual words and grammatical accuracy” (Harmer 2004: 5). The text is often read by another person, usually a teacher, who is involved in reacting to the text (see Chapter 2.6). In other words, the teacher comments and suggests possible changes and he/she participates in reshaping a piece of writing. But the draft can be read by other readers, for instance, classmates, who can also become a valuable source of feedback. Then, we talk about peer review (see Chapter 2.6.3). This kind of help from outside may be considered as cheating, but in process writing, it plays an important role. The students must be trained how to work in this way.

Davis and Hill (2003: 29) introduce the stage of revising and crafting before the stage of editing, whereas Harmer includes reflecting and revising straight into the editing stage. Revising and crafting are aimed at the improvement of the quality of the text including the content, or the organization of the text (Davis and Hill 2003: 29). On the other hand, editing is, according to Davis and Hill (2003: 29), engaged with writing conventions like: spelling, grammar, and punctuation in order to assure that the text is accurate and comprehensible.
2.4.4 The fourth stage of process writing: The final version and Publishing

The final version is the output of process writing, which is prepared for the readers. Harmer (2004) says that the final version “may look considerably different from both the original plan and the first draft, because things have changed in the editing process” (Harmer 2004: 5).

Davis and Hill (2003: 30) introduce the stage of publishing, which is closely connected with the final version of the text. During this stage, the students learn how to present their work to the public. Decision-making in the field of artwork, the media of presentation (handwriting or printing), or even reading the text for the audience are closely connected with this stage (Davis and Hill 2003: 30). The teacher should outline some ways of publishing and discuss them with the students. The way of publishing can be highly individual matter and what is more, the students might be invited to develop their own ways of publishing to make the text visually attractive for the reader. Creativity, independence and self-expression are essential for this stage. The final versions can be presented orally by reading in the classrooms, displayed in the library, or broadcast world-wide. Wright (1997: 6) claims that teachers should display their students’ work as much as possible, for instance, in the form of e-mails, books, crazy books, posters, or cards.

However, Harmer (2004: 5) considers his own description of process writing unsatisfying. He explains that this linear approach does not describe the way of writing in which most writers work. He prefers to label the writing process as “recursive”. Recursive way of writing signifies the situation, when the writer re-plans, re-drafts, and re-edits. The main reason for this way of work is connected with the writer’s change of opinion (Harmer 2004: 5-6). Hedge (1990) agrees that the linear model of process writing is too simple and she also thinks that writing is “a recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of replanning in between” (Hedge 1990: 21). The following diagram (see Fig 1) illustrates process writing as a recursive wheel.
Nevertheless, the research done into the field of process writing outlines the possible ways of the text creation. I consider the linear approach very simple, and based on my own experience as a writer I can say that the recursive version prevails.

Finally, it can be concluded that it is rather difficult to describe the way of text creation because it is a very individual matter. The process approach, although currently the most common approach to teach writing, is only one of the methods used to teach writing developed in the last century. For instance, Raimes (1983: 6-9) provides us with a brief outline of significant approaches, which were developed during the twentieth century. These are: The Controlled-to-Free Approach, The Free-Writing Approach, The Paragraph-Pattern Approach, The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach or The Communicative Approach. Raimes (1983) herself says that: “we will seldom find a classroom where a teacher is so devoted to one approach as to exclude all others” (Raimes 1983: 11). I think that it would be appropriate to cite Celce-Murcia (2001) who says that: “it is important to recognize that as each new way of teaching writing evolves, the earlier focus does not necessarily disappear” (Celce-Murcia 2001: 221). Nevertheless, many teachers work with mixed ability classes, thus I would like to mention eclectic approach, which “encompasses a diversity of techniques and activities”, as Angela L. Carrasquillo (1994: 126) says. In other words, this term can be understood as a combination of the most useful parts of all methods and approaches.
2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the process approach

The advantages of the process approach are several. Firstly, I would mention the fact that the writer can change his/her intentions and plans during different stages of the process. Secondly, the writer can concentrate on the content and ideas first and later on the accuracy. Thirdly, the process approach trains the writer to think about the reader, which makes writing meaningful and communicative. The stage of publishing brings another dimension, when a text becomes a piece of art. I am convinced that cooperation among the students during editing is another valuable feature of process writing. Finally, for the students, process writing means that they have to be creative, independent and reliable during their work to become successful writers.

On the other hand, process writing has several drawbacks. I think that the teachers should be acquainted with problems which could appear during process writing. Harmer (2004) points out that: “process writing is not an easy option for students or teachers. Quite apart from it taking up time, it takes up space (especially in a paper-driven world) and can be problematic for the more disorganised student” (Harmer 2004: 13). Further, process writing can be “quite a long process,” which is called “the process trap”, as Harmer (2004: 12) stresses. Wright (1997) thinks that process writing is “a good idea”, nevertheless he points out that: “there is a danger that we will bore children if we make them go through all these steps every time” (Wright 1997: 6).

We should realize that writing process needs time and space. Although process writing has a lot of pros, I think that the teachers should be prepared for the possible problems to avoid stress, misunderstanding, overcorrecting and frustration.

2.6 The ways of reacting to a text in process writing

Generally, the ways of reacting to the text are reckoned to be the most discussed and difficult areas in writing process. Process writing stresses “invention, revision, and formative feedback” (Matsuda and Silva 2001, p. xv qtd. in “Evaluating teacher feedback in writing classes”) allowing the students to experience the recursiveness of writing. In the process approach, the teacher enters the process of writing during various stages, which means that the teacher’s interventions should be more useful for the writer. It is said by Raimes (1983) that the teacher’s response is valuable for the student, when it is provided during the creation of the text. On the contrary, when the
teacher reacts only to a finished paper, he/she has no influence upon the content, form, or accuracy, which is, as Raimes (1983) says, “useless time” (Raimes 1983: 139).

The teacher’s role changes during writing process and consequently the way of his/her reaction. Harmer (2004: 12) is convinced that in the process approach, the teachers will probably need to change their usual way of feedback. Hedge (1988) shares a similar opinion and she thinks that: “traditional focus on error-correction by the teacher needs review and modification into a range of activities involving students as well as teachers” (Hedge 1988: 10).

Although process writing is considered as student-centred, the teacher’s role is still of great importance. When the teacher provides feedback, his/her work involves several roles, as Harmer (2004: 109) says. More precisely, Harmer (2004: 109) identifies that the teacher works in a position of an assistant, a resource, the audience, an evaluator, and an editor. To be more precise, the role of an assistant means that the teacher helps the students during their work. The role of a resource is based on providing information or guidance. The teacher is usually the first person, who reads the draft. Then we can talk about the role of the audience. When the teacher assesses the text and the progress, he/she becomes an evaluator. And finally, the role of an editor involves selecting and rearranging the text for publishing. To consider such a variety of the roles, I think that giving feedback in process writing is a difficult area of the teacher’s work.

There are a few basic principles for giving feedback, which were set by Raimes (1983: 142-143). The first principle says that before the teacher starts to react, he/she should read the whole text without responding or correcting. The second principle is based on searching for the strengths and weaknesses of the text while the strengths should be highlighted. According to the third principle, the students should be acquainted with the editing symbols used by the teacher. The fourth principle talks about the importance of the teacher’s own strategy of dealing with errors and the last principle points out that the responder’s task is to outline the ways of further improvement instead of judging the quality of a text.

I think that the teacher must think about the way of reacting to the students’ work and explain the students his/her expectations. In the process approach, according to Harmer (2004: 108), we distinguish between two terms: responding and correcting. Responding is connected with the content and the design of the text while correcting is aimed at accuracy including syntax, concord, collocations, and word choice.
Wright (1997: 7) recommends us to apply a different approach when we respond to the first and the second draft. As for the first draft, Wright (1997) suggests that we should analyze “freshness of the main ideas, clarity and expression, main sequencing for excitement and sense, how well the story grips the reader’s interest, richness of detail (using descriptions that appeal to several senses), richness of the ‘sound’ of the language” Wright (1997: 7). In the second draft, Wright (1997) recommends to concentrate on „grammar, syntax, punctuation and spelling” (Wright 1997: 7).

2.6.1 The ways of responding

In the process approach, the teacher’s main goal is to help the student to progress successfully from the first draft to another, when setting questions, making suggestions, and indicating the possible changes create the core of the teacher’s feedback. Harmer (2004) suggests asking questions like: “Why have you done it in this way?” or “What do you want the reader to understand here?” to let the students make their own conclusions (Harmer 2004: 113). Similarly, Raimes (1983: 143) believes that a kind of paraphrase, praise, question, or suggestion is more beneficial for reshaping the student’s text than just saying “Good.” I agree with both Harmer and Raimes that such a way of reaction promotes independent thinking and decision-making. On the other hand, Harmer (2004: 113) states that the teacher must be more direct or strict in responding, especially if the student fails to progress. Then, a certain kind of a command, for instance, “I would do it like this” seems to be a suitable way of a response (Harmer 2004: 112). Hedge (1990: 10) highlights a positive reaction to strong points in a text.

Among the ways how to respond to a text, Harmer (2004: 112-115) mentions: responding to work-in-progress, a written comment, post-task statements, taped comments, or electronic comments.

- **Responding to work-in-progress**

To be more precise, responding to work-in-progress means that the teacher reacts to the text at the moment of its creation in the class (Harmer 2004: 112). I believe that such an immediate face-to-face reaction is a very effective way of feedback, when the teacher and the student talk about a draft, which is just being created. Raimes (1983: 145) confesses that in some cases, “one-to-one conference” is the only possibility how to uncover the writer’s message. Moreover, the conferences can be held not only
during the class, but before and after it. Of course, responding to work-in-progress can be realized not only orally, but through a computer screen in a language laboratory as well.

- **Responding by a written comment**

This way of response is used when the students give the teacher a draft and the teacher writes a comment. Harmer (2004) stresses that: “it is always a good idea to write down what we think is good in the students’ work” (Harmer 2004: 113). Again, setting questions or expressing opinions are preferred to commands.

- **Post-task statements**

This special way of feedback is provided at the end of a written task, when the teacher expresses a final comment. To make the statements more effective for the future progress, the students are asked to write their own suggestions about the possible changes in their next writing.

- **Taped comments**

Taped comments are used instead of face-to-face responses, when the teacher is limited by the paper and wants to be more personal and extensive (Harmer 2004: 114). Based on my own teaching experience, it is a very unusual way of feedback, which I have not used so far.

- **Electronic comments**

Electronic comments show how modern media can be used in communication between the teacher and the student over a text. Thanks to a special programme, the teacher is able to respond to the text directly while the students integrate these comments into their drafts. Electronic comments can serve both for providing responses and for correction purposes (Harmer 2004: 114). I agree with Harmer that this is a time-saving way of work both for the teacher and the students although Harmer (2004: 114) stresses that electronic communication should not be exaggerated because of heavy “e-mail traffic”.

Finally, I think that the main goal of feedback is to set a helpful and relaxed way of communication between the teacher and the student leading to an improved piece of writing.
2.6.2 The ways of correcting

Radecki and Swales (1988) conclude that far better results in helping students write better are achieved when the teacher pays attention to the contextual meaning (qtd. in Cindy Gunn and John Raven 1). On the contrary, it is believed by Fathman and Whalley (1990) that: “grammar and content feedback, whether given alone or simultaneously, positively affect rewriting” (qtd. in Gunn and Raven 2).

To study the importance of correcting in the process approach, it might seem that it plays a minor role, but I think that we cannot let our students publish a text with errors. When the students want to present their writing to the audience, the text must be grammatically correct and that is why the teachers must help the students to correct. Raimes (1983: 153) confirms that presenting a text to a reader is a good motive to minimize the occurrence of mistakes. Correcting, which is also called proofreading, does not mean the same as responding. In the online article “Responding to Writing”, it is said that proofreading occurs before the text is published and it is aimed at writing conventions including grammar, punctuation, spelling, or formatting.

There are many possibilities how we can correct a text. Harmer (2004: 110-112) mentions seven methods of correcting which are: selective correction, using marking scales, using correction symbols, reformulation, referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book, ask me, and remedial teaching.

- **Using selective correction**
  It is a way how to avoid excessive correcting. It means that we do not correct every mistake, but we concentrate on one or two problems. Before the teachers start to use selective correction, Harmer (2004: 110) recommends the teachers to inform the students about such an approach in advance.

- **Marking scales**
  Marking scales are used for correcting various language areas separately. In other words, the students are marked for grammar, vocabulary, coherence and cohesion of the text, so that they could identify strong and weak points in their texts exactly. The teachers usually work with “marks out of 10” for each category (Harmer 2004: 110).

- **Correction symbols**
  By using a certain symbol, the teacher helps students to identify a mistake, which they should be able to correct by themselves. Students need to receive a list of symbols with clear explanation and examples in advance. Harmer (2004) introduces that: “there
is no set list of symbols” and he says that different textbooks or teachers use their own concepts (Harmer 2004: 111). Nevertheless, Harmer (2004: 111) introduces a list of the most frequently used symbols. I chose only some of them to provide a short example:

- **S** - A spelling error
- **WW** - Wrong word
- **γ** - Something has been left out
- **WO** - A word order mistake
- **P** - Punctuation mistake
- **T** - Wrong verb tense
- **G** - A grammatical mistake
- **C** - Concord mistake
- **{}** - Something is not necessary

**Reformulation**

It is another tool of correction, through which the teacher shows a possible way of writing more precisely. The comparison done by a student is highly valuable, especially in drafting and redrafting stages of the writing process.

**Referring students to a dictionary or a grammar book**

This means that the student, who was reminded, where the mistake was, tries to find a solution to the problem in a grammar book or a dictionary on his/her own.

**Ask me**

“Ask me” is a kind of a face-to-face interaction, when the teacher and the student discuss a problem together. It is really beneficial, especially if the teacher fails to explain the problem in a written form.

