

### ART FORM

Creative Writing

### LEARNING AREA

Language and Literacy

### SUBJECT

English

### TARGET GROUP

Key Stage 1 + 2

### MATERIALS

Pen/pencil and paper for everyone

Large sheets of paper (flipchart size)

A selection of different styles of music to listen to

### SPACE

Classroom.

### DURATION

You can use the range of exercises as a menu for a one-off session or a long-term project.

### ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

All of these exercises I have used with the Key Stage 2 age group. I have also used them in very different contexts; with senior groups, with individual playwrights, with community groups. My philosophy is that any constituency can take on board the most sophisticated tasks, if they are presented in an appropriate way.

With all of the exercises included here, my guiding lights (in terms of the age group) have been to (a) take on board the language-experience of the group, and (b) the life-experience of the group.

Adapt the exercises to the needs/experience of the class. I have been constantly amazed at the way in which primary students can grasp the basic principles of 'what makes a story work'.

My advice to the teacher is to try the work out on yourself first. This might seem a bit of an arduous task, but it will bear gold.

**NB. This is the warm up stage for an extended workshop by Noel Greig, broken into five stages – Creative Writing Warm-ups, Developing the use of words, Creating a Character, Creating a Story, Dialogue. Each workshop can be downloaded separately. Within each section there are a number of exercises, some of which fall into natural sequences. You can use the range of exercises as a menu for a one-off session or a long-term project. It is important however, that you remember to use warm up exercises before each exercise.**

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Communication Skills – discuss, list, classify and shape words. Perform original poetry. Interview other pupils.
- Creative Skills – develop rhythms for words, build sound-scapes, invent characters and write poetry and stories.
- Decision Making and Thinking Skills – make judgments and draw conclusions, select and organise appropriate information, and represent words in appropriate forms.
- Managing Information – work with a focus and follow directions in relation to a task.

**INSTRUCTIONS****Going for a walk** ( Allow 10-30 minutes)

1. Go for a walk. Round the block, round the park or if you are in a school, round the playground or playing field. Be conscious of what you are seeing and hearing. Be aware of your body moving in space, the way you are breathing, the ground beneath your feet, and the air around you. What are you seeing, hearing, and feeling? Hear the words in your head. Allow phrases to form themselves. Allow the rhythm of the walking to infect the rhythm of the words in your head. If you start to speak the words, let it happen.
2. Return from your walk
3. Write:
  - Ten things you saw
  - Five sounds you heard
  - Three feelings you experienced
  - One question that is prompted by what you saw, heard or felt

**Lying on the floor** (Allow 5-10 minutes)

1. Lie on the floor in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
2. Listen to the sounds outside the building or the room. After a minute or so, listen to the sounds inside the room. Finally, listen to the sounds inside your own body.
3. Allow your hearing-sense to travel back-and-forth between these distances, identifying the specific sounds.
4. Write:
  - The type and quality of the sounds you heard.
  - One question about anything you heard or felt.

**Count and write** (Allow 2 minutes)

1. Count to 10 and write a description of how you look.
2. Count to 20 and write a description of today's weather.

**Pink elephants** (Allow 3 minutes)

Think of pink elephants and write an account of what you did yesterday.

**I am writing** (Allow 3-5 minutes)

This time again you will be 'just writing', but there will be no numbers or pink elephants or given subjects. You are going to write, but until you start you will have no idea of what is going to come out.

1. Start with the words 'I am writing....' and do not stop.
2. If you find that, even if only for a second, your mind feels blank, just write
  - a. 'I am writing, I am writing, I am writing.....' until something else appears.
3. Don't plan, don't censor yourself, just write.
4. Ready, steady.....go. [Example 1 below]
5. When you have finished, underline words, phrases, and sentences that you particularly liked. [Example 2 below]

**Example 1**

Before starting work this morning I did this exercise myself. What came out was the following jumble, including the bad grammar and spelling:

I am writing because I am starting to write this book what is a book a book is something between hard covers no not that it can be between papercovers and it is called a paperback my back is aching at the moment so i'm nt looking forward to sitting at the machine nad typing in fact my back is so bad I think i'll have to lie down but I cant lie down because i have to carry on with this exercise for the book the book the book I can't think of oh yes I can.....etc.

**Example 2**

From my own effort I liked the rhythm of 'papercovers and its called a paperback my back'

**Outcome:**

Even at this very simple stage of the process, we can learn to value quirkiness and originality in what we write and to trust our instincts.

### Music and words (any length of time)

Music and rhythm can provide an excellent stimulus to the writing process.

1. Close your eyes and listen to a piece of music for a few moments.
2. Let the music continue. Write a speech on a particular subject matter: war, peace, love, football etc. Don't plan ahead. Allow the music to filter into what you are writing, the words you use etc.

### Instant Book (2-3 minutes)

1. Place an imaginary book in front of you. In it is a brand new story. No-one has ever read it before.
2. Open it at the first page. Write down the first three sentences of the story.
3. Now turn to page three, and run your finger down to the third paragraph.
4. Write the first three sentences of that paragraph.
5. Now turn over to the next page, on which is an illustration. Describe it.
6. Now turn to the last page find the very last three sentences of the book. Write them.
7. Close the book. Look at the title on the front. Write the title of the book.

### Links to other learning areas:-

- The Arts – using music, art and design and drama to develop aspects of the spoken and written word.
- Personal Development – explore aspects of feelings and build confidence in working with others independently.
- Information Technology – compose and edit text on-screen to communicate and develop ideas.
- The World Around Us – Use history, geography and the environment as stimulus material and research sources for character and strong ideas.

### TEACHER'S TIPS

While any of the above exercises can be used as warm-ups before moving on to more developed work, a selection can be used as a composite workshop in its own right.

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Now that you have explored the warm up stage, you are now ready to move onto the next stage. All five stages in this workshop combine to offer long term exploration of creative writing leading to the completion of finished work – group or individual. However, the individual stages can also serve as a menu to dip in and out of over a period of time and in combination with other activities.

**Don't forget to send feedback to [toolbox@youngart.co.uk](mailto:toolbox@youngart.co.uk)**

**[www.youngart.co.uk/toolbox](http://www.youngart.co.uk/toolbox)**