

BBC
RADIO

2

5000 WORDS

— 2017 —

Learning Resource Pack



In association with
OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Calling all young writers

500 WORDS is back and there are zillions of reasons why you should enter if you are 13 (and 11 months) or under! Get your mind muscles moving and those creative cogs turning. It's also a chance to have your story read **LIVE ON THE RADIO** by a superstar narrator like Julie Walters, Tom Hiddleston or Andy Serkis...to a whopping **10 MILLION PEOPLE!**

If that isn't exciting enough, this year our finalists will take a trip to the **TOWER OF LONDON** – the home of legendary ravens and brilliant Beefeaters – where they will be serenaded by pitch-perfect pop stars, at the 500 WORDS Final. And some might even have their stories read by royalty, as Her Royal Highness the **DUCHESS OF CORNWALL** returns as our Honorary Judge in 2017.

Calling all teachers, librarians and parents

Over the six years of the competition, we've had over half a million entries; which is over 277 million words. That must mean that 500 WORDS is a whole lot of fun, so get your young writers to join in.

If you are a **TEACHER** or a **LIBRARIAN**, you could be one of our judges. More than 5000 terrific teachers and librarians help us to **JUDGE** the first round of the competition – if you want to help us in 2017, sign up at bbc.co.uk/500words before 7pm on 23rd February. As well as getting the chance to read some super stories, you will be entered into a draw to **WIN TICKETS** to the Final, so why not give it a go?

The 'Learn' section on our website contains loads of **RESOURCES** for you to get your class reading, writing and inspired. Your entire class – or school! – can enter the competition. We want to read what your pupils come up with, no matter what their ability, and we absolutely promise to read **EVERY SINGLE ONE.**

This pack contains some **FUN IDEAS** for use in the **CLASSROOM** or at **HOME**, to break through that writer's block and get kids writing. We've included exercises centred on each **MARKING CRITERIA** of the competition, to give your kids the best possible chance of bringing home a gold medal.

That's it from me. Thanks for getting involved with 500 WORDS. Remember, it's an open invitation to the wide world of imagination, so get your kids to give you their entries to **SUBMIT ONLINE** before 7pm on Thursday 23rd February!



