

Inspiration pages

1. Biographical writing p.2

2. Description p.4

3. Did you know? p.6

4. Fascinating facts p.8

5. How-to guides p.10

6. Jokebook p.12

7. Letters p.14

8. Poetry p.16

9. Recipes p.18

10. Stories p.20

Biographical writing

For an example of an anthology based on recounts, see *Memories* by the pupils of the John Rankin Schools.

Models and Inspiration

There will be plenty of great examples of biographical writing in your library, but you will definitely be able to find brilliant biographical writing in these books:

El Deafo by *Cece Bell* (5+)

Ethel and Ernest by *Raymond Briggs* (8+)

Ronaldo (Ultimate Football Heroes) by *Matt and Tom Oldfield* (8+)

Coming to England by *Floella Benjamin* (9+)

Boy by *Roald Dahl* (9+)

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by *Judith Kerr* (9+)

Chinese Cinderella by *Adeline Yen Mah* (9+)

My Family and Other Animals by *Gerald Durrell* (10+)

I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World by *Malala Yousafzai and Patrick McCormick* (11+)

The Diary of A Young Girl by *Anne Frank* (13+)

12 Years a Slave by *Solomon Northup* (13+)

Smile by *Raina Telgemeier* (13+)

Suggested Activities

Memories

A school trip, students' first day at school, a time capsule of the year or a special memory could all be useful inspiration for writing. It might be the first time they scored a goal in football, a time they helped a grandparent cook something or a trip to the seaside. Alternatively, ask pupils to think of one experience which helped make them the person they are today.

Our greatest challenges

What's the most difficult thing your pupils have ever done? Why was it so tough? What helped them overcome the challenge, and how did they feel before, during and afterwards?

My life in 5 dishes

Ask pupils if there is a special meal which sticks out in their memory? Or perhaps there's a certain dish which sums up a person or place that's important to them. Following discussion, pupils could write a story about a memorable meal or make a list of five dishes which each represent a different aspect of their identity and experiences. Make sure they use evocative description using the five senses.

Our first...

Pupils could describe their first bedroom or the first time they tried their favourite hobby. Alternatively, pose questions about their first day at primary or secondary school; what thoughts and fears were running through their minds?

A memorable place

Where is the most fun, interesting, scary or sad place your pupils have ever been? Who did they meet there and what was it like? What made it so memorable?

How I met...

Ask pupils to write the story of how they met someone who is now an important person in their life. It could be the day they met their best friend or a younger sibling was born. What was their initial reaction to this person? Has anything changed?

Pets or toys

Encourage pupils to think about the life story of their pet or favourite toy. They could write this in third person as a biography or from the perspective of the animal or toy. What have been the key moments in its life? What are its hopes and dreams?

Descriptive writing

For an example of an anthology which uses lots of detailed description, see this short story and poetry anthology by students at Abbey Gate College.

Models and Inspiration

There will be plenty of great examples of descriptive writing in your library, but you will definitely be able to find brilliant descriptive extracts in these books:

Skellig by *David Almond*

Wuthering Heights by *Emily Brontë*

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by *Lewis Carroll*

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by *Roald Dahl*

Oliver Twist by *Charles Dickens*

Stardust by *Neil Gaiman*

Lord of the Flies by *William Golding*

Tom's Midnight Garden by *Philippa Gregory*

Chronicles of Narnia by *C.S. Lewis*

Discworld Novels by *Terry Pratchett*

His Dark Materials trilogy by *Philip Pullman*

The Harry Potter series by *JK Rowling*

Suggested Activities

An imaginary creature

Ask pupils to invent a miraculous creature. Where does it live - land, sea, sky? How is it adapted to its environment? What is the texture of its fur, feathers or scales like? Introduce metaphors and similes to produce accurate description of its colours. What noise does it make? How does it move? The more detail pupils include, the more realistic the creature will seem.

An object in a museum

This is a great activity to incorporate into an excursion to a museum or gallery. Challenge pupils to find the most interesting, unusual or striking item they can. Can they imagine the object being made or used? If it could talk, what might it say? What does its shape or colour remind them of? If they are not sure of its actual purpose, ask them to invent a new purpose for the item.

