

## Story writing - creative thinking

Writing stories is an exciting and creative activity and yet students often seem resistant to undertaking this task. I think it is important to break the task down into small stages so students don't get discouraged, and place emphasis on the creative part.

### Preparation

This is the last line of our story;

*'They walked away sadly, promising never to return again'*

Before class, think up several examples of who 'they' could be and from where they are walking. For example;

- They: students Where: the last day of their language course in the UK
- They: aliens Where: the Earth
- They: football team Where: after a match
- They: teenagers Where: a concert by their favourite band
- They: friends Where: a party at another friend's house

### Procedure

- Giving the task purpose (this stage could be done in the students' own language)
  - Ask students what the purpose of writing a story is. Answer: to entertain
  - Ask them for ways a writer can do this Possible answers: comedy, suspense, mystery, a twist, romance, a moral
- Brainstorming for ideas/ creating the plot of the story (I) As a class.
  - Write the title of our story on the board. Ask students to think silently who 'they' might be and where they are leaving.
  - If they find this difficult you could give them one of your ideas. Eg. They: students Where: the last day of their language course in another country
  - Choose one of their suggestions and ask questions to get students developing the idea: Eg. Where did they go? Why were they so sad when they left? What things went wrong? Why will they never return?
  - The aim is to get lots of different suggestions for each question to get students being as creative as possible.
- Brainstorming for ideas/ creating the plot of the story (II) In groups, with direction.
  - Divide students into groups of 4 or 5.
  - Each group chooses a different 'they' and 'where', either from earlier student suggestions or your ideas.
  - Give them five minutes to come up with a story based on these. Encourage the groups to follow the same procedure as in step 2 and come up with lots of different stories before choosing their favourite.
  - The aim is creativity and a chance for students to use their imaginations. The time limit is important to keep the activity moving.

- Whole class feedback
  - Ask students to share their favourite stories with the class.
  - Before this activity begins, tell them that they will need to choose which one of the other stories they like best and why - this will give students a good reason for listening.
- Extension
  - Take students back to the title you started with and discuss how many ideas came out of just one line. Of course, you could now ask them to write the story either in class or as homework, however, I would suggest leaving this activity at this point as the aim is to exercise students' creative side. During the task the students will have had to use a wide range of vocabulary and I think this is challenge enough for any class.

*Stuart Wiffin, Teacher, France*