**Remedial teaching**

This technique is applied when the same mistake occurs among more students in the class. More specifically, the teacher presents an example of a wrong structure, sentence, or paragraph in front of the whole class while the students are encouraged to solve the problem and provide suitable changes. It is advised not to betray the author of the exemplified structure to avoid his/her frustration.

This chapter, which was aimed at the ways of correction, showed that there is a wide range of correction techniques. I believe that the most important thing in making correction useful is a careful explanation of its purpose and the impact upon the text. The students must know how to work with the teacher’s way of correction and what they are expected to do with it.
2.6.3 Other ways of reacting to a written text

Apart from the types of responding and correcting described in the previous chapter, there are other alternatives, how to deal with commenting on a text, for instance: checklists, peer review and self-editing/self-correcting.

- **Checklists**
  
  Raimes (1983: 147) mentions that checklists can serve both for editing and correcting purposes. Checklists are designed in the form of questions, instructions, content analysis tasks, or simplified points. For instance, “Which sentence expresses the main idea?” or “Main idea” are two versions pointing to the same language area (Raimes 1983: 147).

- **Peer review**
  
  Peer review is, according to Harmer (2004), “a valuable element in the writing process” (Harmer 2004: 115). It is based on the idea of the students’ mutual collaboration during responding or correcting. In other words, students themselves react to their classmates’ work. Nevertheless, this is not an easy option, because the students need the teacher’s guidance how to respond. Even Harmer (2004: 117) admits that: “peer review is not problem-free” (Harmer 2004: 117).

- **Self-editing**
  
  One of the main things the students need to become good writers is „to develop the ability to read their own writing and to examine it critically” (Raimes 1983: 149). The method of **self-editing** is designed to promote independence during editing and correcting. Raimes (1983: 149-150) suggests five brief instructions, how to guide the students to self-edit, which are:

1. Students who write a first draft are told to concentrate on the content because grammar is important during other drafts. If someone is not sure about correct spelling, he/she uses a question mark to return to the word later.
2. Students are asked to leave a text for a while and reread it after several days. Rereading facilitates seeing weak points in the text, for instance, incoherence, incomplete sentences, missing words, spelling, and grammatical mistakes.
3. Students are encouraged to proofread the whole text by pointing at each word with a pencil.
4. The teacher should be mindful of showing the students how to work with dictionaries or grammar reference books.
5. Students should have enough time for using checklists, rereading and handling with dictionaries.

Finally, it can be claimed that feedback is an important part of the process approach implemented by various methods. As for individual stages of the process approach, the teacher’s way of reacting to the first draft usually deals with the contextual point of view while writing conventions and grammar accuracy are checked in the course of other drafts. On the other hand, I think that we must take into account the main aim of feedback, which is to move student’s writing forward.

3. Stories

3.1 Stories in our lives

Stories are part of our lives since the childhood. “Stories are told to children all over the world. Most children recognize that a story is about to be told when they hear “Once there was…” or “Once upon a time…” (Dafne Gonzales 1998: 14). Apart from this, stories are a very useful tool in learning languages. Eleanor Watts (2006: 6), who has rich experience in the field of using stories in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, is convinced that: “as stories are essential to the learning of the mother tongue, they are also invaluable to children learning a second language” (Watts 2006: 6). She explains that stories provide “a meaningful context” and “new language makes sense when it is used in real situations” (Watts 2006: 6). Further, motivation is mentioned among other advantages because stories are enjoyable and they have “a theme that enables the teacher to explore popular primary topics”, where new language makes sense unlike ordinary drilling exercises (Watts 2006: 6).

As for writing individual stories, Watts (2006) highlights several advantages. Firstly, she thinks that: “writing stories individually gives children an opportunity to use language we have taught in an integrated way.” Secondly, she thinks that children like to express their thoughts, and thirdly, she says that: “if you display finished stories on the wall or in little books, other children can read and enjoy them. Writing for an audience motivates children to do their best” (Watts 2006: 76).
Undoubtedly, students are unconsciously familiar with the discourse of stories (Gonzales 1998: 14) and this basic assumption helped me decide to use a short story genre to enhance my students’ written performances.

3.2 Definition of short story

A short story is a kind of “fictional narrative”, as said in the online source “Narrative writing-Writing a story”, being written to amuse other people. The writer’s main aim should be to elicit the reader’s eagerness to read.

As any other genre, short story has its specific features. According to Cathy Kennedy and Dennis G. Jerz (“Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 1), a short story:

- Gets off to a fast start.
- Generally has a limited number of characters and scenes.
- Starts as close to the conclusion as possible.
- Frequently deals only with one problem.
- Uses only the detail necessary for understanding the situation.
- Usually covers just a short time period.

I think that Wright (1997) provides us with a very clear and straightforward definition of short stories and he says that: “they have a beginning, a problem, an emotion, an action, and an end” (Wright 1997: 5).

3.3 The craft of story-making

Of course, the research was done into the field of story-making, but there is no exact recipe how to write. I think that each writer has his/her own way of writing and that is why it can be said that there are as many ways of story-making as writers. Wright (1997: 5) mentions the fact that some teachers are afraid of creating stories with their students because of the students’ limited knowledge of language, especially, when they are beginners. But he is not sceptical and provides some encouraging examples of very simple stories which even beginners manage to create. Here is one of his examples: “Big…dog…small…cat…run…jump…tree” (Wright 1997: 5). In this
simple example, a set of single words generates the whole story, and what is more, “the story is creative and fluent in the ideas conveyed” as Wright (1997: 5) explains.

But more advanced students are capable of creating longer stories, with more details, attractive plots and interesting solutions. Wright (1997) claims that for the students, it is less demanding to create an “imaginary story with limited language than it is to describe real experiences” (Wright 1997: 5). In the online article “How to write a short story the creative way”, it is claimed that: “writing short story is an extremely creative process, and it is important to let creativity flow” (1). Nevertheless, it would be appropriate to investigate the craft of story-making and follow some basic rules.

1) How to plan a short story

If we want our students to create a short story, we should let them experience short stories written by other writers. Watts (2006) points out that: “even Shakespeare stole most of his plots from other people!” (Watts 2006: 7). Of course, we do not want our students to copy or steal ideas from other authors, but style analysis is an important step of the preparation stage, as it was said by Harmer (see Chapter 2.4.1). As for writing stories, Harmer (2004) recommends to make the students think about: „how should a story start, what kind of a resolution should it have, etc.” (Harmer 2004: 88). Similarly, Wright (1997) suggests devoting some time to “oral story-making” before we start with the written form (Wright 1997: 5).

Before the first draft of a short story is on the paper, the writer usually devotes some time to planning. Wright (1997: 22) says that during planning, the writer thinks about developing the sequence of events in the story. At that point, the writer considers the beginning of the story, or the way how to attract the reader’s attention. The way of describing people and places becomes an important part of planning because it can make the story either interesting or boring. But planning also means the introduction of the main characters, the problems the main characters face and the way in which the main characters deal with the problems. Finally, the writer has to plan the climax of the story leading to the final solution, which is either a happy ending or a tragedy. In the following lines, there are some useful tips how to plan a story, which are as follows:

- **Making lists**: According to Kennedy and Jerz, making lists is connected with outlining the main character(s), plot, or an emotional tone in a few words at random (“Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 1).
• **Clustering**: During clustering, the writer chooses an important word in the story, writes this word in the middle of the page around which he/she writes any association. Then the words which seem to be connected are linked together (Kennedy and Jerz: 1).

• **Particularizing**: Wright (1997: 23) mentions that through word webs, the story is visualized, which helps the writer to improve the text. Particularizing is based on the assumption that a picture of a place, a main character, or an event, which the writer has in mind, should not be too general. On the contrary, the writer is invited to develop as many details as possible. The writer focuses on the description of senses, feelings, or ideas using his/her own imagination to invent very colorful images even if the language is rather limited.

2) **A catchy first paragraph**

The first sentence or a paragraph is the key how to “catch the reader’s attention”. So “the unusual, the unexpected, an action, or a conflict” are the ways how to engage the reader’s attention (Kennedy and Jerz: 2). In the following example, it can be seen, what kind of a sentence is supposed to follow the above mentioned suggestions: “*The neighbour behind us practiced scream therapy in his shower almost every day.*” Such an opening elicits the reader’s curiosity to know more by asking questions like: “*Who is this guy who goes in his shower every day and screams?*” followed by another question: “*Why does he do that?*” On the contrary, a sentence: “*I heard my neighbor through the wall.*” sounds rather boring and uninteresting, as Kennedy and Jerz explain („Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 2). Therefore, such a beginning is not satisfying although it was written correctly.

This means that the students have to think not only about the correctness of their text, but first of all, they have to be attentive to the content of the text and the ways of expressing their ideas. The students should be trained how to make their texts attractive since the first sentence.

3) **Developing characters**

As short stories work with limited space, the number of characters is also limited. According to Kennedy and Jerz, the characters that are introduced in a short story should be the whole personalities („Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative
Writers”: 2). In other words, the writer works with a complex picture of the characters although he/she does not reveal everything about them to the reader.

Further, Kennedy and Jerz introduce a list of details, which includes the information about the character’s: name, age, job, ethnicity, appearance, residence, favourite colour, friends, favourite food, faults, phobias, pets, religion, hobbies, single or married, children, temperament, something hated, secrets, strong memories, any illnesses, etc. Nevertheless, for the reader, only four areas are essential to be acquainted with. These areas are: appearance, action, speech and thought. Appearance description helps the reader to visualize the character, action helps us to understand what kind of character we meet, speech develops the character as a person, and thought uncovers the character’s innermost thoughts, memories, fears, or hopes (“Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 3).

4) Choosing the point of view

It is important to decide from what perspective the story will be narrated. The point of view influences how the story will be viewed by the reader. In the article “Short stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”, it is explained that there exist three possibilities, which are: the first, second, or third person narrator (3). The writer can narrate the story very subjectively, which means that he/she is involved in a story, or the writer just tells about the events objectively, which means to describe what others do.

When the writer uses the first person point of view, the story is narrated from “I” perspective. To understand it better, the narrator identifies himself/herself with the main character and the main protagonist is drawn into the plot directly in this way. The reader gets very close to the main character sharing the character’s thoughts and feelings. As it is easy to write from „I” perspective, the first person narrator is suitable for beginner writers (Kennedy and Jerz “Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 3).

The second person narrator turns directly to the reader, which means directly to “you“. Kennedy and Jerz explain that the reader becomes a witness or a participant of the events in this way („Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 4). I think it is a good way how to attract the reader’s interest to read more through the moments of direct experiences.
The third person narrator enables to describe what the third person “he”, “she”, or “it” does in the story. The third person perspective can be either omniscient or limited. Omniscient narrator reveals all information about all characters in the story while a limited narrator develops only one character’s point of view. (Yourke qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 4).

5) A meaningful dialogue

Kennedy and Jerz explain that a dialogue is “what your characters say to each other (or to themselves)” (“Short Stories: 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”: 4). The dialogues are integrated into the text by the means of direct speech, thanks to which the reader enters the events in the story. The narrator provides a lively and dramatic picture of the scenes in this way.

Direct speech involves the application of certain rules, which in process writing can be examined or corrected during the stage of editing. The sentence with direct speech consists of two parts, the first of which is created by the speaker’s actual words and the second part, which is labelled as a reporting clause (“Punctuation of direct speech”: 1). Hedge (1990: 120) provides us with a short summary of the rules for direct speech:

a. The words which are spoken actually are put inside inverted commas.

b. Spoken words must be separated from the reporting words, for instance, *he said, she asked* etc. by the means of punctuation marks like a comma or a question mark.

c. The punctuation marks are included inside the inverted commas.

d. When the speakers change their turns, there should be a new line or a paragraph.

Here are some examples of direct speech written in a correct way taken from the online article “Punctuation of direct speech” (1).

- He said, “Good morning!”
- “It’s a lovely day,” she replied.

6) Setting

Kennedy and Jerz talk about the importance of setting. Setting is a characterization of time, location, context, and atmosphere. In addition to details, it is
advised to describe two or more senses (“Short Stories: 10 tips for Novice Creative Writers”; 6).

I would start with the description of setting during the stage of planning in process writing, when the students have time to think about the details. The method of particularizing or webbing can be used here. Of course, beginners will not be able to provide too many details. On the other hand, it is a suitable way how to promote independent work while using dictionaries to enlarge the stock of vocabulary.

7) The Plot

“A plot is a series of events deliberately arranged so as to reveal their dramatic, thematic, and emotional significance.” (Janet Burroway qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 6). In other words, Kennedy and Jerz explain that it is a storyline which can be developed by the means of:

- Explosion. A thrilling, stirring event or a problem attracting the reader’s attention.
- Conflict. A character is in a conflict with the external world or the internal self.
- Exposition. Information about the character’s background helping to see character in the context.
- Complication. An obstacle that the main character has to overcome to achieve the objectives.
- Transition. The paragraphs or scenes should be linked together, by the means of an image, symbol, or a dialogue.
- Flashback. It helps the reader to return to the past, for instance, to an event that happened before the short story actually happens.
- Climax. This is one of the most thrilling points when the story culminates.
- Falling action. To release tension after the story reached its climax, the events are calmed down.
- Resolution. In this part, the writer provides the solution to the conflict (“Short Stories. 10 Tips for Novice Creative Writers”; 6-7).
8) Conflict and Tension

It is claimed that conflict is the basic element of fiction because only a trouble is what the readers are interested in (Janet Burroway qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 7). Further, the conflict causes tension and the tension arises at the moment when the main character stands against some internal, or external forces, or conditions. There is a variety of conflicts, for instance, the main character stands against another character, against the society, against nature etc. (Kennedy and Jerz: 7).

9) Crisis or Climax

To identify crisis in the story, it would be appropriate to use Jerome Sterns’ words that: “the crisis may be a recognition, a decision or a resolution” (qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 7). According to Janet Burroway, crisis is “the moment the reader has been waiting for” (qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 8). In other words, it is a turning moment in the story.

