

# Tutoring in 2020

## *Pandemic Style Virtual Learning*

Hello! I'm so happy that you have continued to honor your student and are willing to put in the time to make any sort of virtual learning a priority. Virtual learning will not be the same as in-person tutoring, and it is not our goal to make it be. Literacy Partners goal right now is to help you keep your adult student engaged throughout the course of the pandemic.

Below we have a few ideas for you to try with your students. Some are via phone, some email, and some even texting would work for. You chose what is right for you right now. That may change as you move along—and you are more than welcome to use as little or as many of the resources we have to continue learning with your student.

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### Guidelines for Virtual Learning & Reengaging With Your Student

1. If you have not been meeting for classes regularly, start slow.
  - a. Send a text asking them how they are doing. Regular text messaging reminds your student that you have not forgotten about them.
  - b. Send a voice message via text using one of the questions below.
  - c. Call and have a short lesson via phone (no more than 10 min long if possible).
2. If you have been meeting with your student via Skype/Facetime/Zoom, etc, please continue to do so (if it is working for you). If you need a break or a change, talk to your student about incorporating some virtual learning in to shake things up.
3. Make virtual learning fun. Be silly, make it low stress on both of you!
4. Consider exchanging written letters as a practice in grammar and sentence formation. If you need help with stamps, please let us know.
5. **ADVANCED:** Consider trying to make a short YouTube video lesson. You can send the link to your learner in a text message and chat about it after. Here is a link to a step by step video made by *Literacy Network*. If you would like help with this, please ask.
  - a. Presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXDUCmzXuDo&feature=youtu.be>

# Some things to think about when starting/changing over to virtual learning:

## 1. **Make it relevant to your student!**

Most adult learners need to be able to see the relevancy of what they are learning as applied to their lives. How might continuing their learning virtually offer them skill sets they need to improve their work performance or master a particular task (grocery shopping, banking, talking to their children's teacher, etc.)? We have to continually remind ourselves that we are not teaching children, and adult learning has to clearly show real life value—and adults will likely see if it doesn't.

## 2. **Exploring is key!**

Adult learners accumulate knowledge more effectively when they are active participants in their own learning process. Designing their lessons to encourage them to explore a subject matter on their own and learn from personal experiences is one of the best ways to teach an adult. *Pose a question and then ask them to arrive at a solution (or craft a paragraph about it) on their own. When they acquire knowledge on their own, they are inspired to continue pursuing knowledge.*

## 3. **Consider the source**

Your student has likely gathered significant life experience already. Use their experiences, likes, dislikes (yes, those too!) and passions to ignite learning. ***The 3 Questions a Week*** exercise below can be modified. *Let's say your learner loves soccer. Design questions such as: 1. Who is your favorite player? 2. Do you think Major League Soccer will have a season during the pandemic? 3. Will there be a World Cup in 2020?*

## 4. **Emotionally-driven content**

No matter the age of a learner (1<sup>st</sup> grade or 45 years old), learning things is ALWAYS easier if you can emotionally connect to it. If they are interested in whatever the subject matter is, they are more than likely to absorb and retain the information, as well as stay engaged throughout the entire lesson.

## 5. **Woah! Back up a minute! Delete! Delete!**

It is easy for an instructor to overload a student. Be sure to break up your sessions/lessons into small chunks, and maybe only send one lesson or a couple questions a week. The last thing we want to do is overload our students to the point where learning evokes anxiety and dread. Are you feeling overloaded right now? I bet you are—I tend to write a lot! Now imagine if I was writing this all in Spanish or French. I can imagine the feelings you would encounter as you tried to read through it (if you even made it to the end before quitting).

## 3 Questions a Week

This lesson can be done via email, text (typed out or audio message), or via FaceTime/Zoom/Skype call. You choose what will work best. You can do as many questions as you'd like, but please remember to ease your student into this form of learning. Try not to overwhelm them in the first week or two.

1. How is your family today?
  - a. BEGINNER: How is your family today?
  - b. INTERMEDIATE: Did you have a nice weekend?
  - c. ADVANCED: What did you and your family do this weekend?
  
2. What is the weather like today?
  - a. BEGINNER: What is the weather like today?
  - b. INTERMEDIATE: Do you like all this rainy weather we are having?
  - c. ADVANCED: What is your favorite thing to do on rainy days and why?
  
3. Do you like the season fall?
  - a. BEGINNER: Do you like the season fall?
  - b. INTERMEDIATE: What is your favorite season of the year?
  - c. ADVANCED: Wisconsin is lucky enough to experience all 4 seasons. What is your (or your family's) favorite thing to do during each season?

### Other questions ideas to consider are:

#### Beginner:

1. What makes you laugh?
2. What do you like about your job?
3. What was the last movie you saw?
4. Do you have a nickname? If so, what is it?
5. Would you rather vacation in Alaska (cold) or Hawaii (hot)?
6. Do you like surprises?
7. What are your hobbies?
8. If you could choose a pet, what would it be?
9. Are you a clean or messy person?
10. What is your favorite Holiday?
11. How are you doing today>?
12. Are you handling everything okay during the pandemic? Is there any way we can help?

