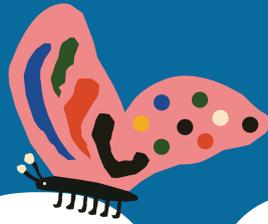


BBC
RADIO

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500 WORDS



2014



BBC Learning



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Welcome to this, the **500 WORDS 2014** learning resource pack!

We're so happy you've decided this pack is something you can use with young writers. After the huge success of 500 WORDS 2013 (we received over 90,000 stories!) we can't wait to read this year's entries.

Over 3,000 terrific teachers and librarians helped us judge the stories last year, and you can listen to, or read, the Top 50 online at bbc.co.uk/500words. On our website you will also find writing tips from best-selling authors, and our random word generator Alphabot. He's been designed to help provide inspiration to any children struggling to get started with their stories.

There are lots of reasons for kids to enter **500 WORDS**. They could win my height in books (1.9 metres) or hear their story read by a superstar narrator live on the radio to millions of people. But the most important reason is to encourage them to write stories. We want to read what your pupils come up with, and we absolutely promise to read **EVERY SINGLE ONE**.

That's it from me. Thanks for getting involved with **500 WORDS** - we hope you find this pack useful.

And don't forget to submit your entries online, before 7pm on Wednesday 26th February!




Playing with language



You could use the following language games in your classroom. Discuss the definitions of synonyms and antonyms with your class.

Ask the class to split into pairs or groups and give each pair opposing words such as **hot** and **cold** or **big** and **small**.

Ask them to take it in turns to think of a synonym for their word as illustrated on the worksheet, a winner is declared when one pupil has no more suggestions. During the game you could increase the difficulty by asking the groups to switch between thinking of synonyms to thinking of antonyms. This can snowball into a whole class game with teams where the children call out synonyms until the teacher shouts 'switch' and the focus becomes antonyms.

Split the class into groups and hand out a selection of simple sentences such as the "The giant boulder is heavy" or "The tiny mouse was quick". Ask the groups to think about synonyms and try to rewrite the sentence in as many ways as possible, for example "The tiny mouse was quick" could become "The small mouse was fast."

You could have a class discussion asking pupils to pick their favourite versions of the sentences and think about how different versions of the sentence could be used in different situations.



Child A

Hot
Scorching
Blistering
Balmy
Muggy
Roasting
Stifling

Child B

Cold
Freezing
Frosty
Parky
Chilly
Harsh
Bleak

Here are some more antonyms, challenge somebody in your class to take on a vocabulary duel with you:

BIG / LITTLE
OLD / YOUNG
DARK / LIGHT
HAPPY / SAD
COWARDLY / COURAGEOUS



Player 1

Player 2

Player 1

Player 2

Lights, camera and action...

Here's a hands on way to get pupils to identify different features of story writing. Display these 9 story types:



Ask your class to think of an action which matches each story type, for example **mystery** might be pretending to hold a magnifying glass really close to an object; **magical** could be waving a wand. Once your class have a bank of creative actions, call out a story type and ask everyone to carry out the action together.

This activity could be consolidated in your classroom by creating a role play area where children consider the use of **props, music, costume, hair and make-up, set design and special effects**. Allocate a genre of story to each group and ask the children to identify the features of that genre. You could have a class discussion after each group have identified the features of their genre.



Share the blank canvas worksheet and ask the pupils to work in pairs and create a plan for a film or play.

Discuss the following questions as prompts for the plan:

- What would the set look like?
- Who would they cast to play the parts?
- What would the cast wear?
- Which songs would be on the soundtrack?
- Would there be any special effects?
- Where would the film be set?
- What props would be needed?

Explain to the groups that they will present their ideas to the rest of the class and the class will use their ideas as clues to guess the genre of the film.

Handing ownership over

Ask the class to explore recording ideas in different ways on the blank canvas worksheet. Some children may draw ideas, record as mind maps or write lists; any offering is acceptable!

What would the set look like?

Who would you cast to play the parts?