Chris Evans



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Learning Resource Pack

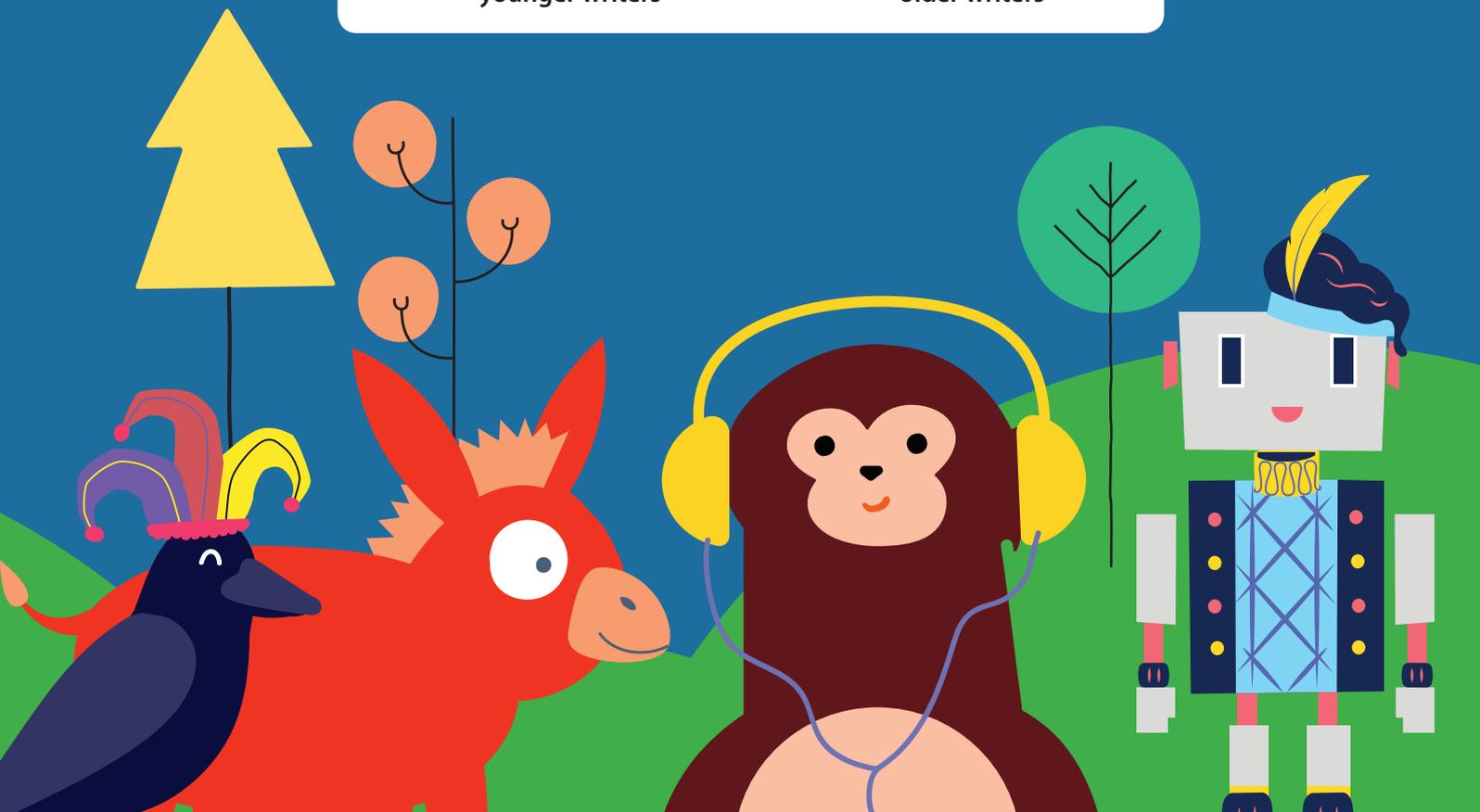
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Easy quick ideas,
especially for
younger writers



More ideas,
especially for
older writers



Originality

Some people say that every story has already been told... but our 500 WORDS writers know that's not true! Every year, they come up with wonderfully inventive and original stories which wow our judges. Use some of these activities with your class and tell them to let their imaginations run free and take us on an adventure.

Inspirational objects

Unusual objects can be a great source of story inspiration. Raid the store cupboard or get your class to bring in intriguing items from home. Anything from an old hat to a telescope will do the trick. Ask questions about the object to inspire different story ideas. What could it be used for? Who might be looking for it? What secret could it hold? Suggest different genres or types of story such as mystery or science fiction and discuss how the item might be used in this kind of story.

Facts into fiction

Fun facts from different school subjects can inspire astounding stories. Did you know a jumping flea can accelerate faster than a space rocket taking off into orbit? You could use this science fact to spark a story about an astronaut flea saving Tim Peake from bug-eyed alien invaders. See who can think up the craziest story idea inspired by the facts they find.

Headlines

Real-life events can often spark great story ideas. Bring in a selection of newspaper reports and headlines. Ask your writers to read through these to find interesting details that could inspire an imaginative story. Why not take details from different reports to create a fresh and original story?

Idea generator

Sometimes it's the mix of ingredients that can give you a story idea that stands out from the crowd. Get your writer to choose different characters, settings and genres from the next page and mix them together. What kind of mystery would Sherlock Holmes solve on his visit to Hogwarts Castle?

Calling all
teachers

Writing Tip

**Frank Cottrell
Boyce says...**

“What could be more fresh and original than you! You are unique and amazing. So the more of you you put in, the more original your story will be.”

Writing Tip

**Malorie
Blackman
says...**

“Unusual settings and scenarios help spark story ideas but so do unusual characters in everyday settings.”

Did you know?

In 2016, the children's word of the year was 'refugee' with writers imagining what it is like to leave home and undertake difficult journeys.

Story idea generator

Pick a type or genre of story, characters and setting and put them together to think up a story idea. You can pick and mix from every category or even throw your own ideas into the mix.

