Lancashire Primary Strategy

Narrative Writing
The Teacher’s Role in Shared Writing

The session should be focused on just one or two teaching objectives from the text and sentence levels.

If you use the techniques below during your Shared Writing sessions, you will gradually move your children towards greater independence:

**Teacher Demonstration**
- Most shared writing sessions begin with the teacher modelling how to write in a particular genre, always maintaining a clear focus on the objective(s).
- The teacher thinks through the process aloud, rehearses everything orally before writing it down, makes changes and explains to the children why the changes were made and why one choice is preferable to another.
- He/She writes the sentence, rereads it and amends again if necessary.
- The teacher does not ask the children to contribute at this stage, but asks for their opinions on the choices made.

**Teacher Scribing**
- The children are asked to make contributions drawing on what they have learnt from the teacher’s demonstration.
- The teacher limits the children’s contributions so they are only related to the objective(s) being taught.
- He/She challenges the children’s contributions in order to refine their understanding, and their skills of composition.
- The teacher asks the children to talk about their contributions with each other first before offering them to the rest of the class.
- He/She asks more able children to note their ideas down on a whiteboard. These can be looked at either as good examples, or used as teaching points.

**Supported Composition**
- The children get to compose, and try out what they have been learning for themselves.
- They use whiteboards and dry-wipe markers to write individually or in pairs.
- They are asked to write a short amount of text that sharply focuses on the objective they are studying.
- The children hold up their ideas for the teacher to see.
- Good examples are celebrated, and misconceptions identified and corrected.
- Supported composition could take place over the full 30 minutes of the shared session. This would allow some in depth work on the particular language feature.
## Narrative Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| Reception | • Oral retellings  
• Puppet plays  
• Story Boards  
• Mini books  
• Story maps |
| Year 1 | • Stories based upon personal experience or other stories.  
• Class Story book  
• Oral retelling  
• Character profile  
• Story based on known structure  
• Writing about significant incidents  
• Story with a simple setting |
| Year 2 | • Oral and written retelling  
• Stories  
• Character profile  
• Traditional Tale  
• Reading Journal – narrative |
| Year 3 | • Story with a setting  
• Story with dialogue  
• A fable or myth with a ‘moral message’  
• An alternative ‘traditional’ story  
• A story with the focus on the sequence  
• An adventure/mystery story |
| Year 4 | • A story with the focus on plot  
• A character sketch  
• A personal response to a story with a historical setting  
• A descriptive setting  
• A collaborative chapter story  
• A story in paragraphs  
• Alternative endings to a story |
| Year 5 | • Two story beginnings  
• A new scene or character written into a story  
• A written version of a fable  
• A myth and/or a legend  
• A short story written from the point of view of a different character  
• An additional chapter written in the style of the author |
| Year 6 | • Narrative writing (speed)  
• Test practice  
• An extended narrative on a theme identified in reading |
Don’t say ‘said’!
Replied, bumbled, cried, screeched, laughed, whittered, whinged, bellowed, whispered, exclaimed, retorted, squeaked.....
The structure of stories

There is a fundamental pattern to narrative that children need to internalise in order to create their own stories.

Openings:
Some possible options for opening a story ‘to grab the reader’:
- Using dialogue, e.g. a warning given by one character to another
- Asking the reader a question (Roald Dahl often does this)
- Describing some strange behaviour of one of the characters
- Using a dramatic exclamation – Help! – or dramatic event
- Introducing something intriguing

Techniques for introducing characters:
- Using an interesting name
- Limiting description to how the character feels – sad, lonely, angry or their personality – bossy or shy
- Relying on portraying character through action and dialogue
- Using powerful verbs to show how a character feels and behaves, e.g. muttered, ambled
- Giving the thoughts and reactions of other characters
- Revealing the characters’ thoughts and ideas

Build up:
- Making the characters do something
- Using detail based on sense impressions – what can be seen, heard, smelt, touched or tasted
- Basing settings on known places plus some invented detail
- Using real or invented names to bring places alive – to help make the setting more real and more believable
- Creating atmosphere, e.g. what is hidden, what is dangerous, what looks unusual, what is out of place
- Using the weather, time of day and season, as well as place
- Lulling the reader into a false sense of security that all is well