10) Finding a Resolution

Resolution of the conflict comes at the end of the story. It is said that in a short story, it is not easy to write a complete resolution. According to Yourke (qtd. in Kennedy and Jerz: 8), the solution can be:

- Open. It means that the reader determines the meaning of the resolution.
- Resolved. It is a very clear resolution provided by the writer.
- Parallel to Beginning. Resolution is very similar to the beginning.
- Monologue. It is based on the main character’s comment.
- Dialogue: The characters talk to each other.
- Literal Image. Setting or aspect of setting is used to uncover the solution.
- Symbolic Image. A detail is used to symbolize the meaning.

The craft of story writing involves many areas to master. On the other hand, the teachers should not worry to write stories with their students. Writing short story in the method of process writing seems to be a good combination because process writing enables the students to plan the story, reread it, change its content, get feedback from the teacher, edit it, and correct before the final version is born. Maybe, some teachers would argue that it is not possible to teach process writing and writing short story
concurrently, but I think that it is possible. Even Harmer (2004) talks about the activities which are “a blend of genre study and process sequences” and “sometimes they are more heavily weighted towards the one, sometimes to the other” (Harmer 2004: 86).

From time to time, some fears might appear, for instance, the students do not have enough vocabulary or they have not mastered all grammatical areas yet. Despite the students’ lack of vocabulary or some gaps in the grammatical rules, their stories can be well developed, creative and interesting. When the task is brought to the students’ level, I believe that the results must be satisfactory.
Practical Part

The practical part of this thesis is based on action research conducted from November 2008 to April 2009, during which I concentrated on practising writing short stories based on five key words in the method of process writing. The key words were chosen from the textbook Open Doors 2 and Open Doors 3 to keep the connection between the project and our syllabus.

The main aim of the project was to study whether the method of process writing would improve writing short stories based on five key words, with the special attention paid to the correct application of the key words within the whole text. I studied how the students used the key words in their first drafts and how their stories changed to the final versions during the writing process. I also investigated how the method of process writing worked during the lessons. Further, I was interested in the most suitable ways of feedback for the students in the target group and finally, how the students evaluated process writing. To measure data in a larger context, I compared two groups of nine-grade students. The target group underwent the research during a six-month period while the controlled group, taught by a colleague of mine, followed their common syllabus.

At the beginning of the research, both groups were given a questionnaire in which the students also wrote a short paragraph about their last weekend. At the end of the project, both groups were asked to write another short story. Moreover, the target group was asked to fill in the final questionnaire, the results of which are included in the practical part (see Chapter 16). The students from the target group wrote approximately one story per two or three weeks. When the research was finished, the students were asked to hand in a self-published book of seven short stories, which was the final output of this long-term project. The final versions of all seven stories are included in Appendix I.

I have mentioned previously that the students wrote short stories based on five key words. As it was said in Chapter 1.3, writing reinforces not only vocabulary, but other new language structures as well. That is why I wanted to practise vocabulary in a meaningful context in accordance with Chapter 1.5, where it is talked about exercises aimed at writing the whole texts. I followed Wright’s recommendation from Chapter 3.3 that creating imaginary stories with limited language is less demanding than describing real life experiences. For that reason I asked my students to create fictional
stories based on their imagination. In Chapter 2.3, it is mentioned that the teacher can control the length of the text. I decided to limit the length of the stories from about fifty to one hundred words for several reasons. The first reason was the fact that my students were beginners in the field of short story writing. The second reason was the fact that I had to work with a group of nineteen students, which meant a lot of responding and correcting. And the third reason was the amount of work because I did not want my students, who had to prepare for their entrance examination, overload with work.

4. School description

The school where I conducted my research is called ZŠ Křižná, which is located in the town of Valašské Meziříčí. With its one thousand pupils, ZŠ Křižná is the biggest of six basic schools in the town. The school is attended by the children from the catchment area and from the surrounding villages. It is divided into two grades, the first grade is attended by the children from the first year to the fifth year, and the second grade is for the pupils from the sixth year to the ninth year.

In the school year 2007/2008, the basic school started to follow the “School Educational Program”, which was based on the “General Educational Framework”. According to the School Educational Program, English language is taught from the first year in one lesson per week. From the third year, the pupils have three lessons of English per week obligatory. There are also English conversational lessons, which are included in a compulsory subject for seven graders. Nevertheless, the students from the target group followed the Public School Curriculum, which meant that they started to study English in the fourth grade. At the time when my research was conducted, all the teachers had master’s degree, so they were fully qualified and experienced teachers. Nevertheless, English language was a different case because it was taught by the teachers, who did not study English Language Teaching in any bachelor’s or master’s program at university, except for one teacher. I have been teaching English language since 1998 and most of my teaching load is connected with the pupils from the age of nine to the age of fifteen.
5. The description of the target group

The students from the target group were in their last year of the basic school and most of them wanted to study at various kinds of secondary schools. The target group consisted of nineteen students from two classes, class IX.A and class IX.B. To be more precise, there were five boys and one girl from class IX.A and four boys and nine girls from class IX.B. A new student started to attend this group at the beginning of the second term, but I did not include her into the research although she started to write.

The choice of the target group was influenced by several circumstances. The first one was the fact that the written performances of the target group were not satisfactory, and they did not correspond to the expected level of knowledge, which should have been A2 (elementary), according to the Common European Framework of Reference. This means that the students are able to write short simple notes and a message, or they can write a simple personal letter. On the other hand, I am convinced that nine-grade students should manage to write a short story at the length from fifty to one hundred words. When I asked the students to incorporate five familiar words into a text, the results were not satisfactory. Here is a rewritten example, which influenced my decision to start this long-term project.

The key words: cucumber, hungry, eat, dinner, quickly

“Green grasshopper was hungry. Hungry is very bad. It found in fridge some cucumber and now eating it on dinner. It is quickly eating and it is not now hungry. She is sick now and must go to doctor. Grasshopper don’t like doctor and she does not like cucumbers. But she eat pills and she is O.K.”

This example shows that the writer had an idea of the story. The text has the basic features of a short story, which are: the main character, problem, plot, climax, and resolution, which, I think, is the strong point of this text. The main character is the grasshopper, which has to solve the problem because it is hungry. It tries to solve the problem by a quick dinner, but it gets sick. A new problem arises and it is solved by seeing the doctor, who prescribes some pills to it. The story is a happy ending because the grasshopper is well again.
As for the key words, the text failed. The noun *cucumber* was used without an indefinite article and in a sentence with wrong word order. In the second case, the noun *cucumber* was correct. The adjective *hungry* was correct in the first case, it was incorrect in the second case because the student used it as a noun and it was used correctly in the third case. The verb *eat* was used as a verb, but it failed because of the tenses. The noun *dinner* was not used with the correct preposition, and the adverb *quickly* was not used in the correct position in the sentence. The length of the text was appropriate to the limit. To sum it up, the key words were incorrect seven times out of ten cases, in which the key words appeared in the story. In addition, the writer had problems with the linkage of single sentences. Apart from this, there were serious problems with grammar areas like word order, articles, tenses, and spelling. In other words, the story had to be reshaped if it were presented to the reader. That is why I decided to improve writing performances of my nine-grade students and I preferred a long-term activity with a final output. I have decided to develop an exercise based on writing short stories with the key words from the textbook, and I chose the method of process writing because this stage model offers a lot of ways how to improve a text.

6. **Teacher’s preparation before the project**

   As I mentioned in the theoretical part, process writing can bring a different way of work for the teacher. Although the teacher does not stand in the centre during the lesson, his/her role is very important because the teacher is the person who has to plan, assist, or guide. The method of process writing was new to me, that is why I studied the topic in the literature and I was prepared to do necessary changes in my plans according to the actual situation in the group.

   The first point I planned was timing. I planned to write one story per two weeks. Secondly, I planned questionnaires for my students, pre-writing activities based on reading a short story including genre analysis. Further, I considered the ways of feedback. In addition, I followed Harmer’s words (see Chapter 2.3) that the teacher should also think about the flexibility of work from lesson to lesson, the amount of work which the students will manage to do in one lesson, the number of students the teacher will manage to work with individually, and extra responding time. As I had no experience with process writing, I could just predict the logistics of process writing
and so I was ready to change my plans according to the current needs of the target group.

6.1 Time planning

As Harmer mentions, process writing needs time and that is why I think that the teacher must consider this criterion very carefully (see Chapter 2.6).

I planned to start with the project at the beginning of November 2008, and I planned to finish with it at the end of February 2009. It meant to write the final versions of seven or eight stories. From my teaching experience, I envisaged possible problems and some delay with work. I supposed that the expected amount of time could drop due to: reluctant students, illnesses, holidays, school projects, or various cultural events. We had three English lessons weekly on average, but the real number of the lessons was lower, as I expected. To compare my plans and the real situation, I had to adapt my plans to the actual circumstances because the time became a real obstacle. Finally, the students managed to publish seven stories, but the project had to be extended to the end of April 2009, when the students were prepared for submitting self-published books of short stories.

Apart from the timetable, I had to plan how to divide the time in the lessons between the project and the stuff in our syllabus. I planned to devote some lessons to the writing workshops (see Chapter 2.1) during which the students would work only on the stories. In addition, I planned to spend about fifteen minutes of a common lesson on the project. I was also prepared to spend some extra time outside the class on individual consultations. To compare my plans and the reality, I can say that we had fourteen workshops and forty-six common lessons from the total number of sixty lessons during a six-month period.

7. Questionnaire before the action research

During the research, I worked with a group of the students I used to teach in the previous school year. It was an advantage because I was acquainted with the students’ strengths and weaknesses in English language. Nevertheless, I wanted to obtain some more information about the target group. Before I started the action research, I had to map the situation in both the target and the controlled groups in order to get more
information about the students, their attitudes to writing and in order to get some writing material to analyze. The questionnaire consisted of twelve points, most of which I designed in the form of questions. The students could choose from two to five possible answers, or they could express their own answer. Finally, the students were asked to write a short paragraph about their last weekend because I wanted to see their actual written performances. The following chapter brings a detailed analysis of the questionnaire. For the handout of the questionnaire see Appendix A.

### 7.1 Target group’s questionnaire before the action research

1. What is your attitude to writing in English?
   This question was aimed at the students’ personal attitude to writing. None of nineteen students gave the answer that they loved writing. Eleven of them (58%) quite liked writing, eight students (42%) did not like writing and nobody said that he/she hated writing. This question helped me to find out how previous experiences with writing influenced the students’ general attitude to this skill.

2. Do you find writing in English easy or difficult?
   This question was set to find out something about how easy or difficult the skill of writing was for the students. Nobody said that writing was very easy. Three students (3%) introduced that writing was somewhat easy for them. Sixteen students (84%) confessed that writing was difficult for them, but nobody found it extremely difficult. The results showed that most of the students in the target group found writing difficult.

3. What is the most difficult language area when you write?
   Five students (26%) ticked grammar, one student introduced spelling (5%), six students (32%) ticked collocations and seven students (37%) found the coherence of the text the most difficult. The answers helped me to predict possible problems during writing. I expected that the students would probably have problems with grammar, collocations and coherence of the text.
4. Is writing in English language important for you?
As I wanted to know something about the importance of writing for my students, I included this question into the questionnaire. Only two students (11%) considered writing very important, twelve students (63%) thought that writing was important for them, six students (26%) found writing not very important. This result showed that most of the students in the target group admitted that writing was important for them. Some students explained that writing helped them to communicate with their friends living abroad, or they said that they needed writing for business purposes, for instance, ordering some goods via the Internet.

5. Which of the exercises do you prefer the most?
As writing is a part of the syllabus, the students were acquainted with writing exercises. The students could choose from five different kinds of written exercises. Two students (10%) preferred writing a short paragraph about their hobbies, ten students (53%) enjoyed writing a gap-fill exercise, three students (16%) preferred copying a text from the textbook, nobody liked letter writing and only four students (21%) preferred writing a short story on their own. According to the answers, I came to the conclusion that most of the students preferred a kind of a guided writing exercise to the exercises where they had to create a text on their own.

6. Have you ever written a short story?
Eighteen students (95%) had already written a short story and there was only one student who had not, which was a good background for further writing.

7. If you have already written a short story, what was your attitude?
This question was connected with the previous question, so it was answered only by eighteen students. Four students (22%) said that they had really enjoyed writing a short story, eleven students (61%) expressed a neutral opinion and only three students (17%) had not enjoyed it at all. The result of this question showed that writing a short story was a rather “plain” exercise for most of the students. This was a stimulus for me to make writing enjoyable and interesting way of learning as much as possible.
8. What kind of help do you need when you write?
I included this question into the questionnaire because I wanted to find out what ways of help the students used during writing. The students used to work with a dictionary the most often, then they mentioned the teacher in the second position, classmates were in the third position, and only four students preferred working on their own.

9. What do you usually do when you finish your writing?
I set this question because I wanted to find out if the students were used to rereading and rewriting their texts. In other words, I wanted to know if they were used to any stages of process writing, especially editing and redrafting. One student (5%) introduced that he/she was used to making a lot of changes and a lot of rewriting. Fifteen students (79%) said that they were used to making a few changes and some rewriting, and three students (16%) admitted that they left their writing without any changes. According to the above mentioned results, it could be said that most of the students tried to think about their writing, and they tried to improve it somehow before the research was started.

10. Write a short paragraph (50-60 words) about your last weekend and use the following key words: last/weekend/Saturday/(to)go/(to)visit.

The final task in the questionnaire was important because it provided me with important data for further analysis and for the comparison with the controlled group. My main aim was to study how the key words were used in the text.