Calling
all young
writers

Genre

Mystery
Romance
Science fiction
Horror
Comedy
Fantasy
Historical
Adventure
Spy
Animal

Character

Superhero
King Henry VIII
Hedgehog
Vlogger
Rapper
Wizard
Dinosaur
Robot
Secret agent
Archaeologist

Setting

Haunted house
Planet X
School
Department store
Zoo
Desert island
Mountain
Castle
Enchanted forest
City



Genre

Character

Setting

Character

Every story needs a star. From famous footballers to pet hamsters and fictional superheroes, unforgettable characters make stories come to life. Use some of these activities with your class to help them to dream up some page-turning protagonists.

Instant impressions



Writers can use adjectives to create an instant picture in a reader's mind. Create a list of different adjectives such as 'flashy', 'tattered' and 'chinless' and challenge your writers to choose three from your list to describe the lead character in their story. Or ask the class to create their own different lists of adjectives for heroes and villains. Remind them not to scatter them everywhere but use fun adjectives appropriately.

Get the profile



Asking questions about the characters in a story can give writers the answers they need to bring them to life. Challenge your writers to think about what a character is like and why they act the way they do. This can often help with plot ideas too! Get writers to ask each other questions about their character using the character profile on the next page.

The game of the name



Unforgettable characters need a memorable name. Suggest famous character names from fiction and ask the class to decide what type of story they are from. For example, would you expect to find a character called Eowyn Broadsword in a love story or a fantasy tale? Is this the kind of name you would give to a heroine or villain? Ask your writers to think about the type of story they are writing to make sure the character names they choose fit the bill.



Does your character have a favourite band?



Does your villain love ice cream?



Does your hero have a secret fear of spiders?

Calling all
teachers



Writing Tip

Charlie Higson says...

"Try and make your characters real, try to make them come alive on the page, try to make them people we'd like to know more about. Let us know what makes them tick."



Did you know?

Made-up names like Darth Sitax and Hippo-Bottomus had starring roles in the 500 WORDS stories in 2016, which also featured crazy characters such as 'botvaders' and 'catroopers'.

Joshua Michael Uppington was a disgrace, a horror, an outrage and all round one of the smelliest boys in history.

(Josh Up, 2016)

Character profile

Complete this character profile to collect ideas about the lead character in your story. Try to answer every question to find out what makes your character tick.

Calling
all young
writers

My character's name is: _____

Can you describe what your character looks like?

My character looks like: _____

Does your character speak or make any sounds?

My character sounds like: _____

What interests or pet hates does your character have?

My character likes/dislikes: _____

Does your character have a hobby? What do they do?

My character: _____

Where does your character live?

My character lives: _____

Does your character have a family?

My character has: _____

Plot

Great stories have page-turning plots that keep readers glued to their seats to find out what happens next. Use some of these activities with your class to help them to turn their brilliant ideas into a fantastic story with a beginning, middle and end, and maybe a twist or two along the way as well!

Story starters



Get your writers to think about the event that will kick-start the plot of their story. Throwing the reader into the middle of the action straight away is a great way to grab their attention. Ask your writers to pick the opening scenes of a favourite book or film and give it a twist to create a new plot and storyboard their own story. For example, what if Bilbo Baggins hadn't met Gandalf at the beginning of *The Hobbit* but Smaug the Dragon instead...

Obstacle race



Action drives the plot of a story forward. Pick a fictional character and give them a story starter such as Spiderman discovering a radioactive banana in his lunchbox. Pass the problem around the class, challenging one person to suggest how the fictional character would tackle the obstacle and then asking the next to invent a new obstacle to put in the character's path. See how quickly the action escalates!

Story mountain



Creating a plot is like climbing a mountain – each event in the story should build on the one before. Get your writers to complete the story mountain worksheet on the next page to help them to plan their plots. Encourage them to think about the problems and challenges their protagonist will face.

The perfect ending



The last lines of a story should pack a punch. List different story genres and discuss the different emotions each might evoke, for example, a reader of a horror story might feel nervous or uneasy if the story ends on a spooky scene. Ask your writers what emotions they want a reader to feel at the end of their story and challenge them to craft a final line that creates this exit feeling.

Calling all
teachers

Writing Tip

Malorie
Blackman
says...

“Starting on a moment of change or conflict for your main character is a good way to get us straight into the story.”