Dilemma/Problem/Threat:
- Introducing a problem
- Using ‘empty’ words, e.g. ‘someone’ to create suspense
- Using short sentences to create drama and suspense
- Strengthening nouns and verbs rather than adjectives and adverbs
- Employing suspense words such as ‘suddenly’, ‘without warning’
- Drawing the reader in by asking a question
- Occasionally breaking a sentence rule by using a fragment to emphasise a point, e.g. ‘Silence!’
- Varying sentence openings by:
  - sometimes starting with an adverb, e.g. ‘Carefully’,
  - a prepositional phrase, e.g. ‘At the end of the street’,
  - a subordinate clause, e.g. ‘Although she was tired, Vanya ….’
  - ‘Swinging his stick in the air, he….‘
- Delaying the revealing of the ‘monster’ by shadows, sounds, etc
- Using ominous sounds, darkness or cold to build tension

**Reactions/Events/ Complicating Action:**
- Building up on many of the techniques already used in the earlier part of the story
- Varying sentence structures by using longer sentences to get a rhythm going to describe the increasing tension as events unfold
- Using alliteration and short sentences to portray sounds within the action
- Using metaphor and simile to help paint the scene and describe the feelings of the characters
- Introducing further possible complications, using connecting words and phrases such as ‘unfortunately…’ ‘what he hadn’t noticed was …’

**Resolution:**
Techniques for resolving the dilemma:
- Allowing help to arrive in an unexpected form, such as ‘It was at that moment that …’
- Making the character/s do something unexpected
- Showing that the problem/dilemma was only in the characters’ minds and not real
- Allowing the character some extra effort to overcome the problem
- Only resolving a part of the dilemma so the characters learn a lesson for the future

**Ending:**
Some possible options for closing a story:
- Making a comment about the resolution
- Using dialogue – a comment from one of the characters
- Using a question
- Making a mysterious remark
- Telling the reader to remember or to do something
- Showing how a character has changed
- Using one word or an exclamation
- Avoiding clichés such as ‘The End’ or ‘They all lived happily ever after’ unless it is a fabrication of a traditional story
- Reflecting on the events and perhaps providing a moral
- Allowing the main character to think aloud
- Introducing an element of mystery, e.g. ‘Sally would never know how lucky she was that …’
- Looking to the future
- Revisiting where the story began
Story Mountain Planner

Problem

Build Up

Resolution

Opening

Ending
Opening, Build Up, Complicating Action, Resolution or Ending?

The wolf blew so hard that the little house fell down.

Once upon a time there was a little girl called Red Riding Hood.

While she was walking in the forest, Snow White found a little cottage.

But the pot would not stop cooking porridge.

At that moment, in rushed the woodcutter.

I will grant you three wishes, but you must choose carefully.

So the three pigs boiled up a cauldron of hot water.

And from that day on the wolf was never seen again.
The three stages of story writing

IMITATION: listening, joining in and getting to know stories well. Beginning to internalise story structures and sentence patterns.
One fundamental way of improving children’s language ability is through reading and re-reading. Re-reading and retailing is crucial, so that children can move through these stages.
Listen – to the teacher reading/telling a tale
Join in – increasingly saying more and more
Imitate – be able to re-read/retell the tale

INNOVATION: taking a story you know well and using it as a basic structure but changing it.
Borrowing and adapting story structures and sentence patterns.
At first, innovation might be very simple – re-telling a tale and changing the names of the characters. Later on, the tale could be unpicked to write a whole new story based upon the underlying structure.