Character

Introduce pupils to Sherlock Holmes and the things he notices about other people. Ask them to describe a character, fictional or a real person in the way that Holmes would, giving hints about their personality, interests and other characteristics through tiny details.

The view from your window

Pupils are more able to notice the small details if they draw the view from their bedroom window or from their desk at school before they write the description.

An imaginary island

Tell pupils that they have discovered an island that no one back home knows about. Using their imagination, they could describe the plants they can see, the weather, any animals or humans living on the island. You could use music to help pupils imagine the atmosphere of the island.

Exploring shoes

Ask pupils to take off one shoe and put it on the desk in front of them. Have them describe the shoe in as much minute detail as they can, right down to the scratches and scuffs. What does it tell an observer about the wearer? How much of their personality is revealed through their shoes?

A secret hideaway

Give pupils time to imagine their perfect hideaway. It could be a treehouse, an underwater cave, a room in the topmost turret of a castle etc. Use noun phrases to make pupils writing as descriptive as possible, e.g. instead of writing 'a chair', they could write 'a rocking chair carved from an ancient oak-tree'.

Favourite childhood toys

Encourage pupils to bring in their favourite childhood toy if they can. What memories does looking at the toy bring back? How does the toy look now compared to when it was new? What does its shape resemble? What expression is on its face?

A journey

Pupils could describe a journey they have been on; it could be one they know well such as their everyday journey to school or something special like the first time they flew in an aeroplane. Have them think about the sensation of movement: how do their muscles feel as they walk? What happens to their tummies or ears as the plane takes off? Remind them to include details about their own thoughts and feelings as well as the things they notice during the journey.

Wordburst

Put a photo of a destination (the more detailed the better) in the middle of each table, with at least four lines coming out of the picture so that it appears to be at the centre of a mindmap. At the end of each line, write a word you would like pupils to think about e.g. colours, shapes, smell, sounds. Give pupils 30 seconds only to write as many words as they can around that word, relating to what they can see in the picture. When the time is up, rotate the picture 90 degrees and give them the chance to build on someone else's ideas. Do this four times to allow for a full rotation.

Did you know? (Historical non-fiction)

For an example of what is possible, see the work of Year 6 pupils from Hollington Primary Academy who wrote recounts from the perspective of a fictional character they had studied for their anthology: Bottled Memories. This could be easily applied to a historic figure using one of the suggested activities below.

Models and Inspiration

Fiction

Stig of the Dump by Clive King (7+)

The Island At The End Of Everything by Kiran Millwood Hargrave (9+)

Seeing Stone (trilogy) by Kevin Crossley Holland (9+)

Coram Boy by Jamila Gavin (11+)

The Lie Tree by Frances Hardinge (13+)

Non-fiction

BBC History For Kids website

Teaching History with 100 Objects (British Museum online resource)

Horrible Histories (series) by Terry Deary (7+)

Beyond the Wall by Tanya Landman (13+)

Suggested Activities

Time travel

Ask pupils to write a story about travelling back in time to a different era or a particular moment in history. What seems particularly strange? Does anything seem familiar? Do they meet a friend who can show them around? Do they make any enemies? Does their experience challenge any of their preconceptions about the period? Remind them to use the five senses to help transport the reader back in time with them.

Interview

There are two possibilities for this one. Pupils could write an imaginary interview with a historical figure (they can be famous, for example, Rosa Parks, or an unknown person; for example, someone else who was on the bus with her). Alternatively, they could do a real interview with someone of an older generation about their memories of a different time - a grandparent, for example. This is a great opportunity for pupils to do some investigative local or family history.

Life stories

The activity above is also suitable for writing short biographies. More confident writers could write a poem about the person, a diary entry from their perspective or even a Facebook profile.

Object stories

As a class, investigate the history of a particular object - this could be an artefact in a local museum, a family heirloom or something in your school or local area, like an old telephone box or a war memorial. Pupils could work in groups to produce a report into a different aspect of the object, such as: its invention, manufacture, common uses, the people who might have used it, its location etc.

Young people's history

Linked to a period of history they are currently studying, ask pupils to write a piece of historical fiction or an account of a famous event from the perspective of a child or teenager living at the time. They could be the son or daughter of a key historical figure or they could have a job which enables them to eavesdrop on important situations e.g. a chimney sweep at 10 Downing Street or a maid in a royal household.