Trudging through the forgotten city of Bludhaven, Mongul looked at the devastation he had caused.

(The Rebellion, 2016)

Did you know?

In *The Great Cookie Quest*, which was a Bronze-winning 500 WORDS story in 2016, the action escalates from a character sneaking a biscuit to demolishing a house!

Story mountain

Complete the story mountain to plan out the plot of your story. Start at the bottom with a dramatic opening and then work out the different twists and turns your plot will take until you reach the top!

Challenge

Problem

3

2

Build-up

4

Problem solved

1

Beginning

The story starts with...

5

Ending



Language

Every writer wants to find the perfect words to tell their story. Since the writer can only use 500 of them for this competition, it's important for them to make the best use of every one. Use some of these activities with your class to help them to choose words that will make their 500 WORDS stories sparkle in the reader's mind.

Striking similes



Share some of these similes from 500 WORDS stories and discuss the pictures they paint:

'as tall as a dozen giraffes standing on top of each other',

'each step I took crackled like bacon cooking in a pan full of oil',

'my mouth hung open like the gates of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory'.

Challenge your class to create their own striking similes using the worksheet on the next page.

Word inventors



Blending different words together to create new compound words can add interesting ideas and characters to a story. For example, blending 'man' and 'suffragettes' creates 'manffragettes', while if you add 'water' to a 'yeti' you end up with a 'weti'! Challenge your writers to blend different words to create their own compound characters.

Synonym



Don't let your writers settle for the first word that pops into their head. Flick through a thesaurus to find better alternatives for overused words like 'big' and 'nice'. Pass this challenge round the classroom with each person having to find a synonym that's even better than the last, for example, 'big', 'enormous', 'gigantic', 'dinosaurian'...

Get gongoozling!



From 'squeegees' to 'widdershins', 'mulligrubs' to a 'gongoozler', get the class hitting the dictionaries to find out the meanings of some of these funny-sounding words! Challenge your writers to find their own funny words to weave into their stories. Could they fit a 'flibbertigibbet' into their story or find space for a 'jackanapes'?

Calling all
teachers

Writing Tip

Francesca Simon says...

"Do have fun with language. Play around with it until you find the right word."

*John asked the weti,
'what is a weti?'
Slowly in a deep
booming voice the
weti replied,
'A weti is a
water yeti.'*

(The Mountain Adventure Crash, 2016)

Did you know?

The longest word ever used in a 500 WORDS story is the 45-letter word 'Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis' which is a lung disease caused by breathing in very fine sand and ash dust. See if you can make up a longer word!

Striking similes

A simile is a way of describing something by comparing it with something else. Using similes can help you to describe the scenes of your story in interesting and unusual ways. Complete the examples below to create your own striking similes. Try to choose unexpected words that will create an original picture in the reader's mind. Then create your own similes from scratch!

soar like a _____

as cunning as a _____

as _____

like _____

as dark as _____

as easy as _____

as sharp as a _____

as tall as _____

as _____

eat like a _____

like _____

like a _____
in a china shop

as _____
as a feather

as fast as _____

as _____

as _____

as red as _____

as loud as _____

like _____

Enjoyment

The world is made of stories. Exciting stories, scary stories, thrilling stories, stories that make you cry and ones that leave you giggling so hard that your face hurts. The magic ingredient in all these types of stories is enjoyment. Use some of these activities to help your class create stories that will wow the judges.

Who's who? ★★

Get your class to think about who's telling their story. Invent a character and send them on a tour of the school. Challenge your class to describe the character's journey, sharing their thoughts and feelings about what they see. At key moments shout out a change of character and see how the story changes. You could switch from a fairy tale princess to a secret agent or even an escaped dinosaur!

Twisty tales ★

Take some traditional story openings and give them a twist. How about starting a 'Once upon a time' story about a bogey that lives up a nose? Or change Little Red Riding Hood to Little Red Hiding Hoodie and make her the villain of the story? Perhaps you could give Rapunzel a smartphone or let Cinderella meet Luke Skywalker... Have fun twisting traditional fairy tales into stories that will surprise the reader.

