



How to use an Alternative Pencil Flip Chart

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How to use an Alternative Pencil flip chart and some suggested activities.

Using the chart:

The idea is that you ask the student to select a letter by pointing to the letter strip at the top. When you start using the chart for the first time you will name the letters (and sound if you wish but you must name) one by one and then ask the student if they want to write one of these letters. The YES and NO cards should ideally be on a piece of ribbon and worn by the communication partner like necklaces. This makes them easy to hold up and put down so that the student can answer by looking at their choice. If they look at YES you go through each letter on that strip asking "is it this one" until they choose. If they say NO you model the selection of "turn the page" by pointing to it yourself and saying "turn the page". You then flip to the next set of letters and repeat the process. Each letter the student selects is written on post it notes, on the white board backing or on a note pad which they can easily see.

Always give positive feedback to what the student writes and then say "I'll show you how I would write it". See example below under diary entries.

Activities to support the use of the chart:

- **Exploring letters.** At the most basic level you say to the student, we are going to do some work with letters. You choose the letters you want to write. You then go through the charts until they have chosen what they want to say. You will need to model "Finished" to start with. You write the letter/s they choose, name each one (and if you wish sound each one).
- **Signing in.** Instead of, or as part of, answering the register the student identifies the letters of their own name to start the day.

- **Diary entries.** If you are using a communication board, book or high tech vocabulary for the student to tell you what they did at the weekend/on holiday/last night the option "it's not here" should be on every page. If what they did is not on the page there is an opportunity to try out some spelling. You need to get a system going with home so that they let you know what the student did at the weekend/on holiday/last night because you may need to model a correct spelling. For example, if the student watched a DVD of Frozen last night and they write: WVFZ you say "well done, those are some of the letters you need. Now I'll show you how I would write it." You then write the sentence correctly. **Never tell the student they are wrong and never say that you are going to show them how to write it properly.** If the student selects a string of letters that are unrelated to the answer still praise them for selecting some letters and tell them the letters they have selected, then tell them that you will show them how you would write it etc.
- **Predictable chart writing** involves taking turns to finish a sentence where the beginning has been written already. You always model the first line and the student/s go second. Predictable charts normally use the student's communication system for them to identify their answers but "writing it up" could be an extension activity. Examples of sentence starters are:
 - I like
 - I don't like
 - I see
 - I like to
 - I don't like to
 - I can
 - I am
 - Today I will
 - I will go

- I like to eat
- A is for, B is for and so on
- I want
- I saw

Some of the above might be contextualised. For example, you might write "I want" in relation to Xmas presents or "I saw" in relation to a visit you have just been on.

- **Recording reaction to a story or other piece of text.** This could be in the form of predictable charts where you start with them using the communication book/high tech vocab to complete a sentence "I thought the story was _____" and then type what they thought.
- **Write a letter/email.** The student could write a letter to a friend in class inviting them to visit, come to a party etc. or asking them what they are doing at the weekend etc. You can make some suggestions and use the YES/NO cards to find out what they want to do.
- **Pick a picture.** Give the student some picture to choose from. Encourage them to write about what they can see in the picture.
- **Hangman.** Make a simple version of the game. You might give a picture clue for example.

The most important thing to remember with Alternative Pencils is that you are not expecting the student to spell correctly, especially when they start out. They make a choice, you write it down and name (and if you wish sound) it. If appropriate, you might then show them how you would write it.

There are some helpful video's that show students using Alternative Pencils on this link:

<http://alternativepencils.weebly.com/alternative-pencils-in-action.html>

There are some suggested activities at this link:

<http://alternativepencils.weebly.com/meaningful-writing-activities.html>