



Flight Teaching Resources

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CREATIVE WRITING

1. Freewriting.

This is a useful exercise to do before everyone starts to write.

Ask them to write for just for two minutes though you can build up to five or ten minutes depending on your class. Write whatever comes in to their head. They don't have to think about punctuation or sentences and it doesn't have to make sense. It is just whatever comes out of their head. They don't have to look back at it either.

It is all about emptying their head of all their worries and stuff that gets in the way of writing.

They will probably complain about it initially, but it is a good habit to get into. Good exercise for people with writer's block too.



2. Writing is writing, editing/proof reading.

Explore the difference between writing, editing and proof reading

When you first write your story, Terry Pratchett says it is you telling yourself the story and he calls it draft Zero.

Editing is all about making sure that the big details work, the structure, characters, setting and plot. It is all about big brush strokes and looks at the whole story. Editing can mean you rewrite the whole story many times over. Some people can do up to ten or eleven redrafts or more. Writing is hard. There is no short cut.

Proof reading is then getting down to the nitty gritty. Looking for consistencies and spelling/grammar mistakes. For example, you need to make sure you are using the same name throughout and it is spelt correctly. Check out the proof reading exercise.



3. Starting stories

Below are first sentences that they could use as inspiration to start a story with. The first one is the first sentence from *Flight*.

If Jakob sneezed, he could die...

The door slammed shut and the whole house shook.

The buttery moon shone full and bright in a midnight sky.

It's happening again.

Who said a unicorn, or a dragon couldn't win?

The five robots stood in a row looking down on the city.

The air raid siren started wailing again.

The horses all galloped like the wind across the moor.



4. Show not tell

Another way to think of show not tell is dramatization. It is where you are bringing your story to life.

Showing is active and is where you let the reader experience the story alongside the characters. The reader might find out things at the same time as the character.

Telling is passive because you are telling the reader how to feel and exactly what is happening. Everything is explained to the reader. In a way the reader is kept outside the story, while showing involves the reader.

Ways to show:

Dialogue

Action

Thoughts/Feelings

Description

Start in the middle of the action

Resist the urge to explain everything, trust your reader to work some things out.

A good way to show is to use all the senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste.



Details can make all the difference:

Jane had a drink. – this is basic and there is nothing wrong with it but it doesn't tell us anything other than Jane is having a drink. Now read the ones below and see what you notice:

Jane drank ice-cold orange juice from a carton.

Jane sipped the frothy hot chocolate, it had marshmallows and whipped cream on top.

The bubbles in the lemonade went up Jane's nose as she sucked on the straw.

Showing is also about picking the best words possible to create the right image. For example:

Telling: Fred was in a temper. He told them he wouldn't do it. Shutting the door as hard as he could on his way out.

Showing: 'I won't do it!' shouted Fred, slamming the door on his way out.

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5. Characters

Creating characters is not just thinking about what they look like, though that is important, they need to build their whole character up, so they are three-dimensional. Ask them to think about themselves. What makes 'them'? It is not just the colour of their hair and their eyes is it? It is things like:

Where do they come from?

What is their family like?

Where do they live and go to school?

What is their favourite food?

What do they hate?

What is their handwriting like?

What do they keep in your pockets?

What's their deepest secret?

Who's their best friend/enemy?

And what do they like to wear the most?

Answering questions like these can help them build a picture of what their character is like.

Knowing the answers means that when they are writing about their characters they will know exactly how they will react in any given situation.

Ask them to write a letter from the perspective of one of their characters.



6. Setting

Once you've created characters a good story needs a setting.

Ask them to investigate setting and what is meant by world building?

People often think setting is just the geography, where they live, but it is so much more than that. It is everything that is encompassed in that world. Yes, it is the geography, so the mountains, deserts, fields, towns, cities and rivers etc but it is also the flora and fauna (plants and animals), the technology, the politics, the culture, the religion, the science, communications, food, anything that might have an impact on your character.

This includes the rules of their world – particularly if they are writing fantasy. If they are writing fantasy the rules might include how the magic works and who it applies to. (think about how it works in James Nicols' *The Apprentice Witch* stories and J K Rowling's *Harry Potter* stories).

What about historical fiction – what needs to be right in that?

Investigate what needs to be considered when writing realist fiction?

For example, you might need to work out how long it takes you to get from one place to the other. Or what the weather might be like at a certain time of the year.