Andrew Sheehan (2004), in the article “Making Ends of Words“, asks a question what it means to know a word. He introduces an adapted list of criteria according to Ellis and Sinclair (1989), from which I chose only those points connected with writing. The criteria are as follows: to spell the word correctly, to use it in the right situation, to know when (and when not) to use it, to use it with the correct meaning, to use it in a grammatically correct way, to know which other words you can (and can not) use with it. I developed a similar list of criteria for the analysis of the key words in the students’ texts.

The students wrote their short paragraphs without any preparation, without a dictionary and they were not allowed to ask the teacher for help, either. Each
student got his/her identification number, which I used during the whole project (numbers 1-19, Chart 1).

### Chart 1

| Key words | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| last      | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | +  | -  | -  | +  | -  | -  | +  | -  | -  | -  |
| Saturday  | ! | - | - | ! | + | - | - | - | - | !  | -  | -  | +  | -  | +  | +  | +  | -  |
| weekend   | - | + | - | ! | - | - | - | - | + | -  | +  | -  | -  | +  | -  | -  | +  | -  |
| go        | ! | - | ! | - | + | + | - | + | - | !  | -  | -  | +  | -  | +  | +  | +  | -  |
| visit     | - | ! | - | ! | - | + | ! | + | - | -  | -  | +  | -  | -  | +  | -  | +  | +  |

**Caption:**

- Correct key word
- Incorrect key word in a lexical chunk
- Incorrect key word: a grammar mistake (agreement, number, person, active and passive voice, articles) and a wrong tense
- Incorrect key word: spelling
- Incorrect key word: wrong meaning
- Incorrect key word: wrong word order
- Missing key word

The analysis of the key words showed that the key word last was used only three times correctly (16%), it was used incorrectly in the lexical chunk in five cases (27%) and eleven students (58%) did not use it at all.

The key word Saturday was used five times (26%) correctly, it was incorrect in the lexical chunk in five cases (26%), one student (5%) failed because of grammar and eight students (43%) did not use it at all.

The key word weekend was correct in six cases (32%), in one case (5%) it was incorrect in the lexical chunk, but it was not used in twelve cases (63%) at all.

As for the key word go, six students (32%) did not have any problems with it and used it correctly. Three students (16%) used it incorrectly in the lexical chunk and four students (21%) made a grammar mistake. It was not used in six cases (31%) at all.
As for the key word *visit*, seven students (37%) used it correctly, it was used incorrectly in the chunk by one student (5%), in three cases (16%), there was a grammar mistake and it was not used by eight students (42%) at all.

The result of the analysis showed that the students in the target group were successful only in 29% of the key words on average per one student before the project was started. Further, the analysis revealed that the students used 24% of the key words incorrectly. Finally, the students did not use any of the key words in 47%. On the other hand, nobody misunderstood the meaning of these words. According to the results, it can be claimed that the task uncovered serious problems with written English in the target group. More precisely, the most problems appeared in the field of the prepositional phrases, tenses, or active and passive voice. Nobody misunderstood the meaning of the key words because I chose the words the students were familiar with. But a different problem arose because even if the students understood the meaning of the key words, they were not able to apply the words into larger units like phrases, sentences, or the whole texts. To demonstrate some examples of this last task in the questionnaire, I chose two different examples.

One of the most problematic texts was written by student seven, who wrote only seventeen words in four complete sentences. The text was as follows:

*I was visited at friend. We corrected cars. It was beautiful. In Sunday visiteding grandparents. My grandmother*

As it can be seen, the writer used only one key word out of five, which was the word “visit” (the green word). The word was incorrect because the writer used it in passive voice instead of active voice, which I considered as a grammatical mistake. In addition, when other areas of the language are analyzed, the writer used a wrong word “*corrected*” instead of “fixed” or “repaired” in the second sentence. Another problem appeared in the third sentence “*It was beautiful*”. Here he used a wrong phrase and moreover, he had problems with spelling. In the fourth sentence, he failed in the prepositional phrase because he wrote “*In Sunday*”. Finally, he used a form “*visiteding*”, where he mixed the forms of past simple and past continuous tenses. Moreover, he wrote less than fifty words. On the other hand, he had an idea of the story, which he wanted to describe through the sequence of events. I think that if the
text was rewritten in the method of process writing, the final version would be different.

On the contrary, I would like to present one of the most successful paragraphs written by student sixteen (see Chart 1), who used four key words out of five correctly. Her text was as follows:

*I was at home last weekend because I had a lot of work for school. Class nine is very difficult. On Saturday I went to my grandmother because she had a party. It was nice and funny. The weather was a good. I watched TV in evening. I went to bed about ten o’clock p.m.*

Although there were mistakes in the text, for instance, prepositions: “*to school”, articles: “*a good, *in evening”, unnecessary word: “*p. m”, the student succeeded in using the key words correctly in four cases out of five (the key words are underlined in green). Her sentences were longer and she told us not only about her last weekend, but about her problems as well. On the other hand, it is obvious that this text also had to be reshaped in the method of process writing.

7.2 Controlled group’s writing results before the action research

The controlled group was asked to write a short paragraph about their last weekend as well. I analyzed their texts and compared with the target group. Chart 2, shown below, presents how the students succeeded in using the key words in their short stories.

*Chart 2*

<table>
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<th>Key words</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caption:
+ Correct key word
! Incorrect key word in a lexical chunk
! Incorrect key word: a grammar mistake (agreement, number, person, tenses, active and passive voice, articles) and a wrong tense
! Incorrect key word: spelling
! Incorrect key word: wrong meaning
! Incorrect key word: wrong word order
- Missing key word

The results showed that the key word last was used correctly by six students (35%). On the other hand, eleven students (65%) did not include the key word at all. There were not any incorrect cases and nobody misunderstood the meaning.

The word Saturday was used correctly by six students (35%), two students (12%) were wrong in the lexical chunk and nine students (53%) omitted to use the word in their texts.

The key word weekend was correct five times (29%), it was incorrect once (6%) and it was not used eleven times (65%) at all.

The key word go was good ten times (59%), it was incorrect in the lexical chunk in six cases (35%), and there was a grammar problem in one case (6%).

The key word visit was used correctly by three students (18%), it was wrong twice (12%) in the lexical chunk, and twelve students (70%) did not use it at all.

According to the above mentioned facts, it can be said that the controlled group reached better results in using the key words in their texts than the target group. The students in the controlled group used 35% of the expected number of the key words correctly while the target group used only 29% of the key words on average per one student (see Chart 5, Chapter 15).

8. Pre-writing activities

Before I asked my students to start writing very short stories in the method of process writing, I wanted them to experience other writers’ stories, as I mentioned in Chapter 3.3. For instance, reading or listening to other short stories can help to understand short story genre. I followed Harmer, who says that genre analysis is an
essential part of planning stage in the writing process (see Chapter 2.4.1). That is why I searched for some suitable short stories which could be read, heard and then analyzed from the genre point of view. I decided to spend one lesson based on reading a short story and its analysis.

8.1 The first lesson

To introduce the genre of short story to my students, I used a well known short story by Erik Carle “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”. Although the story is for young learners, I decided to use it with the target group of nine-grade students. The first reason for my choice was the fact that the story was very simple and consequently, I found it suitable for the genre analysis. I developed a lesson plan with the activities according to Chapter Three, where I mention the features of short story (see Appendix B, the Lesson Plan).

I started with a short warm-up activity, which was based on the prediction of the story. I wrote the name of the story in the middle of the blackboard, and I invited the students to predict: the main character, the problem, the plot, the setting (time, place), the resolution by asking the questions: „Who is the main character? Where does the story take place? What is the main character’s problem? How does the story finish?” The aim of this activity was to attract the students’ attention to hear and read the story. Then I asked them to think about five key words which could appear in the story to prepare them for using key words in their stories.

After this activity, I went on to read the story and the students listened to me to compare their guessing with the text. When the comparison was finished, the students read the text again and I asked them to retell the story in their own words. It was the whole class activity, and I helped the students with it.

The next step of the lesson was to teach the students the basic terminology useful for further analysis. We started to work with the worksheets (see Appendix B). The task was to match the English words with their Czech equivalents. When this task was finished, we could start to analyze the story. The students worked in pairs and after five minutes, we controlled this task together. I wrote the answers on the board, which took about ten minutes. The last activity of the lesson was writing. I asked the students to rewrite the story they had listened to. I asked them to use five key words within the text with a limited length from fifty to one hundred words.
This time, I set the key words, which the students had to use in the text. The activity was performed in the class when all the students were engaged to cooperate with me. I helped the students to reformulate their sentences and I wrote the text on the board. The text we created together in the method of collaborative writing was as follows:

*One Sunday morning there appeared a little egg on the leaf. A little caterpillar was born. He was very small and hungry. He wanted something to eat.*

*He started to eat on Monday and finished on Saturday. He ate many things: an apple, two pears, three plums, four strawberries, five oranges, and other nice things. Then, he had a stomachache. On Sunday, he found a green leaf and he was well again. He was not hungry and he was not small.*

*He built a cocoon and stayed inside about two weeks. Then, he came out and he became a beautiful butterfly.*

9. **Introduction of process writing in the target group**

The aim of the second lesson was to prepare the students for writing their stories in the method of process writing. For that reason I prepared a scheme, which was designed according to Harmer’s description. Although Harmer presented process writing as “the process wheel” (see Chapter 2.4.4), which is the recursive version, I decided to use a simplified linear version for the presentation because I found it more understandable for the students. The scheme shows the basic stages of the process, in addition to which I included a few notes describing the basic task during each stage including the ways of students’ work (see Appendix C).

To help the students with editing and correcting stages, I prepared a checklist. As Raimes points out that checklists can be used both for editing and correcting purposes (see Chapter 2.6.3), I created a checklist consisting of several points to help the students to remember important features of story and to help them with problematic language areas. I also introduced a list of correcting symbols based on Harmer’s proposition from Chapter 2.6.2 (see Appendix D).
10. Seven stories and the key words

In this chapter, I would like to present how the students in the target group applied process writing to individual stories. As there is not enough space to describe all seven stories within this thesis, I decided to show only two stories to outline our work.

John Morgan and Mario Rinvolucri (1986: 122) suggest an activity “Words to story”, which is aimed at vocabulary that needs revising. The students choose six or seven words from a group of words written on the board and then they try to create a story orally. I modified this activity in the way that the key words were chosen by the teacher and the students created the stories in the written form. Moreover, I applied the method of process writing as I had already mentioned. As for the verbs, which I set as the key words, I was benevolent, and I accepted all correct forms not to limit the usage of English tenses. The key words, which I selected from the textbook Open Doors 2 and Open Doors 3, were as follows:

Story one: have got, measles, a sore throat, stomach ache, a headache
Story two: (to) meet, (to) be, (to) hear, since Christmas, a long time
Story three: boring, (to) watch, (to) join, show, membership card
Story four: (to) phone, (to) tidy, (to) do the washing up, (to) be back, later
Story five: (to) design, (to) choose, (to) paint, (to) finish, (to) advertise (all verbs in passive voice)
Story six: name, nickname, old, (to) be born, height
Story seven: scared, (to) appear, strange, creature, (to) look like

10.1 Story one

Let me show you how the first story was created from the planning stage to the final version. For the first story, I selected vocabulary from the textbook Open Doors 2, Unit Nine, which deals with health and illnesses. The set of the key words consisted of: have got, measles, a sore throat, stomach ache, a headache because these words were not used correctly by the students during the lessons. The story, I used as the first example, was written by student number eleven. All original drafts and the teacher’s reaction are included in Appendix G. The students gave me a
written permission to use their drafts, final versions and names to be used for professional purposes (see Appendix F).

10.2 Planning

After the students were given the key words, the stage of planning was started. Harmer talks about note taking as one of powerful ways of planning (see Chapter 2.4.1). I explained the students the advantages of note taking, and I asked them to put down some simple notes.

I showed the way of work by using a few examples on the board, through which I guided the students how to make their notes. The first attempt to make notes, written by student eleven, can be seen in the following example:

**Characters:** me, family, doctor

**Time:** now

**Place:** hospital

**Plot:** we are ill → doctor is bad → everyone is ill → we will die

**Resolution:** tragedy

10.3 The first draft

Now it was the time to move to drafting, as said in Chapter 2.4.2. I explained the fact that the students would probably need to write a number of drafts before the final version was finished. I also mentioned the importance of rewriting, which should help them to improve the texts. The students were told to concentrate on the content of ideas and the usage of the key words in their first draft because the accuracy and writing conventions would be dealt later. The students worked individually at school, which gave me an opportunity to react to their work-in-progress (see Chapter 2.6.1). These face-to-face reactions were very useful because I could respond to the students’ work immediately and they could ask me for help. On the other hand, in the group of nineteen students, it was quite difficult to divide my responding time among all students equally.
To describe the way of my work during drafting, I became an assistant, as Harmer mentions helping the students immediately. Further, I worked as a guide, who provided information for writing (see Chapter 2.6).

In the following example, it can be seen how student eleven created her first draft based on her simple notes:

*Ill word*

*I’m sick! Headache is too big from yesterday. I have a sore throat. It is takes a week. I was a doctor Poop today and me not helped and mum is sick too. All is sick. Epidemic sickness. Sister was the measles! “FUJ!” My Dad was stomach ache. Oh, no! Word is ill! All Dies*

When the first drafts were finished, I asked the students to read their texts again and so we moved to the stage of editing. It was the time, when the students reread the drafts, checked the content and they tried to think about the clearness of the thoughts. In the first draft, they paid attention to the key words, which were marked by the students themselves. I always asked the students to keep underlining or marking the key words in all drafts during the whole project. The first drafts were full of mistakes because it was work-in-progress, which could be improved only by the means of rereading, commenting, replanning, and redrafting.