Multi-faceted narratives

Give pupils a set of sources related to a historical event, both images and written, along with some key facts and statistics. Get them to each write an account from the perspective of a particular person involved. For example, if you're studying the Russian Revolution, one pupil could have the role of a peasant, another the role of an urban worker and another the role of an aristocrat.

Dystopia

Tell pupils to imagine that a key historical event had happened differently and write about how different things would be as a result. For example, if the Roman Empire had never fallen or if Henry VIII had not divorced his first wife.

Comic-strip history

Pupils could turn a key historical event into a comic strip or a playscript if they aren't keen on drawing. Terry Deary's Horrible Histories series is a great source of inspiration for this activity.

Holiday history

Ask pupils to write a travel brochure or self-guided tour for a location: it could be somewhere far away or a notable landmark nearby. Include a range of information about the history of the place including key figures who lived or visited there, the economic and social background, any challenges the area has faced. You could use a real travel guide as a model to demonstrate headings pupils could include.

Inspiration wall

Have pupils choose someone from the past they would like to thank for the impact they've had on the world. It might be a famous scientist for their pioneering research, an artist, writer or musician who has inspired them or a campaigner who fought for social change. Encourage pupils to think about how the person's work has affected their lives and how different things might be without their legacy and produce a poster about this person and their contribution to their field.

Fascinating facts (scientific non-fiction)

For an example of presenting pupils' scientific knowledge in a creative way, see Space Extravaganza! by the pupils of Penygraig Junior School. It includes stories entitled: *Tim Peake's Adventure and Adventures on the moon*.

Models and Inspiration

National Geographic Kids website

Online Science (Science Museum resource)

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them: Hogwarts Library Book by *J. K. Rowling* (11+)

A Short History of Nearly Everything by *Bill Bryson* (14+)

Why Can't I Tickle Myself by *Gemma Elwin Harris* (9+)

George's Secret Key to the Universe by *Lucy Hawking and Stephen Hawking* (9+)

Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World by *Rachel Ignotofsky* (9+)

Fun Science by *Charlie McDonnell* (9+)

Suggested Activities

Day in the life

Encourage pupils to write a diary entry from the perspective of a being or object they have learnt about in science, making sure to include lots of detail about its typical activities, what it eats, where it sleeps or spends its time etc. The animal or object could be a tree frog, a pebble on a beach or even a planet or asteroid.

Eco-champion

Have your pupils made a change to your life which will help the environment? Maybe they cycle, walk or take public transport to school instead of getting a lift in the car. Maybe they are buying local produce which hasn't travelled across the world. Maybe they are running a campaign to encourage their families or school community to recycle more. Ask them to write an article, letter or motivational speech about their efforts, encouraging their readers to take action.

An introduction to...

Your anthology could be a guide to an area of science you have been exploring, with each pupil taking responsibility for writing about a different aspect. Examples could include introductions to: the animal kingdom, the periodic table, etc.

Walking with dinosaurs

Ask pupils to imagine they are in the Jurassic era and to describe everything they can see and feel. What is the temperature like? What plants can they see? Can they see or hear any dinosaurs or other creatures?

Space travel

Based on their knowledge of our solar system, pupils could write a story or recount from the perspective of an astronaut travelling into space for the first time. In addition to the extraterrestrial details they include, ask them to describe the thoughts and feelings going through the protagonist's mind. For example, how do they react to being weightless or to seeing Earth from space?

Sensational scientists

Encourage pupils to research a famous scientist from history. They should look into how the person made their discoveries, the important people in their life and the struggles and frustrations they had along the way. They could present the information in a variety of forms, for example, an obituary, an annotated report of an experiment or a song.

The power of nature

Having investigated a naturally occurring phenomenon such as hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, etc, pupils could write the script of a short film, making it as scientifically accurate as possible. The script format gives them the opportunity to write from multiple perspectives and to include descriptive stage directions.

Bodies

Spark pupils' curiosity by asking them to research and collate their favourite gruesome facts about the human body. They could work in small groups which each focus on one organ or system. Alternatively, pupils could research and write about an aspect of their body which is unique, it might be a medical condition, allergy or perhaps how they obtained a scar.