Examples of questions that might be asked when world building:

What is the geography like? Mountains? Rivers? Forests? A new kind of geography?

What about the flora and fauna?

Who is living there? Where do they live? In houses, or flats, or huts, or something created specially?

What about the technology and communications?

If writing fantasy think about special rules?

If writing historical fiction think about the needs of the specific period?

If writing about the present time think about the place being written about what might people need to know?

(Be careful of something called assumed knowledge, which is where the writer knows somewhere so well they forget that other people won't know it, they need to pretend they are acting as a guide)

Write a short scene which includes the new setting and the characters.

Considering *Flight*, think about some of the settings I have used. Write a scene using one of them.



7. Writing historical fiction.

Investigate what makes historical fiction.

Challenge them to pick a favourite historical period in which to write a story.

Personally, I am very interested in the Second World War because both my parents were part of it, which is why I based *Flight* then. Other periods they might pick are First World War, the Victorian period, Civil War, the Tudors, Vikings, when the Titanic sank, any period that really inspires them. There are so many.

Expand this by considering genre – what sort of genre is their story going to be?

Flight is an adventure story, but they might want to write a thriller, a romance, a mystery or an action story, the list can go on and on.

Historical fiction still need to have a good plot that is driven by engaging characters that they care about even if it is based on a true story.

They must do a lot of research about the period so the details right. However, it is important not to put too much information into the narrative that we lose sight of the story.



Proof Reading Exercise

‘I want you to ride Raluca. He’s full of good sense. Trust him.’ herr engel stood in the stable, late in the afternoon. Jakob listened as intently as he could. Theyd spent all day grooming and feeding the horses, getting them ready. Now he was shattered. He tried to trifle a yawn. Engel raised an eyebrow but continued. He handed him some rope halters and lead rains. ‘You will be leading Flavory Maestro Pluto Largo and Jupiter.’

Jakob’s mouth dropped open. ‘All of them.’

‘Yes. Do you see anyone else?’ His guardian made a dramatic sweep of the stables with his arm.

‘But...’

Herr Engel dismissed his concerns. ‘You can do it. I’ll take the rest. Now tack them all up.’ He strode away. ‘Oh, and make sure the reins aren’t loose and that the stirrups aren’t hanging down.’ He turned back. ‘Put the rope halters over the top. All right?’

He went into the stable and Jakob was left standing in the yard, turning the ropes over in his hand. Would he really be able to do it? The thought of trying to control all those horses with just these ropes, and while on the back of a horse, was danting.

His guardian’s voice broke the silence. ‘Be quick and quiet about it.’

Walking into the stolls, Jakob hatched a plane. If he acted confident...

Thee stallions seemed to be waiting for him. ‘Well, boys, this is it! We’re going on a little trip!’ It almost sounded confident, apart from the slight crack in his voice at the end Some of the horses nickered back a welcome. Maybe it had worked.



Proof Read Answers (15 mistakes in total):

‘I want you to ride Raluca. He’s full of good sense. Trust him.’ Herr Engel stood in the stable, late in the afternoon. Jakob listened as intently as he could. They’d spent all day grooming and feeding the horses, getting them ready. Now he was shattered. He tried to stifle a yawn. Engel raised an eyebrow but continued. He handed him some rope halters and lead reins. ‘You will be leading Flavory, Maestro, Pluto, Largo and Jupiter.’

Jakob’s mouth dropped open. ‘All of them?’

‘Yes. Do you see anyone else?’ His guardian made a dramatic sweep of the stables with his arm.

‘But...’

Herr Engel dismissed his concerns. ‘You can do it. I’ll take the rest. Now tack them all up.’ He strode away. ‘Oh, and make sure the reins aren’t loose and that the stirrups aren’t hanging down.’ He turned back. ‘Put the rope halters over the top. All right?’

He went into the stable and Jakob was left standing in the yard, turning the ropes over in his hand. Would he really be able to do it? The thought of trying to control all those horses with just these ropes, and while on the back of a horse, was daunting.

(unnecessary gap) His guardian’s voice broke the silence. ‘Be quick and quiet about it.’

Walking into the stalls, Jakob hatched a plan. If he acted confident... The stallions seemed to be waiting for him. ‘Well, boys, this is it! We’re going on a little trip!’ It almost sounded confident, apart from the slight crack in his voice at the end. Some of the horses nickered back a welcome. Maybe it had worked.