INVENTION: making up your own stories, calling upon the store of known tales.
Manipulating, adapting, altering and creating story structures and sentence patterns.
Invention is hard without the basic tool kit. The writer needs the following building blocks to hand:
• A cast of possible characters;
• Some possible events;
• A few basic patterns;
• The flow of story sentences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Objectives relating to CHARACTER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>T5 to understand how story book language works and to use some formal elements when retelling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>stories. e.g. ‘Once there was . . .’ ‘She lived in a little’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1 Term 2</td>
<td>T8 to identify and discuss characters, e.g. appearance, behaviour, qualities; to speculate about</td>
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<td>how they might behave; to discuss how they are described in the text; and to compare characters</td>
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<td>from different stories or plays;</td>
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<td>T9 to become aware of characters and dialogue, e.g. by role playing parts when reading aloud</td>
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<td>stories or plays.</td>
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<td>T15 to build simple profiles of characters from stories read, describing characteristics,</td>
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<td>appearances, behaviour with pictures, single words, captions, words and sentences from text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2 Term 2</td>
<td>T6 to identify and describe characters, expressing views and using words and phrases from texts.</td>
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<td>T14 to write character profiles, e.g. simple descriptions, posters, passports, using key words and</td>
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<td>phrases that describe or are spoken by characters in the text.</td>
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<td>Y3 Term 2</td>
<td>T3 to identify and discuss main and recurring characters, evaluate their behaviour and justify</td>
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<td>views. T8 to write portraits of characters, using story text to describe behaviour and</td>
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<td>characteristics, and presenting portraits in a variety of ways, e.g. as posters, labelled</td>
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<td>diagrams, letters to friends about them.</td>
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<td>Y3 Term 3</td>
<td>T5 to discuss (i) characters’ feelings; (ii) behaviour, e.g. fair or unreasonable, brave or</td>
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<td>foolish; (iii) relationships, referring to the text and making judgements.</td>
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<td>Y4 Term 1</td>
<td>T1 to investigate how characters are built up from small details, and how the reader responds to</td>
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<td>them. T2 to identify the main characteristics of the key characters, drawing on the text to</td>
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<td>justify views, and using the information to predict actions.</td>
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<td>T11 to write character sketches, focusing on small details to evoke sympathy or dislike.</td>
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<td>Y4 Term 3</td>
<td>T11 to explore the main issues of a story by writing a story about a dilemma and the issues it</td>
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<td>raises for the character.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y5 Term 1</td>
<td>T3 to investigate how characters are presented, referring to the text:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• through dialogue, action and description;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• how the reader responds to them (as victims, heroes, etc.);</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• through examining their relationships with other characters.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T15 to write new characters into a story, in the manner of the writer, maintaining consistency of</td>
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<td>character and style, using paragraphs to organise and develop detail.</td>
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<td>Y5 Term 3</td>
<td>T2 to identify the point of view from which the story is told and how this affects the reader’s</td>
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<td>response. T3 to change point of view, e.g. tell incident or describe from the point of view of</td>
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<td>another character or perspective.</td>
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<td>T7 to write from another character’s point of view, e.g. retelling an incident in letter form.</td>
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<td>Y6 Term 1</td>
<td>T7 to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative</td>
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<td>writing.</td>
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</table>
How has the author created the main character?

Coral Ocean stood on the edge of the playground and waited. No one came near. All the other children seemed to be engrossed in their own games. She gazed through railings and pretended to notice something interesting in the distance. Blinking back tears, she roughly rubbed her eyes and hoped that no one would notice.

“What’s up?” A tall boy had come across and stood bouncing a ball against the shed.

“Clear off!”, snapped Coral, not yet even ready to try.

