

## *Practical strategies for teaching writing*

(Manuel and Carter, 2015)

Type of Writing/Focus	Activities	Skills and Resources
<p><b>Descriptive Writing</b></p> <p><b>a) People</b></p> <p><b>b) Places</b></p> <p><b>c) Objects/Sounds</b></p>	<p>Describe people: teacher, doctor, plumber, baker, footballer, broker, painter, musician Describe the person sitting next to you in the bus/train Describe your favourite or least favourite ad, TV character, website, song Describe your favourite animal Make jottings about a character you have imagined</p> <p>Describe a scene in a painting, postcard, drawing to capture its essence I am a giant octopus carried out into the sea that is too cold I am a creature from Jupiter. I've landed near the sea. Describe the view from your bedroom window, early morning in summer, dusk in winter, twilight in autumn</p> <p>Write the script for an ad for a potato, a new suntan lotion, new no-burn candles Describe your mobile's ringtone without others being able to hear it Describe the impact of your favourite song or piece of music on you</p>	<p>Use models, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ted Hughes' poetry</li> <li>➤ Dickens</li> <li>➤ Hardy</li> <li>➤ Browning's poetry</li> <li>➤ Pictures</li> <li>➤ Music</li> <li>➤ Postcards</li> <li>➤ Film excerpts</li> <li>➤ Documentaries</li> <li>➤ Paintings</li> <li>➤ Webpages</li> </ul> <p>Observation Recognition of uniqueness, differences, contrasts Surface and symbolic characteristics Description and evocation Aims at sharp detail and accuracy Use as a basis for story writing and other imaginative writing Develops language skills and recognition of differences between literal, abstract, emotive, rhetorical, sensational and figurative language</p>
<p><b>Activities/Emotions</b></p>	<p>Describe someone who is angry, shy, embarrassed, delighted, afraid, miserable, enthusiastic, excited (what are the features of these emotions?) Describe what it feels like to ski, float, take off in a plane, ride a bike through the sand, eat ice-cream, shape clay Describe what it feels like to be late, early, stuck, betrayed, cheated, surprised</p>	<p>Memory and observation Honing skills of defining and evoking, showing rather than telling Use photographs and pictures as stimulus</p>
<p><b>Contrasts</b></p>	<p>Describe a room before/after a party A tree on a sunny, windy, raining, foggy day Bush before and after fire An old person and a baby The ocean and the desert Wealth and poverty A cat asleep/awake Fire/water Night/day Classical music/rap music Walking/dancing</p>	<p>Develops precision in description Moving towards figurative use of language. Understanding of symbol, metaphor, simile etc through activity-based and embodied learning Resources – pictures, music, ads, objects – can be simple and supplied by both teacher and students</p>
<p><b>Fantasy</b></p>	<p>Describe life in a world without paper, electricity, mobiles, clothes, McDonalds</p>	<p>Developing concept of fantasy Allow scope for representation</p>

