

## **Online Creative Writing Pack for Primary Schools**

This is a pack containing ideas for creative writing activities for parents and teachers of primary school age children. Teachers can use them as part of the classwork they're sending to their pupils, and parents can use them to keep their little ones occupied. You are under no obligation to do all or any of them, and you can adapt them to what suits the children. I just hope they'll encourage budding writers and help those who aren't fans of writing to see that it can be fun. Stay safe, well and occupied during this strange time.

The activities will be divided into the following groups.

- Language – activities designed to improve vocabulary and help children be inventive with words.
- Character – how to create inventive and compelling characters and how to celebrate the characters in your own life.
- Setting – activities based on the place and time when stories happen, giving children the opportunity to create new worlds.
- Plot – how to make things happen in your stories and create a sense of excitement.
- The senses – activities that encourage children to use their senses to gather ideas for stories.

If you have questions about how to do any of the activities, you can email me, [derbhile@writewordseditorial.ie](mailto:derbhile@writewordseditorial.ie) or call me on 087 6959799. Happy writing.

Derbhile Graham

## LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

### **Word Hunting**

This will get children outside and help them practise vocabulary at the same time. It will also encourage them to pay attention to their surroundings.

- Have the children go into the garden with a copybook or notebook and write down ten words based on what they see, what they hear, what they smell and what they feel. They can even do it based on what they taste, if they use their imaginations.
- They can also gather words in a room in the house if it's raining.
- Then they take five of their ten words and make a collage of those words on a bigger piece of paper or card. They write the words in a decorative style using a variety of colours.
- Take them on a word treasure hunt. Create a list of clues based on their words and then write the words on small pieces of paper or card. Hide the words in the places indicated by the clues and when they reach the end, let them have a treat. If the children are younger, the clues can take the form of an I Spy game.
- If you have a few school-going children, you can have one of the children create the clues for the other children to find. This will help them enhance their description skills, as they're hinting at something rather than spelling it out.

### **Inventing A Word**

- Help your children achieve immortality by encouraging them to invent a new word that could become famous!
- First, brainstorm something they think there should be a word for. For example, a word for when they're given food they don't like for dinner, but they have to eat it anyway.
- Have them take an ordinary word and play with the letters. Switch the letters around to make a new word.
- Some children will naturally be good at coming up with gibberish, or knocking two existing words together to make a new one. But you can get children going by having a conversation entirely in gibberish to help them see that nonsense words can actually make sense.
- When they've come up with a word, have them write it on a large sheet of paper in big, colourful writing, with the meaning underneath in smaller writing. If you have several children, they can put all their words on one page.
- If they're very enthusiastic about making up words, they can create a whole dictionary of new words.
- If the children are younger, you can help them with writing their words and word definitions. Or they can come up with it orally and you can write it for them.

## **The Kitchen Sink**

This activity encourages children to broaden the range of words they use when they're writing a story.

- Have the children come up with a list of ten words based on a theme, like Easter, summer or school.
- Then ask them to write a story based on that theme – but they're not allowed to use any of the words on the list of ten that they've come up with. They'll groan at first, but then watch as they come up with clever ways around the word ban.
- If the children are younger, you can ask them to write sentences without the banned words, however many sentences you feel they're able for.
- Another version of this activity is to have children write sentences without using a certain letter, like a vowel or a popular consonant such as M, R or S.

## **Alphabet Games**

These activities will give children a chance to practise using the alphabet, improve their vocabulary and create stories.

### *Alphabet Words*

- Have children call out words beginning with each consecutive letter of the alphabet and write them down. For example, apple, banana, car and so on. If you want to make it more challenging, ban the use of proper nouns, names of people, countries etc.
- This should be enough for younger children. However, for older children, you can add a step. Have them pick three of the words and create a sentence containing each of their three choices.
- You can then advance it further and have the children write a short story which can be about anything as long as it contains those three words.

### *Alphabet Sentences*

- As an extra twist, you can have the children string four or five of the alphabet words they pick to create sentences. So, as well as coming up with words for each letter of the alphabet, they try and see if they can string these words into sentences.
- Here's an example: A Black Cat Drifted Eastwards. You can see how each word begins with each consecutive letter of the alphabet.
- When they feel a sentence come to a natural end, they start the next one, such as. Feed Gerry Ham In Jars. As you can see, the sentences can be quite absurd.
- Then they keep going until they've reached the end of the alphabet.
- Again, if they're feeling really adventurous, they can take a sentence that tickles them and use it to start a story.

## CHARACTER

These activities will give children the sense of almighty power that comes with creating their very own people. Some children will find that the people in their own life are a great source of stories.

### **20 Questions**

This is a popular guessing game that's suitable for various levels.