Action and emotion ★ ★★

Can you show how you're feeling without saying a word? Challenge your writers to think about how a character's actions can reveal their emotions. Ask your class to pick an emotion from the worksheet on the next page and then mime an action that shows this emotion. Can the rest of the class guess how they are feeling?

Extreme writing ★ ★★

Escape from the classroom and try writing in different locations to get some fresh inspiration! From the playground to the sports hall, the local park to the library, see how a change of scene can inspire some fun stories. You could even cover the walls of the classroom with photos of different locations from Mount Everest to Mars for maximum inspiration.

Calling all
teachers

Writing Tip

Francesca
Simon says...

"We love funny stories, silly stories, mystery stories, sad stories – most of all we love stories which only you could write."

Did you know?

The five words most frequently used in happy and exciting situations in the 500 WORDS stories in 2016 were 'adventure', 'school', 'teacher', 'heart', and 'chocolate', and the words most frequently found in scary situations were 'monster', 'dragon', 'fire', 'house', and 'door'.

She kept on having wonderful adventures every time they walked together.

(The Magic Collar, 2016)

Action and emotion

Can you show how you're feeling without saying a word? Pick an emotion from the list below and then mime an action that shows how you're feeling. Can the rest of the class guess the right feeling?

Calling
all young
writers

eager

excited

SINISTER

DULL

moody

SCARED

foolish

SECRETIVE

embarrassed

bold

SAD

cautious

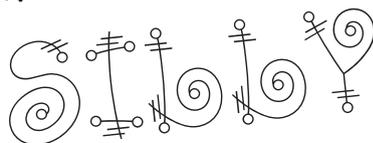
brave

happy

resentful

annoyed

GRUMPY



kind

gentle

romantic

ANGRY

smug

JOLLY

CHEERFUL

irritated

Try to think of at least five other words.

Write them down here and then act them out.

Editing

Writing the last line of a story doesn't mean a writer has finished having fun. From finding plot holes to polishing their prose, authors check and redraft their stories until they feel they're the best they can be. Use some of these activities to help your class revise and edit their stories until they shine.

Story buddies



Find out what genres of stories your class think they have written. You could pair up writers according to the genre of story they love to read and use the story buddy checklist on the next page to give feedback on each other's stories.

Cliché detector



Clichés such as 'the tip of the iceberg' or 'as dead as a door nail' can make a story fall flat. Get your class to suggest their own clichés and collect these on the board. Then challenge the class to change these clichés into something more original. How about 'the pot calling the kettle for a date'? Challenge your writers to look out for clichés in their writing and, if they spot one, to swap it for a more surprising image instead.

Make every word count



Encourage your class to revise and reread their stories to look out for any improvements they could make. Can they spot any words or phrases that are used too often and use synonyms instead? Reading aloud can help your writers to hear any sentences that sound a bit clunky. Encourage your writers to play around with vocabulary and the order of words in their story until it sounds right.

Title terror



We won't judge a story by its cover, but picking the right title can get us turning the pages. Ask your class to suggest some of their favourite story titles such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and discuss what makes them work. Challenge your writers to think up their own attention-grabbing titles. This might be an intriguing title such as 'The Grannies who Flew to the Moon' or just one word that jumps out at the reader like 'Monkeynapped'!

Calling all
teachers

Writing Tip

Francesca
Simon says...

"Write, re-write,
write and re-write
some more. Make
your story the best
it can be."

Did you know?

The most popular textspeak abbreviations used in the 500 WORDS stories in 2016 were OMG, BFF, and LOL, while the hashtag symbol # was increasingly used as a prefix, in front of a word or phrase, to make it a comment or an aside.

Story buddies

Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes can help you to spot how to make your story even more awesome! Team up with a friend to swap your stories. Use the checklist to note down your thoughts about their story and suggest any improvements.

Does the story have a good title?

Does the opening of the story grab your attention?

Does the plot and action make sense?

Does the setting work?

Did you like the characters?

Can you tell which character is speaking when you read the dialogue?

Does the story have good descriptions?

Do you have a favourite word or phrase in the story?

Do you like the ending?

Enjoy 500 WORDS!

**Don't forget to press
the button and
submit before 7pm
on 23rd February 2017!**