Crazy inventor

Ask pupils to come up with a creative idea for a new machine. What is the machine's purpose? Where does it get its energy? Describe which forces will be at play to make it function correctly. They should draw and accurately label the machine.

Elemental poetry

Pupils could choose a chemical element and write a poem about, including reference to its properties. As an additional challenge, they could attempt to begin each line with a word beginning with the chemical symbol for the element.

“How to” guides

The activities below are predominantly suggested themes or titles for an anthology based around writing instructions.

Models and Inspiration

Coding for Beginners using Scratch by Jonathan Melmoth and Rosie Dickins

Almost Adulting: All You Need to Know to Get It Together (Sort Of) by Arden Rose

Suggested Activities

Back to back

Ask pupils to sit back to back in pairs. Give one of the pupils a piece of paper and get the other one to think of an object (keeping the identity of the object to themselves). They should instruct their partner how to draw the object without saying the object's name. This fun game introduces pupils to the importance of precision when giving instructions. You can also explore the techniques their partner used to instruct them e.g. short, clear sentences and imperative verbs.

How to train your...

...dragon
...teacher
...guinea pig

How to fix...

...a bike
...an argument
...a leaky tent

How to win at...

...your favourite video game
...a karaoke contest

How to use...

...common equipment in a science lab
...the school library
...the internet safely

How to grow...

...a sunflower
...mould
...a mandrake root
...kryptonite

How to ward off...

- ...werewolves
- ...a cold
- ...a thunderstorm

How to make...

- ...an origami stork
- ...a school bag
- ...a treehouse or den

How to survive...

- ...a zombie apocalypse
- ...a baby brother
- ...Year 6

How to draw...

- ...a comic strip
- ...farmyard animals
- ...people

Jokebook

This anthology could be a great way to encourage enjoyment of writing, particularly with more reluctant writers. Try to ensure cohesion by presenting the anthology title before pupils begin writing, such as Year 4's Favourite Rib-ticklers or The Brilliant World of Class 7B.

Models and Inspiration

BBC Comedy Classroom resource

Dick and Dom's Big Fat and Very Silly Joke Book by Richard McCourt and Dominic Wood (6+)

The Twits by Roald Dahl (7+)

Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney (7+)

You're a Bad Man Mr Gum! by Andy Stanton and David Tazzyman (7+)

The Parent Agency by David Baddiel and Jim Field (9+)

The Brilliant World of Tom Gates by Liz Pichon (9+)

Geek Girl by Holly Smale (11+)

A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams (13+)

Suggested Activities

A comic short story

Begin with brainstorming scenarios and locations which are familiar to pupils - for example the different things they typically see on the way home from school. Build up a story in which something goes wrong or something strange happens - it could be from your experience or completely made up!

Comics and captions

Give pupils a selection of silly or unusual photos and get them to write captions or speech bubbles to make them even sillier!

Dialogue

Ask pupils to write a dialogue which could be used as the script for a sketch - it could be based at school, during a pivotal moment in history, a conversation between your two favourite sports players or two aliens discussing their observations on Earth.

Consequences

Play the consequences game as a class. Each pupil writes a name at the top of the piece of paper and then folds it over and passes it on to another pupil. Repeat this, adding additional details each time such as: second character, where they meet, what the first character says, what the second character says, what they do etc. Each pupil will end up with the outline of a nonsense story that can be expanded into an original and funny narrative.

Character comedy

Provide a prompt for pupils such as a photograph of somebody pulling a funny face or wearing an unusual outfit. Ask them to decide on a name for the character and then create a backstory for them. You can develop the characters further through drama activities such as hotseating.

Alternative school rules

Pupils could write a set of alternative school rules, making them really ridiculous but described as though they are absolutely serious, with lots of formal language and specific detail. For example: 'It is absolutely imperative that all pupils must wear yellow dungarees and rubber gloves in an exactly matching shade, every Wednesday.' The Accidental Prime Minister by Tom McLaughlin could provide inspiration for Key Stage 2 classes.

When I met...

Ask pupils to imagine that a character from their favourite book or TV series, or a famous historical figure, arrives as a new pupil in their class and they have to show them around. How would other people react? Would the person understand the school routines? What might go wrong?