#### *Oral 20 Questions*

- Children come up with the name of a famous person – a singer, a sports star, a TV or YouTube star – and the others have to guess who it is by asking up to 20 questions. After 20 questions, they give up if they haven't got it.
- Add an extra challenge, that the children can only ask questions with yes or no answers, like: are they American? Or flip it over and say they can't ask questions with yes or no answers, like: where are they from?
- If they use up their own pool of famous person, you can have them look up famous people from history, even the relatively recent past.
- You can also do a written version of this game, where the children write 3-5 lines to describe the famous person and the others guess.

Here's an example.

He lives in a big house. He signs papers. He has a dog. There was a book written about his cat. He is President of Ireland. Who is he?

### **Character Sketch**

This is where the children get to invent people.

- The children create a character based on a picture which you'll find on the following page. They fill in a worksheet with details about the character, which you'll also find on the following pages. There is a version for infants and a version for children from first to sixth class, or they can do it orally.
- The worksheet asks the children to give the character a name, age, job, hobbies and a family status, meaning whether they have brothers and sisters, parents or children of their own. If the children want to say they have no family, then encourage them to give a reason why.
- The children write down the character details next to the headings. The most important heading is the Special Power heading. This is where the children imagine an amazing power the character could have, like teleporting, going invisible and much more. This is what will make the character come alive.

#### *Ways of Extending the Activity.*

- The children can simply colour in the character picture I supply. They can also draw a picture of their own.

- Have them draw a speech bubble containing something the character might say.
- Ask them to walk around the room the way they think their character would walk. Then they write a sentence to describe that walk, such as: he walks like a crab.
- Similarly, ask them to hold a pen the way their character would and say happy birthday the way their character would, then write a sentence to describe what they did.
- Get the children to do the same character sketch for someone they know, using the same headings. Special Power could be modified to describe a special gift someone has.

Here's a picture of an old man that the children can use to create their character. You can substitute him with any picture from the internet.



## Children's Character Sketch – First to Sixth Class

Name:

Age:

Where they Live:

Family:

How They Travel:

Special Power:



## Character Sketch – Infants



My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old

I live in a \_\_\_\_\_

I work as a \_\_\_\_\_

In my family, I have \_\_\_\_\_  
brothers and \_\_\_\_\_ sisters.

I have a special power and I am able to

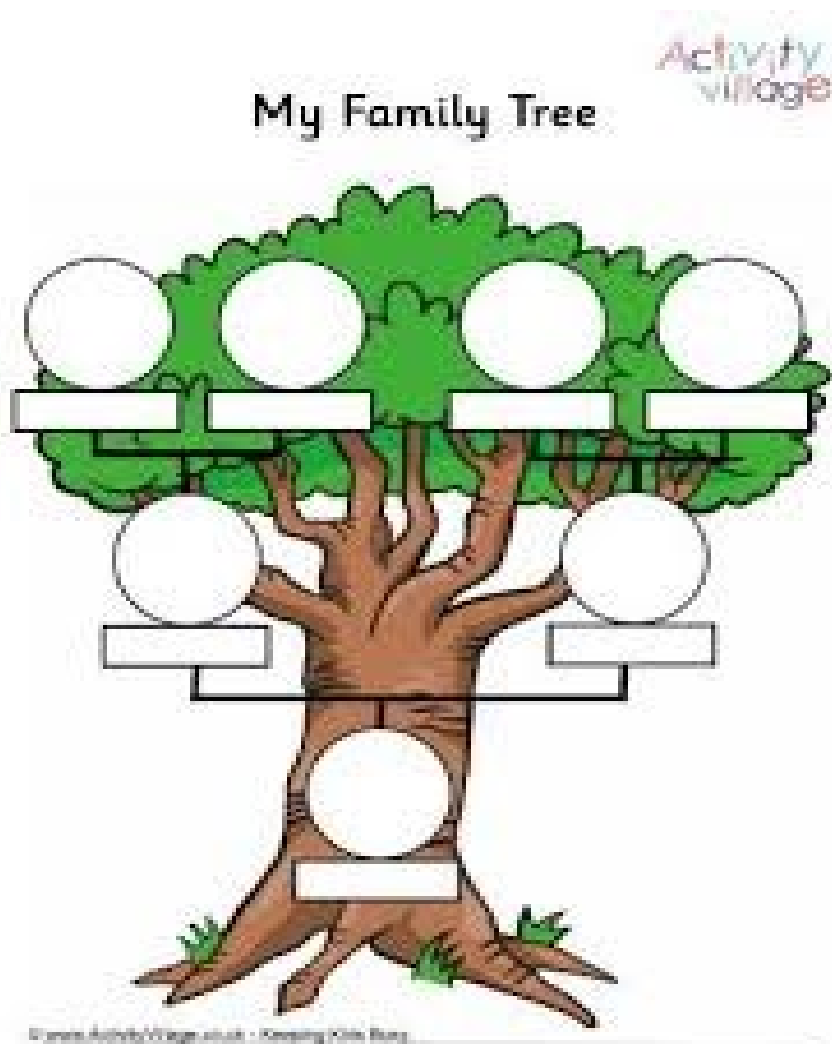
\_\_\_\_\_



## Family Tree

This activity will give children an appreciation of the characters in their own lives. They draw out a family tree containing the names and ages of their siblings, parents and grandparents. I'm going to give you an example of a family tree, but you can explain to children that not every family's tree looks the same and they can design their tree to fit the shape of their family.