Although I had read some drafts during the workshop, the drafts were collected at the end of the lesson and I brought them home to respond to them. According to Chapter 2.6.1, I decided for a written comment. My response to the first draft, written by student eleven, was as follows:

*Teresa, I like the first draft of your story. I enjoyed the dramatic situation and your ending. Do you really believe that everybody will die? In the next draft I would suggest to:*

- Start by telling a few words about you.
- Check all the key words (articles).
- Find the Czech „svět” in a dictionary because of spelling.
- Rewrite the second sentence, for instance, I have had a bad headache since yesterday.
- Join the third and the fourth sentence, for instance, I have had a sore throat for a week.*
- Rewrite the fifth sentence which is too long.
- Check the verb „have got” because in English we say: I’ve got measles.

I am looking forward to your next draft. 😊

As it can be seen, my reaction was a kind of responding in the first part and correcting in the second part. Although it was suggested in Chapter 2.6 to respond to the first draft and correct during next drafts, I found very suitable to combine the ways of reacting in order to move the draft forward. My way of reaction corresponds with Ellen Lipp and Debbie Davis-Ockey (1997: 12), who talk about the research done into the field of giving feedback. According to the research, the combination of content-grammar feedback works effectively, especially during early drafting and redrafting and I must confirm that such a method really brought its fruits.

10.4 The second draft

The second drafting took place at school again because I felt that the students needed my help. In the course of the lesson, I provided individual consultations. I tried to spend a few minutes with each student over a draft to explain my written comment, or I asked the students directly in cases I did not understand something in the draft. I must emphasize that the face-to-face discussions became really beneficial. The following excerpt shows the second draft written by student eleven, which was as follows:

Ill World

This is a story for this week. I am Teresa and I am fourteen. I have got a problem. I have had a bad headache since yesterday. I have had a sore throat for a week. I was at doktor today. Doctor Poop not helped me at all. He is a bad doctor. And my mum is sick, too. Everybody is sick this week. It must be an epidemy. My sister has got the measles. “Ugh!” I said. My Dad has got bad stomachache. “Oh no!” I cried. The world is ill. I think that everybody will die and I will cry.

When I got the second drafts, I underlined the problematic areas and I asked the students to spot the problems. In the above mentioned example, the green words mark
the key words, which were indicated by the student, the words underlined in red were marked by me to spot the problematic areas. This was my reaction:

*Teresa, I think you did a very good job. I am pleased that you keep underlining the key words. I marked the areas which need correcting.*

- at doctor’s.
- Please look at the checklist to find out how to use past simple tense negative.
- Find the noun measles in a dictionary because there is a problem with a definite article. Thanks. 😊

To analyze the second draft, it can be seen that the student followed my comments and by comparison with the first draft, there are some positive changes. As for the content, the student changed the introduction, where she really added a few facts about herself. In my opinion, the story is quite well developed because it has the main character with her problems. The main character tried to solve the problem, but she failed because of external obstacles. The story is narrated in the first person, so the reader can see the problems through the narrator’s eyes. The story finishes by the writer’s tragic and emotive prophecy of the end of the world uncovering the writer’s feelings if the prophecy went true. Although the reader does not reveal if the prophecy was fulfilled, I am convinced that the open ending invites us to guess, which makes the story interesting.

Most of the students needed to reshape the content, do some replanning or to add some more information. Further, they needed to improve the accuracy of their texts. That is why most of the second drafts had to be polished by the means of next redrafting.

10.5 The third draft

The third drafts were written outside the lesson. The students were allowed to ask others for help and they were allowed to accept their suggestions. If they could not progress, I asked them to feel free and come to my office for individual consultations during breaks. The following example presents the last draft, written by student eleven, before the final version was finished:
Sick world

This is a story for this week. I am Teresa and I am fourteen. I have got a problem. I have had a bad headache since yesterday. I have had a sore throat for a week. I was at my doctor’s today. Doctor Poop didn’t help me at all. I think he is a bad doctor. And my mum is sick too. Everybody is sick, it must be an epidemic. My sister has got measles. “Ugh!” I said. My dad has just come from work and he has got stomach ache. “Oh no!” I cried. The world is ill. I think that everybody will die and I will cry.

As it can be seen, the areas I had mentioned in my previous comment were improved. All five key words were used correctly within the text. In addition, the quality of the whole text was improved by comparison with the first draft. The following excerpt shows my reaction to the third draft:

Teresa, I think that your text is ready for the final version. I indicated where you should make paragraphs. We can discuss it together in the lesson if you like. Now it is time to think about the way of printing. You can write your story in hand or you can use your PC. You can also add a picture to make your story visually attractive. Thanks. ☺

10.6 The final version

In most cases, the students were able to write the final version after three drafts. The writers prepared the final versions at home and in most cases, this stage was connected with publishing.

The students needed time to think about the form of printing and pictures. In other words, they prepared the stories from visual point of view to make them attractive for the readers.

The final version of the first story, written by student eleven, can be seen in Appendix I „Sick World”. You can find there the stories by other students in the target group.
11. Writing process and story six

In this chapter, I would like to present the creation of the sixth story based on the key words from the textbook Open Doors 3, Unit One, which were: name, nickname, be born, height, old. The main topic of Unit One was “Talking about myself”. That is why I selected the above mentioned set of very simple words. I decided to ask the students to create stories, where they would aim at the detailed development of the main character while the plot would be minor.

11.1 Planning

The planning of this story was realized in accordance with Chapter 2.4.1, where it is talked about the ways of planning, especially the method of mind mapping. The main emphasis was put on developing details about the main character in the method of particularizing (see Chapter 3.4.1). This way of visualizing the main character provided a suitable background for drafting. The following example will help you to imagine how student twelve planned her short story (see Fig 2):

![Fig 2](image-url)
My reaction to this mind map was as follows:

Dear Jiřina, I really like your plan. Your character seems to be a very interesting and mysterious person. Now, you can try to start writing your story about this person. Try to use all key words in the text. I am looking forward to reading more. 😊

11.2 Drafting

When the mind map was prepared, the student used her notes in the first draft. As I had already said, I asked the students to develop stories with easier plots, where they would incorporate the details from the mind maps as much as possible. The first draft, which was written by student twelve, was as follows:

The New Identity
Hello, my name is Grizelda von Kohen. I was born in 30 April 1564 in Old Irish. I am very old. I am 154 cm height and I weight 58 kilos. I have got six sisters. My hair is long and black. My nickname is “the Witch”. My hobbies are broomlying and listening music. My favourite colours are black and green. I am profession a Danish princess and I want be a queen in England and Danish. I eat naugty children. Be careful!

My reaction to this first draft was as follows:

Dear Jiřina, your story develops very well. I like that you tried hard to use all the key words. Excellent! In the next draft, I suggest you should:
- Use the sentence with the nickname after the first sentence.
- The word „height“ is a noun, so we say either “My height is 154 cm.” or “I am 154 cm tall.”
- The word weight is a noun-váha and weigh is a verb-vážit. We say either “My weight is 58 kg.” or “I weigh 58 kilos”.
- We do not say “I am profession a Danish princess”, but only “I am the Danish princess.”
- Please, try to use your checklist to identify mistakes (see correction symbols). 😊
The original draft with the teacher’s reaction is included in Appendix H. If I wanted to help this particular student with her draft, I had to react both to the content and the accuracy. I appreciated the writer’s attempt to develop her piece of writing based on the key words, which I think is not an easy task. Nevertheless, the students admitted that writing the sixth story was the least difficult of all stories because of simple key words the students had already experienced within other contexts.

11.3 Redrafting and the teacher’s reaction

The draft, which the student created, was rewritten and therefore, we talk about the stage of redrafting. The student tried to follow my comments, which were provided in the written form, as it had been mentioned. These comments were supported by a short one-to-one discussion at school to clarify some opacity. Here is the second draft by student twelve:

The New Identity

Hello, my name is Grizelda von Kohen. My nickname is “The Witch.”
I was born on 30 April 1564 in Old Ireland. I'm very old. My height is 145 centimetres and my weight is 58 kilos. I have got three sisters. My hair is long, but you cannot see it. I usually wear a big hat. My hobbies are broom flying and listening to music. My favourite colours are black and green. I am the Irish princess, but I would like to rule in England and Denmark. I eat naughty children. Be careful!

My reaction to the second draft was as follows:

Excellent! You are ready for the final version. Just check spelling of the word “*hobbys” because we use “hobbies”. ☺

As you can see, my reaction to the second draft was very short because the student did a very good job. She followed my comments and our discussion also contributed to this very good result. To compare the first and the second drafts, the student reshaped her first draft in the following ways. Firstly, in the second draft, she wrote the sentence with the nickname after the first sentence, as I had recommended. Secondly, she corrected the prepositional phrase “*in 30 April 1564”. She also
managed to use the key word “height” correctly. Moreover, she succeeded in using the word “weight”. She also used a dictionary to find out the correct form of “Ireland”. Next, she added a preposition in the lexical chunk “listening to music.” In addition, she rewrote the sentence with the word “*profession”, where she deleted this unnecessary word.

To sum up the development of this particular story, I can say that process writing really contributed to create a better piece of writing. The students learned how to plan the story through mind maps and particularizing. Some students managed to write the final version after two drafts. On the other hand, some students needed three drafts. The final version of story six by student twelve is included in Appendix I.

12. The ways of reaction to the students’ work.

In this chapter, I would like to describe the ways of reaction to students’ writing, which I used in the project. Generally, I tried to be supportive and positive in my comments. I would like to highlight that the opportunity to react to the students’ work-in-progress is a big advantage of process writing because I could enter the process of text creation. Consequently, the students could reflect on my comments, which helped them to reshape the texts and reach better quality. Writing process made me change the way of feedback. I had to learn how to analyze the drafts and how to react to them so that I could help the students in their progress. I followed Raimes, who outlined the basic principles for giving feedback (see Chapter 2.6). According to these principles, the first thing I did was reading the whole text without making any notes. Then, I concentrated on the strong and weak points and I always outlined the ways of improvement. I also introduced the correction symbols in advance and I tried to adapt my general strategy of reaction to respond to the students’ needs.

Further, I applied the method of reacting to work-in-progress, as Harmer suggests (see Chapter 2.6.1). The students really appreciated one-to-one conferences held both inside and outside the class. I find this method identical with the method “Ask me” mentioned in Chapter 2.6.2. In the face-to-face discussions, the problems were debated directly in the class once they arose.

A written comment was another way of reaction I used a lot. In these comments, I reacted to the content and I also included a few comments about the key words, grammar, or spelling, as I had already mentioned in Chapter 10.3.
As for correction, I applied correction symbols, as it has been said several times. This technique worked well with more independent students, but less independent students were not able to make corrections on their own, and I had to help them. In these cases, reformulation turned to be really beneficial because I could show the students how to rewrite a phrase or a sentence. I must confirm Harmer’s words that reformulation is highly valuable, especially during drafting and redrafting (see Chapter 2.6.2).

I also applied the method of remedial teaching. I copied a draft written by one of the students, whose name was hidden, and I asked the students to work in pairs to analyze the text from stylistic point of view. Then we concentrated on grammar mistakes and other writing conventions. I helped the students to identify and solve the problems.

I provided the students with a checklist before the project, which served for self-studying purposes. The checklist was used to guide the students how to edit and correct. The application of the checklist was rather controversial because less independent students had problems to follow all points included in it. Nevertheless, more independent students managed to use their checklists and they managed to develop their learning independence.

The students could also ask their classmates for help. Through peer correcting pairs, they tried to use the checklists, analyze correction symbols, or provide a comment. Again, better students were able to help their classmates while slower students benefited from these comments. Peer review was not an easy way of help in the target group, on the other hand, I think that the students promoted cooperation with their peers and so peer review can be considered as an important feature of process writing, as Harmer mentions (see Chapter 2.6.3).

13. The analysis of the controlled stories written by the target group

The controlled story was written in the method of process writing. The students were asked to write a short story with the key words: visit, stay, friends, at the weekend, my family. I chose similar key words which were analyzed in the questionnaire before the project to provide a suitable comparison.

Writing was conducted in two lessons. During the first lesson, the students worked on planning and writing the first drafts. In the second lesson, the students
worked on the second drafts while I was reacting to their work-in-progress. Then, they were ready to write the final versions. Chart 3 shows how individual students succeeded in using the key words in their final versions.

**Chart 3**

| The key words | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| visit         | + | + | + | + | - | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| stay          | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | - | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| friends       | + | ! | + | + | - | + | + | + | + | ! | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| at the weekend| + | + | ! | ! | ! | ! | + | + | ! | + | ! | + | ! | + | + | + | + | ! |
| my family     | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | ! | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |

*Caption:*

+ Correct key word

! Incorrect key word in a lexical chunk

! Incorrect key word: a grammar mistake (agreement, number, person, active and passive voice, articles) and a wrong tense

! Incorrect key word: spelling

! Incorrect key word: wrong meaning

! Incorrect key word: wrong word order

- Missing key word

The chart shows that the key word *visit* was used by eighteen students (95%) correctly, and only one student (5%) did not use it at all.

As for the key word *stay*, the result was the same, which means that eighteen students (95%) succeeded in using this key word and one student (5%) did not use it at all.

The key word *friends* was used by sixteen students (84%) in a correct way, two students (11%) used it incorrectly because of a grammar mistake, and one student (5%) did not use it at all.

The prepositional phrase *at the weekend* was the most problematic. Although ten students (53%) wrote it in a correct way, nine students (47%) failed. I indicated this
mistake as a lexical chunk mistake because the students used a wrong prepositional phrase, for instance: *in the last weekend*.

The noun phrase *my family* was used by eighteen students (95%) correctly. One student (5%) used it incorrectly because he changed the meaning of *my family* into *a family*. I identified it as a mistake in the meaning because he wrote a story about a different family.

The final analysis showed that the students improved their writing results. **The students managed to use 85% of the key words in a correct way. The result was better by 56% when I compare it with the result before the project.** To outline the progress, I would like to present a story written by student number seven, whose writing results were one of the worst in the target group at the beginning of the project. His final story was as follows:

*My Last Weekend*

My parents and I *visited* our grandparents *at the weekend*. I *stayed* there the whole weekend. I was also with *my friends*. We played football and basketball. I went to the disco and enjoyed the evening. *My family* picked me up in the morning and we *went home* together. The whole weekend was absolutely great.

