

7 TIPS FOR TEACHING STORY-WRITING

1. LET THEM INVENT THEIR OWN CHARACTERS.

IF PUPILS CREATE THEIR OWN CHARACTERS (FROM A FRAMEWORK YOU PROVIDE) THEY WILL FIND IT EASIER TO WRITE. 'MAXIMUS THE GLADIATOR' OR 'THE EVIL GUMMY BEARS FROM MARS' ARE MORE FUN TO WRITE ABOUT BECAUSE YOU'VE INVENTED THEM.

2. GET THEM WRITING IN PAIRS - ONE LINE EACH.

WRITING AN ENTIRE STORY CAN BE DAUNTING - ESPECIALLY IF YOU DON'T LIKE WRITING. BUT MOST PEOPLE CAN WRITE ONE SENTENCE. GET YOUR CLASS INTO PAIRS AND TELL THEM TO WRITE ONE LINE EACH. IF A PAIR IS STRUGGLING - TELL THEM TO WRITE ONE WORD EACH.

3. START FROM THE MOST EXCITING PART.

AUTHORS OFTEN SAY THAT THE BEGINNING (OR THE END) ARE THE TRICKIEST PARTS OF A BOOK TO WRITE. START YOUR STUDENTS WRITING FROM THE MOST EXCITING PART OF THEIR STORIES. THEY CAN ALWAYS 'FLASH BACK' TO THE START LATER.

4. TRY SOME WRITING WITHOUT PLANNING.

THERE ARE (AT LEAST!) TWO TYPES OF CREATIVE PERSONALITY: 'PLANNERS' LIKE TO ASSEMBLE THEIR TALES LIKE A METHOD ACTOR BUILDING A CHARACTER. THE OTHER TYPE, 'LEAPERS', LIKE TO CONJURE UP SOMETHING COOL IN A FLASH OF INVENTION. ARE YOU CATERING FOR BOTH TYPES OF WRITER, OR JUST PLEASING THE 'PLANNERS'?

5. DON'T LET THEM GET STUCK ON NAMES.

CHOOSING NAMES CAN BE A TIME WASTER. IF THEY ARE WRITING A ROMAN STORY, GIVE THEM A SHORT LIST OF HISTORICAL NAMES AND TELL THEM TO CHOOSE A 'GOODIE' AND A 'BADDIE'. LOOKING FOR MODERN NAMES? ASK THEM IF THERE ARE ANY UNUSUAL SOUNDING STREETS NEAR THE SCHOOL. 'STONEGOOD PLACE' COULD TURN INTO THE HEROIC CAPTAIN GOODSTONE OR THE EVIL DR STONEGOOD.

6. KEEP THE PACE UP.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO STOP THEM WRITING (BRIEFLY) - AND INTRODUCE EXTRA TASKS: "RATHER THAN 'SAID', WHAT WORD CAN YOU FIND TO MAKE IT MORE DRAMATIC?" "MAKE THE NEXT LINE YOU WRITE, A LINE OF DIALOGUE!" "IF YOU ARE NOT WRITING THIS LINE, THINK OF A TITLE FOR YOUR STORY." "USE A SIMILE - 'AS GREY AS SLATE' IN YOUR NEXT LINE."

7. END THE SESSION WITH A READING.

SHARING YOUR NEW STORY WITH THE CLASS IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR. IF THERE'S NO TIME FOR EVERYONE TO READ THEIRS, USE A RANDOM METHOD - LIKE A SPINNER - TO CHOOSE.

LOOKING FOR STORY-WRITING RESOURCES?

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Robin Price runs creative writing workshops in schools and has created photocopy-free story-writing materials on a number of topics including: [The Celts](#), [The Greeks](#), [The Vikings](#), [The Romans](#), [The Egyptians](#), [Graphic novels](#) and [Shakespeare](#): [The Tempest](#); [Macbeth](#), [Romeo and Juliet](#) and [Richard III](#).

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