Here's the example.



The children draw the tree and draw little circles on the tree where they can add the names of their family members. To extend the activity, they can pick a person from the tree and write a story about something they did with them.

Given that children may not be able to see their grandparents at the moment, this activity could be a lovely way to link in with them. They could ring their grandparents and ask them to talk about their own parents and brothers and sisters, so they can add their names to the tree. They could also ask their grandparents to tell stories about what they did with their siblings when they were young and collect the stories in whatever way you see fit

## SETTING – TIME AND PLACE

These activities centre on the time and place where stories happen, and encourage children to pay attention to their surroundings and be more descriptive in their writing.

### **Building A World**

Children love world-building activities, and this activity will help them create their own world.

1. Have them pick a name for the country they want to create first. Have a brainstorm about this. I'm supplying a list of names below to start you off, which you'll find on the following pages. Some of those names are names of actual places, so you can have fun looking them up.
2. Then get them to draw a map of the country they want to create. Have them draw in rivers, mountains and fields, but also houses and streets. Between drawing the map and colouring it in, this should absorb attention for a while. I've added in a map on the following pages so they'll get an idea of what a map looks like.
3. Weather forecast: Have them come up with unusual weather for this country, for example that it rains ping pong balls. They can draw this weather or they can write a short weather forecast, saying for example: on Wednesday, it will rain ping pong balls, on Thursday the sun will be blue etc.
4. Have them come up with a word for hello in the language of that country. This ties into the made-up word exercise in the Language section.
5. Imagine they have gone on holidays to this country and ask them to write you a letter or a postcard telling you about their adventure. These may be old-fashioned writing forms, but they will learn that text can be laid out in different ways. For example, you could draw out a postcard format and have them write their text into it.

## **List of Potential Names for Countries**

Schmiglington

Upper Volta

Hrothingar

Mingalonia

Rawalpindi

Tashkent

Ceropolis

Chipping Sodbury

Menkendorf

Townsville

## Sample Map

You can use the map to show them what their country might look like. Alternatively, you could have them draw a map of the house they live in.

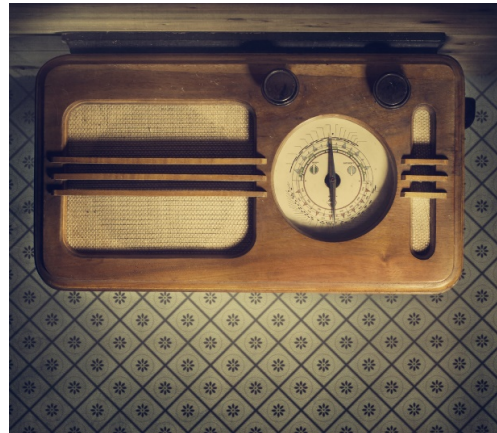


## **Time Travel**

Time travel is an exciting thing to do. Have your children travel back 100 years in time to the 1920s. Here are a few ideas for how to do that.

- Have them imagine how they would travel back in time. They could draw or write about what sort of time machine or portal they could use.
- When they get there, use the pictures I've supplied on the following page to discuss or write about what a house would be like in the 1920s, what would be different and what would be the same.
- Have them draw a picture of what their house might have looked like in the 1920s.
- To add structure to their ideas, the children can fill in a worksheet, which I'm adding.

Here are some pics you can use to stimulate discussion about what a house might have looked like in the 1920s, featuring 1920s furniture. Feel free to dig out your own online.



alamy stock photo

CTG190  
www.alamy.com

## Time Travel Worksheet

I travelled back in time to my house using a

---

On the outside, my house looked like

---

Name three pieces of furniture that are in the house

---

There was something different about my house, and that was:

---

The thing that was the same about my house was:

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## **My Holidays**

For children who like more realistic settings for their writing, you can fill in this feelgood worksheet about a holiday you took. You can also use it for a day out you went on. Have a look for nice pictures of holiday destinations online that you can talk about and use as a stimulus for the worksheet.