As it can be seen, the student used all five key words correctly. Moreover, he managed to write fifty-six words in seven sentences. He improved in the field of grammar, especially in using tenses, word order, and spelling.

What I think he could improve is the content of the story because I find his story too descriptive. As it can be seen, there is no obstacle or tension in the story, which makes the story rather boring. Nevertheless, I can claim that this particular student improved in style because, for instance, his sixth story is very good, as you can read in Appendix I.
The following example was created by student eight. I would like to show that the quality of the stories really improved.

My last weekend

I visited my friends in Norway last month. I stayed with Kate and Desmond, who are my penfriends. They invited me to their country and I stayed in their house. Norway is a very nice country with many lakes and forests in the north.

We went for a trip to Oslo at the weekend. I wanted to see an old Viking ship. Imagine! Our car broke down, but my friends’ Dad repaired it. Our journey took five hours and we were very tired. Finally, I saw an old Viking ship! It was great.

I didn’t miss my family at all because I was so busy. The trip was really exciting.

All the key words were used in a correct way in this story. The student understood the meaning of the words and he succeeded in using them within the text. As for the content, he wrote a nice story with several characters. The story has the beginning, the main part and the end. There is also a problem, climax and resolution. Obviously, the process writing helped the student to improve the quality of his story.

I would like to present another final story, which was created by student number sixteen. This student was one of the best before the project.

My Last Weekend

I woke up at six o’clock. “I’m going to visit my friends,” I said to my family.

I went out and I saw a small bee. The bee was yellow and it looked dangerous. It flew towards me and it sat on my hand. I am afraid of bees. It’s a kind of very bad phobia. I wanted to drive it away because I’m allergic. The bee got angry and it bit me. I had to go to hospital. I was very scared.

Luckily, it was not serious, and my friends went with me. I had to stay at hospital for one week. I came back at the weekend and I was very happy.
In my opinion, the story is very good. It is narrated in the first person, which is suitable for beginner writers, as it was mentioned in Chapter 3.4.4. The narrator is the main protagonist, so the story is narrated in a subjective way. As for the content, I find this story more interesting for the reader than two previous examples. The plot starts to be exciting when the writer says that the bee is dangerous. At this moment, I started to predict some obstacles. The main character has the problem because she is afraid of bees and she has an allergy. The climax of the story comes when the main character is bitten and she has to go to the hospital. The plot is calmed down when the friends accompany the main character. The plot finishes with a happy ending, when the main character returns home. The implementation of direct speech brings a lively moment into the story (see Chapter 3.3, page 39).

14. The analysis of the stories written by the controlled group

Chart 4 presents the results of the application of the key words in the short stories composed by the students from the controlled group. The students created their short stories in the way they were used to. It means that they wrote directly what they had on their minds not having applied the method of process writing. On the other hand, they were allowed to use dictionaries, or they could ask the teacher for help. They wrote the stories during one lesson at school.

Table: Chart 4

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<th>Key words</th>
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<td>my family</td>
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Caption:
+ Correct key word
! Incorrect key word in a lexical chunk
! Incorrect key word: a grammar mistake (agreement, number, person,
active and passive voice, articles) and a wrong tense

! Incorrect key word: spelling
! Incorrect key word: wrong meaning
! Incorrect key word: wrong word order
- Missing key word

The key word visit was used by nine students (53%) in a correct way. On the other hand, four students (23%) used it incorrectly because of grammar (especially tenses). One student (6%) was wrong because of spelling, which was a very rare mistake. Nobody used it incorrectly in a lexical chunk, word order, or meaning. Three students (18%) did not use the key word at all.

The key word stay was used by five students (29%) correctly, two students (12%) made a lexical chunk mistake, three students (18%) were wrong because of grammar. Seven students (41%) ignored the word, and they did not include it into the text.

All seventeen students tried to use the key word friends. Six students (35%) used it in a correct way, two students (12%) were wrong in a lexical chunk, five students (29%) made a grammar mistake, one student (5%) was wrong because of spelling, and three students (18%) used the word in a wrong position in the sentence, which I indicated as a word order mistake.

The prepositional phrase at the weekend was written by four students (24%) in a correct way. On the other hand, ten students (59%) were wrong in a lexical chunk. The most frequent mistake was that the students changed the whole prepositional phrase into a noun phrase “*the last weekend“, which is also wrong because of the article. One student (5%) had a problem with word order and two students (12%) did not use the word at all.

The noun phrase my family was correct in nine cases (53%), one student (5%) made a spelling mistake, in five cases (30%) there was a problem with word order, and two students (12%) did not use it at all.

The analysis showed that the students in the controlled group used 39% of the key words correctly on average. When I compare this result and the result from November 2008, it can be said that the students improved only by 4%. In contrast with the target group, it is obvious that their progress was very small.
15. The final charts

The following charts present the analysis of the key words in the stories and the comparison of the target and the controlled group before and after the action research.

*Chart 5: The results before the action research*

*Group 1 – The target group*

*Group 2 – The controlled group*

*Chart 6: The final results after the action research*

*Group 1 – The target group*

*Group 2 – The controlled group*
16. The analysis of the target groups’ final questionnaire

The final questionnaire was the last task the students fulfilled during the project. The main aim was to investigate the students’ attitude to the whole project and find out how they viewed writing short stories in the method of process writing. The questionnaire is included in Appendix E.

1. Do you think that process writing helped you to be a better writer?
   The students were asked to evaluate their own progress after the project. Twelve students (63%) felt to be better writers than they had been before the project. One student (5%) did not find himself/herself to be a better writer, and six students (32%) were not able to evaluate their progress and they answered „I do not know.“ The result of this question is rather questionable because it is based on subjective answers. Despite this fact, I believe that students should be able to evaluate their own work.

2. What have you learned in the project?
   This question was set to find out if the students learned any of six areas marked by letters from a-f in the project. I included this question because I believe that personal assessment is a good way how to train the students to be more aware of their learning.
   a) I have learned the craft of story writing: Sixteen students (84%) answered “Yes, I have.” One student (5%) answered “No, I haven’t.” Two students (11%) did not know.
   b) I have learned how to write in the method of process writing. Eighteen students (95%) ticked “Yes, I have.” One student (5%) ticked “No, I haven’t.”
   c) I have learned how to use the key words: Thirteen students (69%) were convinced that they knew how to use the key words after the project, one student (5%) answered „no” and five students (26%) were not sure.
   d) I have learned to cooperate more with my teacher in the class and outside the class: Twelve students (63%) admitted that they had improved the cooperation with the teacher, five students (26%) did not feel any improvement and two students (11%) did not know.
e) *I have improved the cooperation with my classmates:* Fifteen students (79%) were convinced that they had improved their cooperation with their classmates, three students (16%) did not find any improvement, and one student (5%) did not know.

f) *I have improved the usage of other informational sources like: internet, dictionaries, or grammar books:* Eighteen students (95%) said that they could use other sources of information better after the project, on the other hand, one student (5%) admitted that he/she had not improved in this field.

3. What do you think you need to improve in your writing?

The students wrote their own answers, and most of them mentioned more than one area. The areas which the students marked were as follows:

- Word order: fourteen times.
- Grammar tenses: eight times.
- Spelling: four times.
- Vocabulary and set phrases: twice.
- Ideas for writing: three times.

The answers were important, especially for the students themselves, because I think that a good student should be able to recognize problematic areas, which could help him/her to achieve better results.

4. What was the most difficult stage of process writing for you?

The answers uncovered that planning was the most difficult stage for four students (21%), ten students (53%) indicated drafting, four students (21%) marked editing and one student (5%) had the most problems with writing the final version.

*The result showed that the stage of drafting was the most difficult stage for more than half of the students.* To explain this result, I would mention the fact that the students had to think about their texts, they had to take into account the application of the key words, and when they received the comments, they usually had to work on another draft to reshape the text, or correct it.
5. What was the least difficult stage of process writing for you?
On the other hand, I wanted to find out which stage of process writing was the least demanding. For five students (26%), it was the stage of planning. One student (5%) ticked drafting, one student (5%) marked editing, for eleven students (59%), it was writing the final version, and one student (5%) indicated publishing. **According to the answers, it can be concluded that writing the final version was the least demanding stage for more than half of the students.** I think that the students’ answers are very logical because the texts had already been edited and the students had to do a few changes.

6. Which part of process writing was the most time-consuming for you?
Two students (10%) indicated planning. For twelve students (64%), it was the stage of drafting. Four students (21%) ticked editing, one student (5%) introduced publishing, and nobody ticked writing the final version. **The answers showed that drafting was the most time-consuming part of process writing for more than half of the students.**

7. How much time did you spend on writing one draft on average?
Only one student (5%) wrote one draft less than ten minutes, fifteen students (79%) wrote one draft from ten to thirty minutes on average, three students (16%) admitted that they needed from thirty to forty-five minutes, and nobody spent more than forty-five minutes on one draft. **The answers showed that most of the students wrote one draft from ten to thirty minutes on average, which means that drafting and redrafting really need a lot of time.**

8. How many drafts did you need to write on average?
Six students (31%) needed two drafts on average and thirteen students (69%) wrote three drafts on average. **The result proved Harmer’s words (see Chapter 2.4.2) that the students really need to produce a number of drafts before the final version is written.**

9. What kind of help did you use during your writing the most often?
This question was important for me because it indicated what source of help the students used the most often. The students could tick more than one answer. The
The following chart shows how the students marked the kinds of help by using a marking scale from one to four. Number one indicates the most frequently used kind of help and number four the least frequently used kind of help.

Chart 7

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<th>Kind of help</th>
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According to Chart 7, I can claim that the teacher’s help was used the most often. Dictionary was the second most often used source of help and peers were mentioned in the third position. Other sources, for instance, internet, or grammar books, were used the least frequently. Nevertheless, the students admitted that they had improved in the field of using other informational sources (see question 2f in the Final Questionnaire).

10. What kind of teacher’s reaction was the most important for your writing?

This question was very important because it helped me with recognition of the most suitable ways of feedback. Six students (32%) marked the written response and thirteen students (68%) indicated the individual consultations during or after the lessons at school. Nobody ticked the whole class discussions, which surprised me, because I devoted some parts of the lessons to remedial teaching. The result showed that the individual discussions in the lessons, or after the lessons became the most important and valuable way of the teacher’s feedback for most of the students.

11. How much was the teacher’s help important for you and your writing?

The result showed that the teacher’s help was very important for twelve students (64%), who followed the teacher’s suggestions. Five students (26%) said that it was important but not crucial, which meant for me that they either worked more independently, which was positive, or they considered my suggestions intrusive,
or they were just careless. On the other hand, nobody ticked the answer “It was not important at all.” According to the answers, it can be said that the teacher’s advice was important for more than half of the students. In other words, the teacher influenced the quality of the stories. On the other hand, it indicated that the students were not able to progress without the teacher’s help in many cases.

12. Where did you prefer to write?
Fourteen students (74%) preferred writing at home because of better conditions concerning concentration and time. Four students (21%) preferred writing at school because of the teacher’s help and the lack of time to work at home. One student (5%) preferred writing somewhere else. Exactly, this student used to write in the park because of better inspiration. Generally, most of the students preferred writing at home because during noisier writing lessons, it was difficult to concentrate.

13. What do you think about reading your stories in front of the audience?
As the students were asked to present their stories by reading aloud in front of their classmates, the audience, I wanted to know how they felt. The students were invited to write their own answers. Six students (32%) enjoyed reading aloud, but nine students (47%) confessed that it was an embarrassing and unpleasant experience for them. Other four students (4%) were not sure and wrote „I do not know.” According to the answers, it can be concluded that the presentation of own stories by reading aloud was not a positive experience for almost half of the students. The explanation could be that such an oral presentation was a new experience for the students and the reason for the feelings of embarrassment.

14. Did you enjoy listening to your classmates’ stories?
By comparison with the previous question, the students’ feelings were more positive. Fifteen students (79%) enjoyed listening to the stories written by their classmates, and they described it as an amusing and interesting activity. Three students (16%) did not enjoy it because listening was boring, and one student (5%) was not sure. The result showed that the students preferred listening to the stories to reading them in front of the public.
15. Which of seven stories did you enjoy to write the most and why?

The students wrote the number of the story and provided their own short explanation. Story one was preferred by one student (5%) because it was interesting and tragic. Story two was „the masterpiece” for two students (11%) because it was easy to create, and one of these two students mentioned that he/she succeeded in describing Christmas atmosphere. The third story was chosen by other two students (11%), who described it as interesting. One of these students noted that she liked expressing her own feelings and emotions. Story four was mentioned by three students (16%) because it was quite easy to write, and it was interesting to read. The fifth story was not chosen by any students. Six students (32%) marked story six because it was, according to the authors themselves, interesting, funny, and easy to write. Story seven was chosen by four students (21%) because it was thrilling and exciting, as they had mentioned.

16. Which of seven stories was the most difficult for you to write?

Eighteen students (95%) agreed that story five was the most difficult of all. The students explained that the problem was connected with the key words which had to be used in passive voice. The students had to write more than three drafts to fulfill the task. One student (5%) had a different opinion and he chose story four because he had the problem to find an idea for the story.

17. What do you think about the project „Writing short stories?”

The last question helped me to uncover the students’ personal attitude to the whole project. The students were given four possibilities. For twelve students (63%), the project was a new, interesting, and beneficial experience. For six students (32%), it was satisfactory. On the other hand, two students (10%) described it as an uninteresting experience, which they did not enjoy at all. The result showed that more than half of the students in the target group reacted favourably and their attitude to the project was very positive.
Conclusion

According to the analysis of data I collected during the action research, I can confirm that the method of process writing improved the quality of writing short stories based on the key words in the following ways.

