

# Culture Street



## Imaginative Writing Workshop led by Seven Stories, National Centre for Children's Books

Creating a love for reading and writing is vitally important to successful delivery of the literacy curriculum. This workshop and lesson plan should be fun, inspiring and accessible for all pupils. We worked with a small group of Year 7's but this activity will work equally well with other year groups or whole class.

**Culture Street** has a full Imaginative Writing Workshop with a step-by-step video guide on this link.

<http://www.culturestreet.org.uk/workshops/withoutnotes.php?channel=book&id=29>



**Step 1**

**Introduction**

What we are going to do

**Step 2**

**Getting started**

Set yourselves up

**Step 3**

**Imagined place**

Creating and describing a place.



**Step 4**

**Feelings**

What does it feel like?.

**Step 5**

**Recording part one**

Write, draw or in some way record your ideas.

**Step 6**

**Recording part two**

Continue to write, draw or in some way record your thoughts



**Step 7**

**Feedback**

Discuss your stories

**Step 8**

**20 years on**

Imagine where you will be in twenty years.

**Step 9**

**Robert Westall film**

This film can be used to start this workshop.

## Imaginative Writing Workshop

from Seven Stories the National Centre for Children's Books

### National Curriculum KS3 English

### Learning Objectives Resources

Pupils should be taught to:

- write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through:
- writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including:
- stories... and other imaginative writing.

Pupils will learn one technique for accessing their own memories as sources for imaginative writing.

### Suggested Classroom Activity

Show the pupils the Robert Westall film/video nine on the workshop page (this film can also be accessed from the Seven Stories Archive page where it is 'What we found out.mp4')

In this film the group of KS3 pupils involved in the workshop discover part of the Robert Westall archive at Seven Stories.

Ask your group if they can recall any books they have read that were based on the author's memories of their own childhood.

The process demonstrated by Seven Stories Debbie Beeks in the short videos provides a useful way into children mining their own memories for imaginative writing. You can;

- **either** show the films one at a time as your class or group follow the instructions,
- **or** use the films just for your own reference, adapting your delivery of the technique to suit your own pupils' needs.

#### **Show them the video 'Introduction.mp4'.**

Reinforce the idea that the one subject matter everyone is an expert on is themselves.

#### **Show 'Getting started.mp4'.**

Students are tasked to think of a favourite place, and to think of one object they associate with that location – the more unusual or 'random', the better.

Share their results and discuss what their choices say about themselves as characters.

#### **Show 'Imagined Place.mp4'.**

Students are tasked with walking around the room visualising their imagined place, trying to 'see' every detail of it. At a given signal, the pupils freeze and, when asked, describe what they are looking at.

*An alternative approach for a seated classroom environment could be for the pupils to mime putting on a virtual reality headset, closing their eyes and 'seeing' different parts of their chosen place by turning their heads.*

## Suggested Classroom Activity cont

### Show 'Feelings.mp4'

Pupils continue exploring their locations, thinking first about the sense impressions; temperature, sounds etc. they perceive, then about the feelings and the emotional response the place produces...

### Show 'Recording part 1.mp4'.

Pupils are given a sheet of A4 paper and asked to record the object they thought of during the 'getting started' section. They can choose a preferred way of notating their responses to the object; prose, spider diagram, labelled drawing etc.

### Show 'Recording part 2.mp4'.

Pupils record their imagined place; a physical description, plus their impressions reactions to it. Again they can use their preferred methods of notation. Ask pupils to share their results.

### Show '20 years on.mp4'

Pupils fold away their A4 sheet and imagine they are at a reunion in 2035. They describe what they have become and their reactions to what they recorded in 2015.

## Development Activity

1. Set the pupils with the homework task of using their A4 notes as the starting point of a 150 word+ section of a story. It need not be the opening section, but should be a convincing piece of writing.
2. In the following lesson, handout the extract 'WestallEdit.jpg', from the Seven Stories archive of Robert Westall materials. Explain that publishers seldom print books exactly as the author has written them. The publishers use an experienced editor to offer suggested improvements where needed. Talk through the three comments made by Robert Westall's editor and see if the pupils can think of one word or phrase that explains what the editor is trying to improve in Westall's work. If you have a copy of the Machine Gunners to hand, you can track down the published version – most editions it is around page 14, or ask the pupils to take two sentences from the unedited section and google them. Not all the editor's suggestions were used.
3. Arrange the pupils into pairs, ask them to exchange their homework, and take on the role of editor and make pencilled suggestions for improvements. Let them know that if they make no useful edits, then you, as their Line Manager will want a convincing explanation of why you should continue employing them.
4. Ask each pair to choose one piece of their writing and editing to read to the rest of the group.

## Resources, Notes and Links

Nine video clips  
'WestallEdit.jpg',



Debi Gliori is an author and illustrator of over 70 children's books. CultureStreet visited her place of work to find out more about her and her work.

[http://www.culturestreet.org.uk/channel\\_artist.php?channel=book&id=5](http://www.culturestreet.org.uk/channel_artist.php?channel=book&id=5)



Your class can turn into author/ illustrators with our Picturebookmaker activity! They can create their own books, publish them and then send them to our gallery or to a friend.

<http://www.culturestreet.org.uk/activities/picturebookmaker/>