	<p>Use Picasso and Dali paintings as a stimulus to describe a dream</p> <p>What is your ideal day?</p> <p>Who is your fantasy friend?</p> <p>Take extracts from fantasy fiction and recast it in another form</p>	<p>Link to popular media representations</p>
<b>Narrative</b>	<p>Word cache and writing derby – free-write for 1, 2 or 3 minutes on a person, place, experience, thing (from own experience of from a text)</p> <p>Use titles, pictures, photos, music, book covers, ads, opening sentences of novels, opening lines of poems or songs, headlines etc as stimulus</p> <p>Take an actual incident and turn it into a story (Kelly gang, war, news items, mystery)</p> <p>Spontaneous memory monologue technique</p> <p>Use flashback, stream of consciousness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finishing stories read in class</li> <li>• Creating ghost chapters, missing chapters, new endings</li> </ul>	<p>Developing confidence in writing through memory, observation, experience</p> <p>Stress origins, derivations, intertextuality, form, organization of ideas</p>
<b>Argument/Exposition</b>	<p>Prepare a for/against list on the topic of censorship, stem cell research, cloning</p> <p>Create a dialogue between two people with opposed points of view about a text or topic</p> <p>Write a newspaper editorial or blog on a controversial topic or issue</p> <p>Contribute to a web discussion or blog on a topical issue</p> <p>Use the Benton advertisements to debate issues such as media censorship</p>	<p>Stress on structuring ideas, distinguishing between fact and opinion, sequencing ideas, using evidence and shared conventions</p>
<b>Creative</b>	<p>Stimulus from pictures, music, objects, characters, topics, experiences, guided experiences, literature, film, media</p> <p>Stimulus by models – poems, stories, plays, media, etc</p> <p>Interview other writers</p> <p>Spontaneous Memory Monologue (Reflect on something in the landscape that triggers memories)</p> <p>Symbols – rocks, plants, gloves, sticks, etc</p> <p>Imagine you are ... a piece of fruit, a force of nature, a season, a body of water, a landform, a tree, a building, a coin, a musical instrument, a car, a country, etc</p> <p>Find a photo or photos from stages in your life. Using the poem “The Album”, use this photo to reflect on the what, where, when, how, why of that picture</p> <p>Draw a silhouette of your friend’s face and vice-versa. Use this to stimulate writing about ‘you’, also using the poems as a stimulus if you wish .. create your own poem with visual images</p> <p>Write interview questions for interviews with characters from texts</p> <p>Speak for the city street, speak for the still lake, your bedroom, your dog</p> <p>Translate a known work into another form – a poem into a news story, a news story into a poem, a dialogue into a poem ...</p> <p>Change the ending of a text</p>	<p>Allow for lots of choice and scope in substance and form.</p> <p>Lots of pre-writing talk, time for revising, opportunities for discussion of writing process, publication</p> <p>Develops confidence and control over language</p> <p>Values the capital that students bring to the classroom in terms of memory, experience, observation</p> <p>Experiential, student and learning centred approaches</p> <p>Workshop approaches</p> <p>Students’ literature and texts valued as part of the continuum of all texts</p>

	<p>Draw something you were afraid of as a child – then share and discuss with a partner – then read “The Day I Met the Devil” – short story</p> <p>Imagine you are the person in the picture – what is your life like? Write about it in diary, letter or narrative form</p> <p>Use the first line of a novel, a poem, a headline, a play, or anything, and continue the story – individually, or around the class</p> <p>Round the group writing</p> <p>Group collaboration on a poem or other piece of writing</p> <p>Haiku, shape poems, acrostic poems</p> <p>Add a missing piece to the story, film or poem</p> <p>Change one thing about the story – a nursery rhyme or a fairy tale – move it forward in time, alter the conditions, the setting, the characters</p> <p>Complete the ending of a story “The New Axe Handle”</p> <p>Write letters exchanged between two characters</p> <p>Rewrite the story from another point of view – e.g. a minor character</p>	
<b>Factual</b>	<p>Write a report on media events</p> <p>Compile lists and catalogues</p> <p>Describe an experience or event from history</p> <p>Take a picture and present a point of view, or argue for an ad/film being (un)censored</p> <p>Instructional writing – giving directions, describing an object to the class without them being able to see it</p> <p>Examine propaganda posters and materials – identify how facts have been distorted. Rewrite the material to provide a more factual representation</p> <p>Detail a scene or an object as a forensic investigator for use as evidence in a case</p> <p>Statement of family background, family tree</p> <p>Inventory of advertising on tv, radio, print, web</p> <p>Present the relevant facts about a fork, a sock, a cricket ground</p> <p>Factual report on a dog’s life, teenagers, house next door</p> <p>Write a classified ad for something you want to sell on E-Bay</p>	<p>Distinguishing fact from opinion.</p> <p>Recognising the role of factual writing in communicating ideas</p> <p>Is there such a thing as fact?</p>
<b>Point of view</b>	<p>Interview people on a topic/issue</p> <p>Express a point of view in response to an article in the paper</p> <p>Give opinions on crime, drugs, public education</p> <p>Write a day in the life of someone you know</p> <p>Write a report on an incident from two points of view</p> <p>Tell the story of a Sunday morning spent by an old man, a baby, a child, a journalist, a surfer</p>	<p>Developing an understanding of the concept of ‘voice’ and the organization of ideas for public contexts</p>
<b>Transactional</b>	<p>Plan an itinerary for a dream holiday – send emails, letter to hotels, postcards to friends</p>	<p>Conventions of letters, emails, reports, forms, workplace texts etc</p>

	Send an email to all your friends breaking to them some important news Write a letter to the Editor of your local newspaper Post a comment on an on-line at a news site Apply for a job Write to an author	Need for coherence and clarity Clarity of message is central
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