

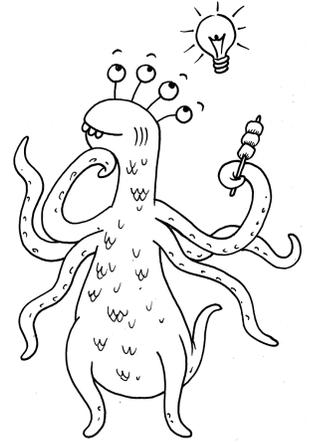
WRITING WITH FRIENDS

Cowriting Exercises to Try with a Buddy

by Caroline Bliss Larsen

Coauthor with Raun Melmed of the *Monster Diary*/*ST4 Mindfulness Books for Kids* series

Grab a buddy (even a virtual buddy) and try any or all of these exercises. Be as creative or silly as you want! In each exercise, be sure to tell your partner what you think they've done well. If you offer any helpful suggestions, be kind.



- 1) Together with your partner, brainstorm ideas for a memorable character. Think about their personality traits, likes and dislikes, how they look, what their background is, and so forth. Once you've agreed on these, each partner will then work independently to write a short story about that character. When you're both finished, share your stories with each other. Discuss your favorite parts of each other's stories. Now see if you can combine the best parts of each story into a new story!
- 2) Independently, without discussing, one partner will come up with a funny or embarrassing situation to be in. The other partner will come up with a couple characters—the more unique, the better! Then, working together, put the characters in that situation and see what mischief or hilarity ensues! What traits or quirks about the characters makes the situation even funnier or more disastrous?
- 3) What are you an expert on? Think of something you know a lot about that your writing partner might not, such as birds or reptiles, music, your faith/religion, where you were born, your native language, baking cookies, doing funny voices, drawing cars, or something else. Now, you and your partner will interview each other about your chosen topics. (Remember the question words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*.) Then, independently, you will write a story that somehow uses what you learned about your partner's topic, and your partner will do the same about your topic. Then read your partner's story and tell them what they got right about your topic and what isn't quite right. Also tell them what you like about the story. Have them do the same for you.
- 4) Have one partner write a page, a scene, or a chapter of a story. Or even just a paragraph! Then have the other partner write the next one. Alternate like this and see what amazing or hilarious story you come up with!