“Keep your hair on”, muttered the boy. He spun round and raced back to the playground bouncing his ball as he went. Coral could see him chatting to some other boys and pointing back at her.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Objectives relating to SETTING</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>T5 to understand how story book language works and to use some formal elements when retelling stories. e.g. ‘Once there was . . .’ ‘She lived in a little’,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y1 Term 1</td>
<td>T5 to describe story settings and incidents and relate them to their own experience and that of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y2 Term 2</td>
<td>T5 to discuss story settings: to compare differences; to locate key words and phrases in text; to consider how different settings influence events and behaviour. T13 to use story settings from reading, e.g. re-describe, use in own writing, write a different story in the same setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Y3 Term 1  | T1 to compare a range of story settings, and to select words and phrases that describe scenes. T11 to develop the use of settings in own stories by:  
  - writing short descriptions of known places  
  - writing a description in the style of a familiar story  
  - to investigate and collect sentences/phrases for story openings – use some of these formal elements in re-telling and story writing. |
| Y3 Term 3  | T11 to write openings to stories or chapters linked to and arising from reading; to focus on language used to create effects. |
| Y4 Term 1  | T1 to investigate how settings are built up from small details, and how the reader responds to them. |
| Y4 Term 2  | T1 to understand how writers create imaginary worlds, particularly where this is original or unfamiliar, such as a science fiction setting and to show how the writer has evoked it through detail. T2 to understand how settings influence events and incidents in stories and how they affect characters’ behaviour. T10 to develop the use of settings in own writing, making use of work on adjectives and figurative language to describe settings effectively. |
Scary settings

Using the checklist, annotate the passage to show how the author has created a scary setting.

I made my way carefully up the stairs, one step at a time. Even though I wore my soft shoes, the boards creaked. In the silence of the empty house, the sound seemed explosive. At the top of the stairs, I paused. A bedroom door swung open. A dark shadow shifted. Dust shimmered. A draft of cold air touched my face.

“Get a grip,” I thought. But the door swung back again, too quickly, and I knew that someone had to be there. I could feel my heart thudding as a gripped the poker tightly. I stepped forwards.

Shared writing should now be used to show the children how to write a similar passage, describing the setting and making it scary. A simple frame will help the children structure their writing.
Creating different settings

Rewrite this paragraph, changing the setting to science fiction...

Tara walked into the next room. There was a table down the middle of the room. Pictures hung from the walls and there was a large mirror. On the floor was a carpet. In the corner of there was a tank of fish. Light came from the windows. The curtains blew in the breeze. Tara stared at the things on the table.

Science Fiction Genre Checklist

- Set in different time or place
- Mix of fantasy and reality
- Technical language
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Objectives relating to OPENINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y3 Term 3</td>
<td>T2 to refer to significant aspects of the text, e.g. opening, and to know language is used to create these, e.g. use of adjectives for description.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T11 to write openings to stories or chapters linked to or arising from reading; to focus on language to create effects, e.g. building tension,</td>
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<td>suspense, creating moods, setting scenes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y5 Term 1</td>
<td>T1 to analyse the features of a good opening and compare a number of story openings.</td>
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</table>

**Story openings**
Can you identify the type of story opening?

*One winter’s evening, when the snow fell thick as feathers, a child wandered out of nowhere into the village.*

*Had it always been so dark?*

*Her name was Fiona and everyone thought she was a snob.*

*On the edge of the town stood a factory where no one ever went.*

*“Why couldn’t I have a Gameboy, everyone else in our class did.”*

*Billy Craddock was having none of it.*

*The bomb exploded at exactly half past twelve.*

*“Gravella, stop that!” screeched Mrs Jarmin.*

*Once upon a time there lived three miserable trolls.*

*Most people think that ghosts do not exist.*

*“Listen here you two - you are not allowed to go to the dump!”*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Part of Story</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Opening     | • Beginning,  
• Scene setting to orientate the reader,  
• May or may not include characters presented in some way.  
• Can start with action, dialogue or description or a combination. |
| Build up    | • Change of normality,  
• Routine disrupted in some way,  
• Expectations changed.  
• Not necessarily bad. |
| Complicating action | Events arising from the threat. Should include:  
• characters’ responses to situation  
• characters’ actions/reactions  
• interaction between characters - dialogue should only be used to carry the story forward.  
• events to carry the story forward  
• consequences of characters’ actions  
Could include:  
• dilemmas  
• characters being thwarted in some way |
| Resolution  | • How characters extract themselves from a situation |
| Ending      | • How things work out for everyone.  
• Return to original setting but things/people have changed/ learned something. |
Think of a sentence

Say your sentence

Write your sentence

Read your sentence