Firstly, writing short stories based on five key words promoted the knowledge of the key words. The students learned how to use these words in a meaningful context, which the genre of short stories provided. The students managed to overcome the problems with these words, which they had in the first drafts and thanks to the method of process writing they achieved very good results in their final versions.

Secondly, the students learned how to write in the method of process writing. Process writing, consisting of several stages, helped the students view writing as a process, in which they can change the content, and in which ideas are more important at the beginning of writing while accuracy is usually considered later.

In addition, the students tried to write for the audience, and they learned how to prepare the final story for publishing. During this final stage of process writing, the students could show their creativity in the field of visual arts, which I think is another valuable feature of process writing.

Further, it can be claimed that process writing enhanced learners’ independence by the means of self-studying and self-evaluation. I would like to underline that process writing influenced the teacher-student mutual cooperation and the cooperation among the students in a very positive way.

Obviously, the students improved the craft of story writing. They learned the basic features of short story and moreover, they created their own short stories. Each student in the target group produced a book of short stories on his/her own, which was the final outcome of the project. Of course, to claim that all the books are excellent would be rather exaggerated because the students were beginner writers. Nevertheless, I must state that their stories are worth reading.

The action research also showed some drawbacks of process writing. According to my own experience, I must say that process writing is not an easy way both for the teachers and the students. I must confirm that process writing is really time demanding. As for the teachers, it means a lot of time spent on reading and commenting on a large number of drafts. That is why the teachers should find
their own way of dealing with process writing, especially in large classes. On the other hand, time spent on commenting was a good investment because most of the students really followed the comments. But process writing was not easy for the students, either. According to the final questionnaire, the students found the stage of drafting to be the most demanding and time-consuming. According to my experience, I can say that process writing was problematic for reluctant and disorganised students. Sometimes it was difficult to get the drafts from them in time. I tried to motivate the students by giving an extra mark for each final version of the story.

Finally, I can state that the results of the action research proved that the method of process writing helped the students in the target group to improve the quality of their short stories based on five key words. The final questionnaire showed that more than half of the students found writing short stories a new, interesting, and beneficial experience. Some students told me that they would like to write more stories, which was the best reward of my work.
**Resumé**

Hlavním cílem této diplomové práce bylo zjistit, zdali metoda procesu psání přispívá ke zlepšení psaní krátkých příběhů založených na pěti klíčových slovech.

Teoretická část je rozdělena do třech tematických celků. V první části se věnuji psání z obecného hlediska, jeho roli ve výuce anglického jazyka, ale také problémům, které psaní přináší. Ve druhé části podrobně studuji metodu procesu psání, zabývám se hlouběji jednotlivými etapami včetně prostředků zpětné vazby. Ve třetí části hovořím o žánru krátkého příběhu a jeho hlavních znacích.

Praktická část je založena na akčním výzkumu, ve které popisují průběh výuky cílové skupiny od první hodiny přes ukázku procesu psání na pozadí tvorby dvou krátkých příběhů. Hlavní důraz byl kladen na rozbor vlivu procesu psání na vývoj příběhu od etapy plánování až ke konečné verzi a dále na analýzu správného užití klíčových slov v příbězích. Určitý prostor jsem také věnovala rozboru dotazníků, které poskytly velmi cenné informace o procesu psání v cílové skupině.

**Resume**

The main goal of this thesis was to find out whether the method of process writing would help to enhance writing short stories based on five key words.

The theoretical part is divided into three main thematic parts. In the first part, I am interested in the skill of writing from general point of view, its role in English Language Teaching and the problems, which writing brings. In the second part, I provide a deep study of the method of process writing and I investigate individual stages of process writing including the ways of feedback. In the third part, I talk about the genre of short story and the main features of this genre.

The practical part is based on action research, where I describe the course of teaching in the target group from the first lesson through illustrating the process approach on the basis of two short stories. The main stress was put on the influence of process writing on the development of the stories from the stage of planning to the final version and the analysis of the correct application of the key words in the stories. I also devoted some space to the analysis of the questionnaires, which provided a valuable source of information about process writing in the target group.
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Appendix I: Stories
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire before the Project

Questionnaire before the project

1. What is your attitude to writing in English?
   a) I love writing.
   b) I quite like writing.
   c) I do not like writing.
   d) I hate writing.

2. Is writing in English
   a) very easy for you?
   b) somewhat easy for you?
   c) difficult for you?
   d) extremely difficult for you?

3. What is the most difficult language area when you write?
   a) Grammar (word order, articles, tenses, etc.).
   b) Spelling.
   c) Collocations.
   d) Coherence (writer’s purpose and the line of thought).

4. How important is writing in English for you?
   a) Very important.
   b) Important.
   c) Not very important.
   d) Not important at all.

5. Which of the writing exercises do you prefer the most?
   a) Writing a short paragraph about your hobbies.
   b) Writing a gap-fill exercise.
   c) Copying a text from a textbook.
d) Writing a letter.
e) Writing a short story on your own.

6. Have you ever written a short story?
   a) Yes, I have.
   b) No, I haven’t.

7. If you have written a short story, what was your attitude?
   a) I really enjoyed it.
   b) I did not mind it.
   c) I did not enjoy it at all.

8. What kind of help do you need when you write?
   a) A dictionary.
   b) I ask my teacher.
   c) I ask my classmate.
   d) I do not need any help, I work on my own.

9. What do you usually do when you finish your writing?
   a) I read it and I make a lot of changes and rewriting.
   b) I read it and I make a few changes.
   c) I hardly ever make any changes or rewriting.

10. Write a short paragraph (50-60 words) about your last weekend.
    Use these key words: last/weekend/Saturday/go/visit
Appendix B: Lesson Plan-The Very Hungry Caterpillar

LESSON PLAN - The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Date: 1.10. 2008
Class: IX.A/IX.B
Length of the lesson: 45 min.
Materials: The text of the story, a self-developed worksheet
Aims: To read the story
  To analyze the story from the genre point of view
  To be familiar with basic features of a short story
Skills: Listening
  Reading
  Retelling the story
  Writing a simplified version of the story (50-80 words)
Assumption: The students are familiar with the short story genre and can recognize the basic features of a short story.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Warm-up activity</strong></td>
<td>Blackboard</td>
<td>5min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction of the story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Text: The Very Hungry Caterpillar</td>
<td>5min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to the story read by the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Controlled practice:</strong></td>
<td>Text: The Very Hungry Caterpillar</td>
<td>5min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the text of the story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Individual work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retelling the story</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Features of a short story</strong></td>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Controlled practice:</strong></td>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole class activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Writing</strong></td>
<td>Worksheet</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a shortened version of the story with five key words: caterpillar, hungry, eat, a stomachache, cocoon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole class activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worksheet

1) Match the words on the left with the Czech equivalents on the right.

a) The main character 1) Zápletka (zauzení děje)

b) Setting (time, place) 2) Vyvrcholení

c) Problem 3) Hlavní postava

d) Resolution 4) Problém (překážka)

e) Plot 5) Pozadí děje (čas, místo)

f) Climax 6) Rozužení

d) The narrator’s point of view 7) Osoba vypravěče

2) Read the story and answer the questions.

a) Does the story have a catchy first paragraph? (If yes, write it down.)

b) Who is the main character of the story?

c) What do you know about the main character?

d) What is the main character’s problem?

e) How does the main character solve the problem?

f) Can you describe the plot of the story?

g) Can you identify the climax in the plot?

h) What is the resolution of the story?
   - Happy ending?
   - Tragedy?

i) Can you describe the setting of the story?

Time:
Place:
j) Can you identify the narrator’s point of view?
1st person narrator
2nd person narrator
3rd person narrator
Appendix C: Writing Process Scheme

Writing process scheme

1. Planning

Your task is: To think about the topic

You can:

- Make notes about the ideas.
- Draw spidergrams.
- Create mind maps.

2. Drafting

Your task is: To create the first draft

You can:

- Use notes from the planning stage.
- Choose ideas and to add new ideas.
- Work with a dictionary.
- Ask the teacher for help.
- Work at school or at home.
- Change your mind.
- Cross out.
3. Editing

Your task is: To read your draft in order to improve it
You can:

➢ Use a checklist.
➢ Ask the teacher to comment your text.
➢ Ask someone else to read your text and comment it.

↓

4. Final version

Your task is: To write a final (finished) version of your story
You can:

➢ Write it in hand.
➢ Print it.
➢ Draw pictures.
➢ Print pictures.

↓

5. Publishing

Your task is: To present your story to the public in your own way
You can:

➢ Use any form of publishing you like (eg. a little book).
Appendix D: Checklist

Checklist

In your story, you should control:

- Five key words
- The length of the story from 50 to 100 words
- The main character(s)
- Problem
- Plot
- Setting
- Conflict
- Climax
- Resolution: Happy ending or tragedy

When you correct, you should control:

- Tenses

**Present simple tense:** I work/ he works/ Do you work? /Does he work? / I do not work. /He does not work.
Use it for: habits, routines, feelings, emotions, facts in the present (always, sometimes…).

**Present continuous tense:** I am working/ Are you working? /She is not working.
Use it for: current actions happening now (at the moment).

**Past simple tense:** I worked/ I went/ Did you work…? /Did you go…? /I did not work /I did not go.
Use it for: past events or states that started and finished in a certain time in the past (yesterday, last week, ten years ago…).
Regular verbs: played/happened
Irregular verbs: went/saw
Verb be: was/were

**Past continuous tense:** I was working. /Were you working? /I was not working.
Use it for: past actions which were happening in a certain time in the past (at 3 p.m. yesterday).
Present perfect simple tense: I have seen.../Have you seen...? /I have not seen...
Use it for: actions or states in the past and the present or actions happened in the past with having a result in the present.

Future:
Will: I will go.../Will you go? /I will not go.
Use it for: a sudden decision, offer, promise, prediction based on own assumption.
Be going to: I am going to work.../Are you going to work? /I am not going to work.
Use it for: plans, intentions, predictions based on facts, very near future.

Articles
Indefinite article: a /an - with singular form of countable nouns: a boy/an orange but not with uncountable nouns.

Definite article: the - with singular form of countable and uncountable nouns: the Boy/the water

Pronouns
personal pronouns (subject)/personal pronouns (object)/possessives
I-me-my-mine we-us-our-ours
you-you-your-yours you-you-your-yours
he-him-his-his they-them-their-theirs
she-her-her-hers
it-it-its-its

Capitalization and punctuation
Capital letter at the beginning of the sentence: We are happy.
Full stop at the end of the affirmative or negative sentence: We are happy.
Question mark at the end of a question: Are you happy?
Exclamation mark at the end of an exclamation sentence: Look!
Inverted commas for direct speech: “I am happy.” said Peter.

- **Active and passive voice**
  - **Active voice:** They paint the model.
  - **Passive voice:** The model is painted.

**Correction symbols**

- **S**- spelling (hláskování) eg. vinter
- **WO**- word order (pořádek slov) eg. Peter was last year in Italy.
- **G**- a grammar mistake (gramatická chyba) eg. He studyed French last year.
- **WW**- wrong word (nevhoďné slovo) eg. I have ten years.
- **P**- punctuation (interpunkce: tečka, čárka, otazník, vykřičník, uvozovky) eg. Are you good at Maths.
- **C**- concord (shoda např. podmět a přísudek) eg. They is my friends.
- **γ**- Something has been left out (něco chybí) eg. I am fond γ cars.
- **T**- wrong verb tense (chybný gram. čas) eg. I speak English now.
- **{ }**- Something is not necessary (nehoďné slovo) eg. I watch at TV very often.
Appendix E: Final Questionnaire

Final questionnaire

1. Do you think that process writing helped you to be a better writer?
   a) Yes, I think that I am a better writer.
   b) No, I don’t think that I am a better writer.
   c) I don’t know.

2. What have you learned or improved in the project? Underline one answer.
   a) I have learned the craft of story writing.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.
   b) I have learned how to write in the method of process writing.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.
   c) I have learned how to use the key words.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.
   d) I have learned to cooperate with my teacher in the class and outside the class more often.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.
   e) I have improved the cooperation with my classmates.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.
   f) I have improved to use other sources of information like: internet, dictionaries or grammar books.
      Yes, I have. / No, I haven’t. / I don’t know.

3. What do you think you need to improve in your writing?
   Write in your own words.

4. What was the most difficult stage of process writing for you?
   a) Planning.
   b) Drafting.
   c) Editing.
   d) Writing a final version.
   e) Publishing.
5. What was the least difficult stage of process writing for you?
   a) Planning.
   b) Drafting.
   c) Editing.
   d) Writing a final version.
   e) Publishing.

6. Which part of process writing was the most time-consuming for you?
   a) Planning.
   b) Drafting.
   c) Editing.
   d) Writing a final version.
   e) Publishing.

7. How much time did you spend on writing one draft on average?
   a) Less than ten minutes.
   b) From ten to thirty minutes.
   c) From thirty to fifty-four minutes.
   d) More than forty-five minutes.

8. How many drafts did you need to write on average before the final version?
   a) One draft
   b) Two drafts
   c) Three drafts
   d) Four drafts and more

9. What kind of help did you use during your writing the most often?
   a) Teacher’s help.
   b) Peers’ help.
   c) Dictionary.
   d) Other source(s):

10. What kind of the teacher’s reaction was the most useful for your writing?
a) Written comment.
b) The whole-class discussion.
c) Individual consultation during the lesson or after the lesson at school.

11. How much was the teacher’s help important for you and your writing?
   a) It was very important and I followed the teacher’s suggestions.
   b) It was quite important but it was not crucial.
   c) It was not important at all and I ignored it.

12. Where did you prefer to write?
   a) At home (explain why):
   b) At school (explain why):
   c) Somewhere else:

13. What do you think about reading your stories aloud in front of the audience?
   Write the answers in your own words, please.

