**How do we begin?**

## PCC Logo Small

Teaching Sequence: Story opener

Text purpose: Recount

Text Types could include: autobiography, fictional story, historical account, playscript

Duration: Flexible 2 or 3 week unit (week 1+ 2, week 1+3, week 1, 2 + 3)

Extension– rich literacy / numeracy project.

Cross Curricular opportunities

* PSE focus: relationships
* Art : illustration
* ICT: research, filming, editing

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| Session | Activity |
| Let’s write an exciting story opener.‘COLD’ | Review understanding of the Recount text purpose.Children are asked to independently write the start of an exciting story. This could be based on a recent activity (such as Watersports, a school trip, or other shared experience) . To be successful children need to ‘hook’ their audience.Re-read, edit, polish, peer assess. Teacher assess work, groups children accordingly to where they are at and the skills that are required to be developed.  |
| Technical stuff | Teacher reads a variety of story starters. Children discuss what techniques have been used and a success list is created (this may include; short sentences for tension, simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, vocabulary choice, direct speech, magic three, first/third person, show not tell). These could be highlighted on individual sheets or enlarged for display and constant reference through the unit. Take a story the children are familiar with. This could be topic based, or be a historically significant event. Children act out the first few moments in the scene and are then encouraged to write different starters to this story (with speech, sound, a question, etc – revising technical aspects of speech marks and punctuation as required). Ideas are shared, peer assessed, edited and celebrated. |
| The original: Romeo and Juliet | Read the prologue to Romeo and Juliet. Use You Tube downloads to show different versions of this.Look at form (Sonnet – 14 lines, iambic pentameter). Create a class translation (this could be done in Guided Reading session). Discuss the effect of the prologue and its successes / failures.  |
| Paint a picture | Read the first page of ‘The Graveyard Book’ by Neil Gaiman. Children tend to recognize this as a mysterious and chilling story opener – you have to facilitate them in communicating’ why’ and the strategies that have been used successfully.Children highlight successful techniques – this may be words and phrases they like. They then discuss the techniques the author uses and their effects (this could be written, using speaking frames to refer to the text, or ‘boxing up’ techniques from T4W).  |
| Extension:  | * Children create art pieces to illustrate what they have read, taking aspects of the language into their work. The pen / ink technique in the book can then be compared.
* Through role play/ hot seating, children could investigate the ‘show not tell’ aspects of the writing by asking the questions they want answered.
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| Write a picture | Read a variety of story openers in pairs (this could be a Guided Reading session), children feedback successful techniques and add them to the class list.Provide children with a stimulus. This could be a photograph, a sentence, a historical artefact, a postcard from a place you are studying. Teacher initiates a shared writing session where the whole class are engaged in creating a story opener based on chosen stimulus.  |
| Write many different pictures | (see video clips for examples of this activity) Class sit in circle. A stimulus for a story is placed in the middle. Using the success criteria the children have collected during the unit, they take turns to create a story start; moving around the circle adding further detail one sentence at a time. (This could be filmed and replayed in order for children to then write their own story start using the ideas from the group activity). The story start is rehearsed again and again until the children (and teacher) are happy with the techniques used and the story opener. Choosing their own stimulus from those provided, the children write a story opener. Peer review, edit and discuss techniques they have used. (see Word docs for examples of children’s work) |
| Extension | Children could continue their work and create a short narrative piece for a competition such as Radio 2’s Big Write (closing date February each year) |
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| Week 2Moving into film | (Recount is still the purpose) (UP is available from ….. if you don’t have a copy)Watch the first 10 minutes of ‘UP’ or ‘Matlida’. Watch again and ask children to make notes – this may need some modelling / direction. Share notes. Watch a third time and ask children to take special note of how emotion is portrayed (have they noticed music, light / dark, facial expression). Consider camera angles – the wide angle to introduce a setting, panning to close ups on characters. The use / absence of voice over, how speech develops character. Consider how the mood and tone of the piece has been created. In groups children take an element of the opening sequence (for example, in the cinema, walking down the road and in the house). Each group write that part of the story, trying to use techniques from Week 1 to develop tone and emotion. Combine the groups to create a whole opening sequence.(see Word doc for class example)(Common problem: children are quick to move on to ‘what happened next’ rather than dwelling on detail in order to create a mood, or develop a character – this skill is highlighted this week)  |
| Film to story: getting emotional | Look at the film again and asses it’s successes and failures to hook a viewer.Reread the writing from yesterday and discuss the successes / failures. Be critical of moving on too quickly. Taking a still image from the film’s opening sequence encourage the children to unpick its emotional charge. Why does it make you sad, happy, excited, worried etc. Using the work from yesterday children take one sentence or phrase and write in more tone and emotion.  Share and discuss. (see Word docs for examples of improved work) |
| Film to story: getting more emotional  | (ICT session, or homework should be dedicated to researching for today’s activity)In groups (of about 6) children plan and film a short opening (as little as 30 seconds) to a film which has relevance to the wider Curriculum focus. (For example lunar landing, Battle of the Somme, the life of Shakespeare or the 6 wives of Henry VIII). Special attention should be paid to creating tone and emotional tension in order to hook the audience. (examples of children’s openings can be found in the Movie Openers folder on the theme of Shakespeare’s life)A success criteria could be agreed on – this may include, the use of voice over/ narrator, wide angle, close up, speech, facial expression, tone, humour.Using Moviemaker, or other similar tool, children edit their work, insert text, music etc to create the tone / mood/ emotion they are looking for.Watch films and evaluate successes. |
| Film to story: getting even more emotional | Replay film openers. Self and peer review. Children take an image from their film opener and write it out, with all its emotion, using techniques from the past two weeks. Self assess and share.(see examples of children’s work – Word Docs) |
| Extension: | Children could create a set of complete short films then hold a Film Premiere for the school / parents. Tickets could be designed, printed and sold, marketing opportunities investigated.Mini sagas could be introduced as a writing style and changed into drama pieces, recorded or performed for others. |
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| Week 3Relationships  | Watch Literacy Shed animation ‘Rooted’ (the Love Shed).Children discuss / write a comparison between this and the Romeo and Juliet story. Alternatively the animation could be used to consider the relationships and how they change / are represented.Circle Time could be dedicated to relationships. Use image, sound, artefact or word stimulus to consider bullying and the experience of this.  |
| Bringing it all together: preparation for the HOT write | Children introduced to theme for HOT write: Relationships Collect words and images about this.Read the opening of ‘Inventing Elliot’ by Graham Gardner, or ‘Cloudbusting’ by Malorie Blackman. Add to class ideas about relationships and discuss successful strategies authors have used.Use drama techniques (freeze frame, hot seating etc) to develop images and feelings about different sorts of people / situations. Collect further vocabulary and ideas.  |
|  | Plan (story board, recount skeleton or other ...) a story opener about relationships that will capture the reader. As this is a HOT write (independent) children should be given scope to write on a topic of their choice, perhaps using physical stimulus (such as a photo or artefact) or a line from a book. The latter can be very powerful in raising the language style the child uses if the phrase or sentence provided by the teacher is interesting.Decide on who the audience is and refer back to examples of good opening strategies worked on over the Unit.What element of relationships will be the focus? What tone will the piece develop – a mood board could be created to help the children identify feelings.  |
|  | HOT write: independent writing of a story opener.Peer edit and review (compare to COLD write, discuss and celebrate learning) |
| Extension | * Create an anti bullying campaign – children to use whatever medium they want with clear thought for audience (film, presentation, leaflet etc ... links to persuasive writing.
* To extend the story sequence mini sagas could be a follow on activity.
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