Spoof

Encourage pupils to write a spoof version of a favourite book, poem, song lyrics or TV programme. For example, it could be a version of 'X Factor' which exaggerates the different personalities of the judges to make them ridiculous or it could be an action-packed thriller novel about the Teletubbies.

Sell it!

As a class discuss a current trend such as cat cafes or fidget spinners and what might happen if they were taken to the extreme. Ask pupils to write an advert for it. For example, instead of a cat cafe, you could write an advert for a dragon cafe where you describe dragons as super-cute and snuggly.

Random generator

Have every pupil write two nouns on separate pieces of paper and put them all into a hat. Each pupil can then pull out two pieces of paper and they must write a story which connects their two objects or people.

Letters

Do send these letters to real recipients wherever possible; it would be fantastic to publish the original letters alongside any replies in your anthology.

Models and Inspiration

The Last Polar Bears by Harry Horse (4+)

Dear Dinosaur by Chae Strathie (5+)

Little Wolf's Book of Badness by Ian Whybrow (5+)

The Father Christmas Letters by J.R.R. Tolkien (8+)

Dork Diaries: Dear Dork by Rachel Renee Russell (9+)

Letters of Note by Shaun Usher (11+)

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky (13+)

Ketchup Clouds by Annabel Pitcher (13+)

Because You'll Never Meet Me by Leah Thomas (13+)

Dracula by Bram Stoker (14+)

The Color Purple by Alice Walker (14+)

Suggested Activities

A letter to a penpal living somewhere far away

Ask pupils to choose a country and write to someone their age who lives there. They can include geographical, political and historical information about where they live, as well as their own thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of living in the UK.

A letter to Father Christmas

Challenge pupils to use different persuasive techniques in order to persuade Father Christmas to give them the best gifts imaginable. They could also try writing Father's Christmas' reply!

A letter to your future son or daughter

Ask pupils to consider what the world might be like when they are old enough to have children. What advice would they like to give their sons or daughters? If I should Have a Daughter by Sarah Kay could be used as inspiration for this activity.

A letter to your future self

What would pupils like to tell their adult self? Maybe they would like to warn them not to get too boring and grown-up. Maybe they would like to remind them of their hopes and dreams.

A letter to the Prime Minister or the United Nations

This activity is a good opportunity for pupils to get politically engaged and practise writing formal letter using impressive vocabulary and persuasive techniques. What big change would they like to see in the world? You could discuss war and conflict, the environment or an aspect of social inequality such as racism.

A letter to a new pupil

Encourage pupils to define the values of their school community and think about how best to welcome someone to their class. What kind of writing register is appropriate for this letter? What impression would they like to give the new pupil about the school and its pupils?

A letter to your grandparent or older relative

One approach to this activity would be to write a humorous explanation of things an older relative might struggle to understand such as Snapchat. Alternatively, pupils could write a detailed recount of what they have done in school that week to give them an insight into their lives.

A letter to your hero

Pupils could write a letter to an inspirational person, whether that's someone they know personally or someone famous from the past or present. Encourage them to explain exactly why they find them so inspiring and what pupils have changed in their own lives as a result.

A letter from an alien

Use Craig Raine's poem *A Martian Sends A Postcard Home* or images from *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan as inspiration for this letter. Pupils describe our world from the perspective of an alien visitor writing back home to their relatives on another planet. This is a great opportunity to experiment with metaphor and be creative.

A letter from your favourite book character

Ask pupils to write a letter or email based on their favourite book or the book you are reading as a class. This is a great way to explore perspectives other than the narrator's or the main protagonist's; for example, you could write a letter from Draco Malfoy to his parents after his first term at Hogwarts.

Poetry

For an example of an anthology which includes some brilliant poetry, see *Build Me a Tower of Unspeakable Sounds* by students at Villiers High School.

Models and Inspiration

Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats by T.S. Eliot (5+)

Moon Juice by Kate Wakeling (5+)

My Mum's Growing Down by Laura Dockrill and David Tazzyman (7+)

All the Best: The Selected Poems of Roger McGough by Roger McGough and Lydia Monks (7+)

Big Book of Bad Things by Michael Rosen (7+)

My Name Is Book by John Agard (9+)

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes (9+)

I Don't Like Poetry by Joshua Seigal (9+)

Talking Turkeys by Benjamin Zephaniah (9+)

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander (11+)

One by Sarah Crossan (13+)

Brand New Ancients by Kate Tempest (14+)

Suggested Activities

Memories

Pupils make a list of 'firsts' or 'favourites', then build up concrete detail around one of them in a free-write.