#### Intermediate:

1. After work, would you rather play a game, visit with friends, watch a movie or read?
2. If you were a super hero, what power would you have? Why?
3. What is your favorite family recipe?
4. Do you have any family traditions? If yes, what are they?

5. What three items would you take with you to a deserted island?
6. What kitchen appliance do you use the most?
7. Have you ever been to a surprise party?
8. Tell me about what school was like when you were young.
9. What is the last book you read? When did you read it?
10. Do you collect anything?
11. Do you know ALL the lyrics to any one song? If yes—what is it!?
12. Talk to me about your first job. What did you like? What did you not like?

Advanced:

1. What three things do you think of most each day?
2. If you had a warning label, what would yours say?
3. Are you an introvert or an extrovert (might need defining)?
4. If you could share a meal with 3 individuals, living or dead, who would they be?
5. On a scale of 1-10, how funny would you say you are? Would your family agree?
6. Tell me about the most intelligent person you know.
7. Who in this world knows you the best?
8. What is one thing you will never do again?
9. Tell me about first job.
10. If you could completely get rid of one month out of the year, which month would it be and why?
11. Tell me about an embarrassing moment in your life.
12. If you had to give your auto-biography (book you wrote about your life) a title, what would it be?

General Topics for Any Level:

1. Shared Interests: Sports, holiday traditions, recipes, family, recreational activities.
2. What did you do last week – Monday, Tuesday, etc. This can be good practice with past tense. Be sure to share what you did as an example (use a bank of vocabulary words, or list of verbs to help).

## ***Writing Prompts***

This lesson can be done via email, text (typed out or audio message), or via FaceTime/Zoom/Skype call. You choose what will work best. Our recommendation would be to just do one writing prompt a week, maximum. However, you know your student better than anyone. If they thrive with this type of learning, you can do as many questions as you'd like. All that we ask is to please remember to ease your student into this form of learning. Try not to overwhelm them in the first week or two.

1. Describe your favorite place in as much detail as possible.
2. Describe your favorite fictional character in as much detail as possible.
  - a. What do they look like?
  - b. Where do they live?
  - c. Do they have any non-human powers?
  - d. Who is their nemesis?

3. Describe a famous person (singer, athlete, political, actor/actress, etc) that you admire. Focus on both their appearance, as well as their traits that make them admirable.
4. What is your favorite sport or hobby? How would you describe how this sport/hobby is done to someone who has never heard of it before?
5. What is your favorite place in the world? Describe it in as much detail as possible. This can be a place you have been, or a place you dream of going.
6. Tell me about your most memorable holiday. I want to feel like I am sitting there with you. Talk about who is there, what everything looks like: tastes, smells, sounds, etc.
7. Pick your favorite food. Describe what you taste, smell and sense while eating or drinking it.
8. Give directions from one point to another. Describe the trip using road names, landmarks, and or landscape that you encounter along the way.
9. Explain how to cook your favorite meal. Pretend I want to make this, but you forgot the recipe at home. Give me a step by step instruction (don't worry, I won't check the measurements to see if they are correct!)
10. Explain how to make a bed. This task is seemingly simple, but allows you to write about everyday habits you might never think of in detail.
11. Write about 3 specific goals you want to achieve in your lifetime.
12. Describe the world 100 years from now. Tell me how people live, new inventions that have made life easier, and what everyday life looks like. Also-what hasn't changed?
13. Talk about your earliest memory. What happened? How well do you remember the events?
14. If you had the power to change one thing in the world today, what would it be?
15. If peanut butter wasn't called peanut butter, what would it be called? Why?

#### **Goals with writing prompts:**

1. Goals should be tailored to each student individually. Use the Ventures level your student currently is in to help guide you. Level 1 students should show knowledge of the question to prove they read it correctly, while Level 4 students should be writing in complete sentences. Look to see if your student is using the right tense of a verb, that pronouns are placed correctly, and if contractions are being used. If your student isn't at that level, then excuse mishaps without mentioning. We want to use these exercises to build confidence!
2. This exercise should be fun! There are plenty of silly questions above. If you can't find one to suit your student, search the internet or better yet—make up your own!
3. By responding to prompts such as these, we are not only developing our student's writing skills, but also grammar and vocabulary. Look for chances to learn about your student (maybe weekly questions can be pulled from things you learn from their writing).

This was a lot of information to consume, even for someone who has spoken English their entire life. Take a breath. Do not put pressure on yourself to do all of these exercises at once. This document was made to be a resource that you could continually look back at for inspiration, guidance and motivation. As you navigate this virtual learning world, please don't ever hesitate to contact our Coordinator Anne Laurent ([annielaurent@gmail.com](mailto:annielaurent@gmail.com), 920-328-5552 cell) with any questions. Questions and roadblocks will occur, and Literacy Partners is here to help you and your student the entire way.