### **My Holiday Worksheet**

I went on a brilliant holiday to

---

The holiday lasted for

---

The holiday happened (say when it happened)

---

I went with my:

---

We travelled there by

---

The coolest thing about the holiday was

---



When it was over, I felt:

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## PLOT

Here are some activities that centre on the events that happen in stories.

### **Oral Storytelling**

This works well if you have a few children. Just start a story and ask each child to add a line to the story. See if you can reach 10 or 20 lines.

### **Collaborative Storytelling**

There is a written version of the oral storytelling activity I just outlined. Again, it works well if you have 2-3 children.

- Give your children the first line of a story. Suggestions include, 'It was a lovely day,' 'John opened the door of his car,' and 'Where's my hat?'
- They carry on the story from that first line for five minutes. Each child writes their own separate version of the story.
- At five minutes, ask them to stop and swap sheets of paper. They then continue the other child's story. So, Amy would continue Conor's story and Conor would continue Amy's story.
- Then the children swap back again after five minutes and finish the story from the point where the other stops. Amy would finish her own story from the point where Conor had stopped his part.
- If you have three or more children, they each write their own separate story and they each swap twice, so they're continuing a different story each time.
- If the children are younger, they can write a sentence and then add sentences to each other's stories.

### **Story Soup**

- This shows children how to combine different ingredients of a story together. Have the children write the name of an animal, place (building or geographical location) and colour on a piece of paper. Ask them to tear out the sheet of paper, scrunch it up small and put it in a container that you'll provide, a cup, hat or box.
- Then you pass the container around and the children take out a different piece of paper than the one they put in. Then they write a short story that includes those words. For older children, set a word limit for the story. If the children are younger, just have them write three sentences with the three words in them.
- Alternatively you can do this exercise with story cubes if you have them. The children throw the story cubes and write down the three images they see each time they throw the cube. Then they write a story based on those three words.



## **What If**

Most great stories start with the question: what if? What if there was a boy who was a wizard? What if there was a boy who wore a dress? Have your children write down three things they would do if:

- they were really small
- they were really tall
- they were invisible.

Have children come up with their own what-if scenarios and write down what they would do. Younger children can do this activity orally.

## **Five Ws Stories**

This will give you a chance to make use of newspapers, online or print versions. It also gives children the chance to display their knowledge of the five W question words: who, what, where, when and why.

- Find an interesting picture online or in a print newspaper.
- Ask your children what's going on in the picture using the five W questions.
  - Who's in the picture?
  - What's happening to them?
  - Where was the picture taken?
  - When was it taken?
  - Why are the people doing what they are doing?

You can then ask them to write down what's going on in the picture. They write the question word on one side of the sheet and then the answers alongside it.

You can also do the Five Ws with an interesting headline you come across, such as: Laptop Thief Returns for Charger.

## **100-Word Diary**

This will be good for older children. Have them test their ability to regulate their writing by asking them to write a diary of their day in 100 words. It could be what they did before or it could be the fantasy day that they always dreamed of. The idea is to see how close they can get to 100 words.

- If they tend to write short, encourage them to add descriptive detail to each scene. Ask them questions about what happened and encourage them to answer those questions in the diary entry.
- If they tend to write long, ask them what the most important part of the day was and tell them to focus on that.
- It's up to you whether to include the dates, Dear Diary or your sign off in the 100 words.
- If the children are younger, you can just chat to them about their dream day or what they did yesterday. Or they could draw their version of a fantasy day.

## THE SENSES

These activities are designed to stimulate children's senses, which in turn helps them come up with ideas for stories.

### **Disgusting Recipe**

Have children come up with a disgusting recipe based on this picture.



- Ask them to come up with three or four ingredients for the recipe. Younger children can just list items but older children can list quantities of the item, such as a teaspoonful of brains.
- Then have them come up with 3-4 steps for making the recipe, the method for the recipe.
- Finally, have them come up with a name for their dish.

### **Life Story of an Object**

Pick an object in your house that's really interesting, like a trinket you picked up on holidays. Ask the children to look at the object and touch it, smell it and taste it if appropriate. Then they can fill in the worksheet on the next page to tell the life story of that object. Again, this worksheet reinforces children's ability to use the five W words. Also, it can be helpful to describe the object as a treasure, as it makes it sound more exciting.

### **Sounds Interesting**

Here's a simple activity that makes children aware of the power of sound. Ask them to write down a sound that they like and a sound that they don't like. With younger children, you can talk to them about different sounds.

### **Musical Moments**

Here's another sound-based activity that harnesses the power of music. Play a piece of music for a minute or so and then ask the children to write down five words that the music makes them think of. Ideally, pick a piece of music the children haven't heard of so they'll come to it with fresh ears.

## Life Story of A Treasure in Five Ws

Where were you made?

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When were you made?

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Who made you?

---

What happened to you after you left the place you were made? (Name Two Things)

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Why are you here now?

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