Song lyrics

Pick a popular song and write an extra verse or re-write the song to be about something totally different using the same rhythms, e.g. re-write *Good Vibrations* by The Beach Boys to be a song about the temptations of snacking.

An excursion to an art gallery

Ask pupils to imagine themselves inside a painting or to write from the perspective of an object or a figure in a portrait. *In Any Other Room* by Gecko is a great example.

List poems

These could be a list of sentences all beginning with the same words, e.g. 'I am..', 'You are...', or similar lines 'His head was a...', 'His neck was a...'. One brilliant example of a poem like this is *Not The Furniture Game* by Simon Armitage. Alternatively, you could use the title to announce the topic of the list, e.g. 'Ten reasons why I hate prawn cocktail flavoured crisps', or 'Ten things I would like to tell my 90-year-old self'. John Hegley's *What a poem's not* is another good example of this kind of poem.

Haikus

These are brilliant way to intensify pupils' writing, because no words can be wasted. They are 3 lines long, with 5 syllables in the first and last line, and 7 syllables in the second line. Try condensing a longer poem or story, or capturing a photograph or painting in a haiku. Haikus can be extended to Tankas, which have an additional two 7-syllable lines and a series of these is called a Renga.

Spells, recipes or instructions

Start by producing a list of abstract nouns as a class. Each pupil should then choose one and write a spell, recipe or instruction poem which will result in their chosen abstract noun. John Agard's *Spell to Bring a Smile* and *The British* by Benjamin Zephaniah are great examples.

Conversations

Pupils could write a dialogue but leave out the voice of one of the characters. Another fun idea is to write a dialogue in which the first line is 20 syllables, the second 19, the third 18, and so on until you get to a 1 syllable response.

Repetition

The concept for this approach is to repeat a word so many times in a poem that its meaning shifts. This is a great opportunity for nonsense and puns. For younger pupils, Rob Auton's *Maroon* is hilarious; for older pupils, read them Caroline Bird's *Gaddafi*.

Recycled poetry

Ask pupils to take a page of a magazine and chop up favourite lines, phrases or words, then rearrange them to form a poem. Alternatively, provide them with a range of existing poems and ask pupils to cut out their favourite words and lines, sticking them down in a new order to create a new poem.

Collaborative poetry

Each pupil write on a given topic or theme and then, in small groups they arrange lines to find an order that works as a complete poem. You could continue to build this up, for example working in pairs, then groups of four, eight and sixteen. Arranging each couplet or verse to make the best possible poem.

Recipes

For an example of an anthology which involves parents and the local community, see this case study about City College Peterborough who produced The Peterborough Family Cookbook.

Models and Inspiration

Little Red Hen by Ladybird (3+)

Nadiya's Bake Me a Story by Nadiya Hussain (5+)

A Horrid Factbook: Horrid Henry's Food by Francesca Simon and Tony Ross (5+)

George's Marvellous Medicine by Roald Dahl (7+)

The World's Strangest Foods by Alicia Z. Klepeis (8+)

Doctor Who: The Official Cookbook by Joanna Farrow (8+)

Piglettes by Clémentine Beauvais (13+)

Suggested Activities

Magic potion

Pupils create a recipe for a magic potion. It could be a potion that cures acne or toothache, or one that provides a special power like invisibility. Encourage pupils to include the most obscure and strange ingredients they can think of and include some delightfully random instructions (e.g. 'Stir 300 times whilst balancing a beach ball on your nose.')

Rainy day

What's the perfect thing to make on a rainy day, when you're stuck inside and things feel grey? It might be homemade pizza decorated with vegetable faces; it might be hot chocolate with mini marshmallows; or it might be pupils' own weird concoction of coco-pops and coca-cola.