14. How did you enjoy listening to your classmates’ stories?
   Write the answers in your own words, please.

15. Which of the seven stories did you enjoy to write the most and why?
   Write the number of the story and explain your choice in a few words.

16. Which of the seven stories was the most difficult for you to write?
   Write the number of the story and explain your choice.

17. What do you think about the project “Writing short stories?”
   a) It was a new, beneficial and interesting experience for me.
   b) It was satisfactory.
   c) It was a boring and uninteresting experience for me.
   d) Any other (write in your own words):
Appendix F: Permission Form

Permission Form

I hereby give permission to my English teacher, Bc. Veronika Komínková, to use excerpts of my drafts, final stories and my name for purpose of professional articles or other works concerning writing short stories and process writing.

I agree/ I do not agree

Full name:

In Valašské Meziříčí

Date: Signature:
Appendix G: Drafts of the First Story and Teacher’s Reaction

1st draft

All weird

I'm sick. Headache is too big
from yesterday. I have a sore
throat. It is makes a week.
I was a doctor. Pass. Day 1 today
and me said to help and paint
as pick pes. All to pick. Epideric
pissness. Fisher was the measles!
"Ahh!" "My Dad! My stomachache.
This is sick."

Word is all! All pick.

By By
Teresa, I like the first draft of your story. I enjoyed the dramatic situation and surprising ending. Do you really believe that everybody will die?

In the next draft I would suggest to:
- Start by telling a few words about you.
- Check all the key words (articles).
- Find the correct spelling in a dictionary.
- Revise the second sentence, for instance, I have had a bad headache since yesterday.
- Join the third and the fourth sentence: I have had a sore throat for a week.
- Revise the 5th sentence - it's too long.
- In English, we say: We got measles.

I am looking forward to your next draft. 😊
2nd draft

I'll need

This is a play for this week. I am Teresa and I am fourteen. I have got a problem. I have had a bad headache since yesterday. I have had a sore throat for a week. I was at the doctor today. Doctor Prov not helped me at all. He is a bad doctor. And my mum is sick, too. Everybody is sick this week. We must be all tired. My sister has got the measles. "Ahh!" I said. My best friend got a bad cold and a bad back. "Oh no!" I cried. The world is all. I think that everybody will die and I will cry! Will save!
2nd draft
Teresa, I think you did a very good job. I am pleased that you keep underlining the key words. I marked the areas which need correcting.
• at doctors
• Please look at the checklist and find how do we past simple tense negative.
  (just helped)

• Find the noun measles in a dictionary because there is a problem with a definite article.
  Thanks. 🙂

• X stomach ache
This is a play for plays week.
I am Teresa and I am fourteen.
I have got a problem. I have had a bad headache pine yesterday. I have had a sore throat for a week. I was at my doctor's today. Dr. Jones didn't help me at all. I think he is a bad doctor. And my mom is picky. Everybody is sick. I must be an epidemic. My sister has got measles." Nga! "I said. "My dad has just come from work and he has got a stomachache. "Oh no!" I cried. "The world is ill. I think that everybody will die and I will cry. A very good job."
Teresa, I think that your draft is ready for the final version. I indicated where you should make paragraphs. We can discuss it together in the lesson if you like. Now it is time to think about the way of printing. You can write your story in hand or you can use your PC. You can also add a picture to make your story visually attractive. Thanks! 😊
Appendix H: The First Draft of Story Six

1st draft

The key words: name, be born, old nickname, height

The New Identity

Hello, my name is Grizelda von Kohen. I was born in 30 April 1564 in Old Irish. I am very very old. I am 154 cm height and I weight 58 kilos. I have got six sisters. My hair is long and black. My nickname is „the Witch“. My hobbies are broomlying and listening music. My favourite colours are black and green. I am a profession a Danish princess and I want be a queen in England and Danish. I eat naughty children. Be careful!

Dear Jiřina, your story develops very well. I like that you tried hard to use all the key words. Excellent! In the next draft I suggest you should:

1) Use the sentence with the nickname just after the 1st sentence.
2) The word „height“ = noun (vyššina), so we say either „My height is 154 cm.“ or „I am 154 cm tall.“
3) The word „weight“ = noun (váha), but „weigh“ = verb (važit) ⇒ „My weight is 58 kg.“ or „I weigh 58 kg.“
4) We do not say „I am profession a Danish princess“, but we say „I am the Danish princess.”
5) Please, try to use your checklist to identify mistakes (see correction symbols) 😊
This is a play for this week. I am Tereza and I am fourteen. I have got a problem. I have had a bad headache since yesterday. I have had a sore throat for a week.

I was at my doctor's today. Doctor Popp didn't help me at all. I think he is a bad doctor. And my mom is sick too. Everybody is sick, it must be an epidemic. My sister has got measles. "Righ!" I said. My dad has just come from work and he has got chickenpox. "Oh, me!" I cried.

The world is ill. I think that everybody will die and I will cry.
I was ill. It was terrible.
I went to the doctor's and he told me:
"It isn't good! You have got measles. You must stay in bed for 2 months."
"Why?" I thought to myself.

Then I went home. I had a headache and a sore throat.

Suddenly, I fell on the pavement.
"Ow!... my stomach! What is more! I have got a big stomach ache now!"
Please! I want to be healthy!
I had measles two months ago. It began with the first zits on my skin and then it got worse. I was very scared. And that is why I went to hospital.

There were many patients in the waiting room. One of them had stomach ache, another one had a headache and a sore throat. But I felt better when I saw these sick patients.

After fifteen minutes I entered the surgery and the doctor checked me. He told me that I would be well in two weeks. I was very happy after hearing good news.
STORY TWO by Kateřina Klanicová (student 13)

2nd story

Key words: a long time, since Christmas, (to) meet, (to) hear, (to) be

Magic Christmas

I have done many things since Christmas. I studied, I travelled and I started to attend a language course. A year is too short. I have many friends but I have not seen them for a long time.

And Christmas is here again. Snow is falling when I look out of my window. I can see the white trees, the children are sledging, the people are smiling and the birds are pecking corn. Christmas atmosphere is all around. We can hear Christmas carols. The air is full of the smell of baked sweets.

I am going out. I am very happy because I can meet my old friends. I like winter.
STORY TWO by Karina Moslerová

Key words: a long time, since Christmas, (to) meet, (to) hear, (to) see

Story 2

A STRANGER

It was 20 December. I was walking to the park when it happened. I met him. He was very nice. He looked at me and he invited me for coffee. We talked about various things. He was very amusing. We exchanged our mobile numbers. I wanted to see him again. Next day he called me and we went out for a short walk.

I have been dating with him since Christmas and I am very happy. I hope that we will be together for a long time.

Oh! I can hear my mobile phone. He is calling ……wow!
STORY TWO by Pavla Šťastná (student 17)

2nd story

Key words: a long time, since Christmas, (to) meet, (to) hear, (to) be

Winter

Hello, I am Peggy. I like winter very much. On the other hand, I don’t like shops full of people.

I don’t like waiting for Christmas either because I like getting presents. Imagine! I have had a great book since last Christmas which I have read five times.

During Christmas I often meet my friends and family and I love listening to Christmas songs. One can hear them everywhere.

When Christmas is over, I am very sad because it will be a long time to wait for next Christmas.
STORY THREE

Membership Card

I wanted to go to a party. But I had to buy a membership card because it was Golden Club’s party. My friends bought the cards too and they joined me. We wanted to have a good time.

When we entered the room, there were not many people. We stayed there for a while. We watched the show but after half an hour we decided to leave and we went home. The party was very boring.

At home we watched a good comedy on TV. The membership card was waste of money.
Hi! My name is Tom. I was at home and I was watching TV when I heard a ring. There were my friends at the door.

We went out together and we visited a car show. But it was boring. We joined our classmates there. They showed us their new membership cards to the White Water Rafting Club. It was very interesting.

I wanted to hear more but I had to go home because it was late.
I woke up and I went down to the kitchen for breakfast yesterday. My mum told me about my grandmother’s birthday party. I went there after school. The party was very boring for me. I left quickly and I went home.

I heard some music on the square and I went out. There was a US Army show. I joined the crowd and I watched the show. It was very exciting.

Suddenly, I fainted and when I woke up I was on the plane. I had a membership card to the US Army in my hands and I was flying to Iraq...
I was with my parents in Spain for summer holidays. We stayed in an expensive hotel.

But when we came into our room, the room was a mess. We phoned a receptionist to send a clean lady to tidy the mess at once. The receptionist told us that the clean lady was away but she would be back soon. We had to wait almost an hour. We were furious.

When she came, she had to do the washing up, clean the bathroom and make beds. We had to wait for another hour. We decided to complain.

Later, the hotel manager invited us for free dinner. After that our mood was better.
STORY FOUR

Key words: tidy, phone, do the washing up, later, be back

DOGS

I set out with our dog Rex to the garden at 10 a.m. Mum told me to be back until 11.45 for lunch.

When we were going through the park, suddenly, a big dog ran out from the bush. Rex and I began to run but the dog followed us. Luckily, his owner called him back. Then, my mum phoned me but I didn’t answer the call because I was near our flat.

Later, I had to tidy the kitchen and do the washing up because I was late for lunch and my mum did not want to listen to my story.
4. story

Key words: tidy, phone, do the washing up, later, be back

New life

Late in the evening, I saw a small drenched figure of a woman standing in a phone box. She was phoning to somebody, she told that she would not come back to the flat where she had to tidy up, do the washing up and cook. Her life was better. I wanted to help her, but she refused. Some days later, I saw her photo in the newspaper. She was missing. Nobody has seen her since that time, but I know about her. I sometimes meet her and she is happy and smiles. She has a new happy life. I want to tell anybody her secret.
Story 5 - House design

The Ants would like to have a new house. First, their new house is designed by a famous ant designer. His work is advertised on the ant’s internet. The kitchenette is designed next to the living room. The bathroom is designed on the ground floor. Blue tiles are chosen for it because it is Mrs. Ant’s favourite colour. Two bedrooms will be painted light green and pink. The toilet is opposite the bathroom. The small play room for little ants will be built at the end of the corridor.

The house will be small and comfortable. The Ants are looking forward to living in it.
V. Fashion Show

Our school magazine came with an interesting article. It was advertised last week. The advertisement said:

We are looking for students who will help us with a fashion show. Don’t worry, it is easy. Models for the show are designed at school. But at first, the materials are chosen, the models are painted and the work is finished.

We hope that you will help us with the school project. Thank you. The School Parliament.
5. story

**Key words:**
Design, choose, advertise, finish, paint

**MY WORK**

Hello. I work as an editor. I would like to tell you about my work.

First, the article is designed in the morning. After that, the name of the article is chosen and the pictures are painted or taken for the article. Article is printed and it is presented in the afternoon. Sometimes this article is advertised in the papers.

Then, the job is finished.
Story six

Wanted

A very dangerous person got lost last week!

Her **name** is Goldie Gold. Nobody knows if she is really called Goldie or if it is her **nickname**. Her disappearance is very strange because she took a few bricks of gold with her. The bricks were stolen from the National Bank.

Goldie is a bit odd. She **was born** in London and she is eighty years **old**. Her **height** is only 150 centimetres and she is fair haired. She loves chocolate and expensive cars.

She is probably in Birmingham now. The prize for capturing her is very high (\$50,000).
Hello, my name is Grizelda Von Kohen. My nickname is „The Witch.“

I was born on 30 April 1564 in old Ireland. I’m very old. My height is 145 centimetres and my weight is 58 kilos. I have got six sisters. My hair is long but you cannot see it. I usually wear a big hat. My hobbies are broomflying and listening to music. My favourite colours are black and green. I am the Irish princess but I would like to rule in England and Denmark.

I eat naughty children. Be careful!
Story 6

Karel’s Identity

Name: Karel Niedermayer
Nickname: Major
Place of birth: Prague, the Czech Republic
Age: 25
Height: 199
Hair: Short and black
Favourite colour: Red and blue
Hobbies: Playing basketball

The famous basketball team is looking for a new team player. Listen! Here is one of the best candidates.

“Hello, my name is Karel Niedermayer but people use my nickname Major. I was born in Prague. I am twenty-five years old. My height is 199 centimetres and my weight is 92 kilos. My hair is short and black. My favourite colours are red and blue. I love basketball. I have been playing it since I was ten. I want to be the best player in your team. I have won many games.”

Will he be the new player? What do you think?
STORY SEVEN by David Stodůlka (student 4)

Story 7: A Dangerous Mission

Key words: scared, appear, strange, creature, look like

Hi! My name is Jacob and I am a spaceman. My work is to explore new things. My present mission is going to land on Mars. It is called „The Red Planet.“

Before the start

Operator: „Spaceman Jacob, are you ready to start?“

Jacob: „Yes, operator. I am ready.“

Operator: „Good luck!“

Later

Jacob: „My spaceship is landing. Now I am going out. OH! What is it? A strange creature appeared in front of me. I am scared. The monster looks like a big green frog. I would rather escape. Go away! Go away goblin! Look, I have got a knife!“

The creature was scared and I managed to escape. I went to my spaceship and I flew away quickly.
The traveller’s memories- from my diary

My friend John Lock and I wanted to visit South America. We went to Columbia last midnight.

When the plane was landing, the creatures and alliens appeared. We were scared, because they looked like very ugly people. It was strange feeling.

John found a mobile phone and called for help. After an hour we were rescued.
STORY SEVEN by Petra Lukášová (student 14)

STORY SEVEN

Key words: scared, appear, strange, creature, look like

New Friends

I met my new friends last week. They appeared in our garden. Imagine! They were little dwarves called Hugo and Max. How do I know their names?

I was sitting in the garden in the evening. Suddenly, I heard somebody speaking. I was scared and I hid behind a tree. I could see two small strange creatures. They looked like babies.

Finally, I found out that they were our garden dwarves Hugo and Max. Now we are good friends.