BBC

What would the cast wear?

Which songs would be on the soundtrack?

Would there be any special effects?

Where would the film be set?

What props would be needed?

How can you engage the reader?

Past entries from the **500 WORDS** competition can be used as examples of how writers engage their readers in different ways. The winning entries are available on the **BBC 500 WORDS** website in two formats, printable versions and audio versions read by actors (bbc.co.uk/500words).

Depending on the age of your class, you may choose to complete this activity as a practical whole class session, in groups, in pairs or as an independent activity. Explain to the class that they are going to assess how well different writers engage their reader; this may prompt a discussion about what engaging the reader really means. Discuss how writers engage with readers and encourage pupils to give examples of books which they have read and pinpoint **how** the writer gripped their attention and held their interest.

Ask the class what criteria they would use to assess how writers engage their readers. You could use the 'I'll be the judge of that' scoring sheet as an example. And this features the five criteria we use to mark the stories (originality, plot, characterisation, language and enjoyment).

Pick a story from the bank of winners with the class and ask a group of pupils to take on the roles of judges and provide verbal feedback. The whole class could hold pieces of card up at the end with scores out of 10. Initially this activity could take the form of a practical, verbal exercise and as children acquire skills to give critical feedback this could develop into a written exercise.

Encourage pupils to develop their responses and give examples from the text showing ways the reader is engaged.

You could ask the class questions such as: Which style of writing did you prefer? How did this author make you want to read on? Does this author remind you of another author? Did anything surprise you in this story?

Using the versions of the stories read by actors could add another dimension which you could take advantage of and discuss with older children. Does the level of engagement depend on who reads the story?

I'LL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT!



How well does the writer engage the reader?



1 Originality 2 Plot 3 Characterisation 4 Language 5 Enjoyment

Title	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			

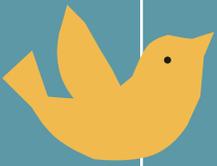
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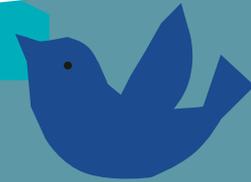
What is the relationship between the writer and the reader?



The following activities can be used to further develop understanding of the relationship between the writer and the reader.

Write the word **ENTERTAINS** on the board and discuss what it means to the pupils. Ask how we are entertained through films, television, radio, books or conversations and record a list of devices such as: to amuse, frighten, upset, evoke emotion, tease, shock, betray and sympathise.

Choose one of the pupil's suggestions, for example, **amuse** and ask the class to recall examples from books which have amused them and write down what features the author used - word choice, playing with language (ie wit, sarcasm and irony), imaginative made up words, a comic character, exaggeration or ridiculous behaviour. This could be presented as a mind-map, list, a table or any other method the children are familiar with.



Once the class have seen this example, allocate other devices to small groups and ask them to repeat the activity with their new word. Gather pupils together as a whole class and ask groups to present their device encouraging pupils to contribute to each other's presentations.

Some devices may be more difficult to explain, for example when the writer betrays the reader. Discuss when writers make these decisions. Do they decide, whilst planning the story, that the main character will betray the reader? Or to surprise their reader by adding a tragic element to the storyline?

Give the class a story starter and ask them to plan out different versions of the story. You could give them road signs with devices such as shock, amuse, frighten, and ask the class to create as many different routes from the same story starter.

How can you structure plot?

Have you ever thought about teaching plot using life size jigsaw puzzle pieces?

Give each pupil an A3 paper puzzle piece and ask them to write any word they want on it (you could also draw pictures). Gather the class into a circle and ask the pupils to turn their word around one at a time and read around the circle. Once everybody has read their word, explain that the second time you go around the circle the pupils have to put their word into a sentence. Explain that this 'story' that they are making up, does not need to make sense. Try this activity a couple of times, changing everyone's positions in the circle to adjust the plot.

Divide the class into small groups and encourage them to explore creating plot by combining ideas from the puzzle pieces and ask them to physically put them together on the ground. Ask each group to explain their story to the other.

Combining ideas - expect the unexpected!

Encourage pupils to combine ideas which we would not normally expect to sit side by side. Experiment by deliberately selecting pieces of the puzzle which do not have a natural connection.

As a class, reflect on this activity and the use of the unexpected in a plot.

The plot ideas on the following page could be used by small groups, pairs or individuals to consolidate skills from the whole class session. You could ask the class to write a story using the 3 elements on each plot idea.

FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

You could share four pre-prepared words on puzzle pieces per group and ask the children to add one or two words of their own to create a mini plot.



PLOT IDEAS

Ideas to explore plot:

- 1 A stolen ring, fear of snakes and a greengrocer.
- 2 An antique jewellery box, a pair of glasses and the mayor.
- 3 A bus, an old enemy and Valentine's Day.
- 4 Identical twins, a party invitation and a mysterious book.
- 5 A broken wristwatch, a pair of binoculars and a prank that goes wrong.
- 6 A scream, a secret diary and a pair of odd socks.
- 7 A grandma, a shower cap and a good-luck charm.
- 8 An annoying little brother, a PE kit and a fake illness.
- 9 The first day of school, a handkerchief, and a recipe for a chocolate cake.
- 10 A campfire, a rabbit and a small lie that gets bigger and bigger.



Being creative with characters

Why not try using traditional stories as stimuli for exploring character from another perspective?

Ask the class to name some characters from traditional tales and make a list of them. Discuss how the characters could be categorised, for example heroes and villains and ask the class to justify their choices of classification.

Extend the activity by choosing a few villains for example The Big Bad Wolf (Three Little Pigs), The Wicked Witch (Snow White and the Seven Dwarves), The Ugly Sisters (Cinderella) and The Troll (Billy Goat's Gruff) and dividing the class into groups representing a villain. Ask the groups to prepare a speech presenting their villain to the rest of the class. After hearing the speeches, the class could put the villains in order of wickedness.

You could play other ranking activities such as listing some characters and then some attributes and asking the class to match them. For example Cinderella, Snow White, Goldilocks, The Giant, Hansel, The Wolf and Most Honest, Most Innocent, Most Manipulative and Least Selfish. Encourage pupils to explain their decisions referring to the character's behaviour and giving examples.

This activity could be extended to an awards ceremony where the class present awards to specific characters. Write the name of the character on the board and ask the class to work in pairs to decide if this character won an award and what the award would be.

Within traditional tales there are often inanimate objects which although are not characters, play a key role in the story. Display a list of some of these objects, for example Cinderella's shoe, the mirror from Snow White or a golden coin from Jack and the Beanstalk. Allocate an object to each group in the class and the groups can discuss the importance of this object to the plot and feedback to the rest of the class.

Guide the class' thinking by suggesting that these objects behave almost like characters. Remind the class what personification means. Choose an object and model some sentences on the board e.g. *'the golden coin wondered who he would belong to at the end of the day'*, and ask the groups to create some of their own sentences about objects from traditional tales using personification.

Using the objects listed in the previous activity, the class could develop their understanding of character and perspective by retelling the traditional tale from the point of view of an object rather than a character. This activity is not limited to traditional tales or familiar stories and can be applied to class novels or books from an author study. There are several examples of this in last year's Top 50 e.g. Freedom (written from the point of view of a coin) and It Was Me (the sea).

A more practical activity which focuses on developing empathy for characters could be to interview the objects. The quality of questions for the object will be important so you may want to prepare some first.

Interviewing objects is an effective tool to develop character and if the class are skilled in this area they will be able to create a wide range of varied characters. Collect some unfamiliar items e.g. a torn leather purse, a tin box, an old doll and a jacket. Choose an object and model how we can act and think as an object. Display some questions such as 'Who owns you? What are you scared of? Where are your family? What do you dream of?' As you practice this activity, the class will develop characters for objects and in turn will transfer depth of character to their writing.