Celebration

Encourage pupils to write a recipe to celebrate an event that's important to them. It could be a dish to mark a religious festival, full of symbolism and tradition. It could be a dish they've invented to mark a one-off event like a football match or the perfect birthday cake recipe. Make sure they give the dish a fabulous name!

Family secret

Pupils should ask relatives if there is a recipe which is special or secret for their family. It might be a stew which their grandmother learnt from her own mother, a special technique for making mashed potato which their dad showed them or their sister's method of cutting a mango to look like a hedgehog. *tell my 90-year-old self*. John Hegley's *What a poem's not* is another good example of this kind of poem.

Special person

Is there a dish which pupils associate with a particular person? Maybe it's something they make really well (or really badly!) or it could be that they have a special memory of eating that dish with them.

Success

Ask pupils about their personal recipe for success. They should write a step-by-step guide to their definition of success, whatever that means for them. Which qualities do they need and in what proportions (e.g. a big lump of courage or a teaspoon of cheekiness)? What method should be followed (e.g. knead your stubbornness until it is smooth and silky, but still strong)?

Around the world

Put a world map up on the board and ask pupils to choose a country each. It might be a country with special significance for them or one they would like to know more about. Pupils can research a traditional recipe from that country and write about it, including when it is traditionally served and how it is eaten (e.g. which utensils are used, any associated rituals etc).

You

What ingredients make up your pupils' personalities? A handful of creativity? 87.4 milliliters of attention to detail? A big dollop of football? Maybe they'd like to add in a particular memory - sift snowy memories of staying with grandparents at Christmas, for example. This is a great chance to celebrate all the different parts of pupils' unique personalities.

George's Marvelous Medicine

Pupils could think about something they would like a recipe to do, e.g. make people bigger, smaller, invisible etc. They can then create their own recipe for a potion that will achieve this.

Homegrown or foraged

Encourage your pupils to write a recipe which includes the process of growing or finding the ingredients. This could be as simple as growing the cress for egg and cress sandwiches or tips on the best places to pick blackberries in your local area. If pupils have any direct experience of growing their own ingredients, they could offer some advice on how to grow your own.

Stories and creative writing

For a lovely example of a picture book written collaboratively, see *The Princess and the Knight* by the children of Lyne and Longcross CofE (Aided) Infant School.

Models and Inspiration

Travels with my Sketchbook by Chris Riddell (7+)

Descriptosaurus: Supporting Creative Writing for Ages 8-14 by Alison Wilcox (8+)

Letters to a Young Writer by Colum McCann (14+)

The World's Worst Children by David Walliams (8+)

Travels with my Sketchbook by Chris Riddell (7+)

Magic Beans: A Handful of Fairy Tales from the Storybag by various authors including Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Morpurgo, Malorie Blackman, Philip Pullman and Anne Fine (7+)

Tales from Outer Suburbia by Shaun Tan (11+)

Smoke and Mirrors by Neil Gaiman (13+)

Suggested Activities

Mystery bag of objects or dressing up boxes

Bring in a box full of random objects or different items of clothing and accessories. Ask each pupil to pick an object and imagine the story or character behind it. Alternatively, bring in a bag of assorted buttons and ask each pupil to build up a character beginning with the button on their jacket.

Fairy tales

Encourage pupils to lift the plots and characters from fairytales and place them into a setting they recognise from their own lives, whether that be the playground, the family home or a favourite reality TV programme.

Social media as a method of characterisation

Give each pupil a photo of a person (collect as wide a range as possible – the street photography blog *Humans of New York* is a great resource) and ask them to describe them in terms of their imagined social media output. For example, their most recent Tweet, their favourite Snapchat filter, their most commonly used whatsapp emoji, their most popular Instagram post, etc.

An unusual visit

Pupils write a story about an unusual visitor to their home. This can be based on something that really happened or it could be as ludicrous as Judith Kerr's *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*.

Story starters

Provide pupils with the opening sentence/s from a novel and ask them to write the first paragraph. Good examples are Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman, 1984 by George Orwell and Little Women by Louisa May Alcott. You can then ask pupils to compare their own paragraphs with the actual paragraph and ask them to decide whether anyone in the class had a better version. Demonstrate how the prediction skills they use in reading can be useful in planning their own stories.

Toy story

Have fun with your class turning everyday objects or animals into characters, for example, the adventures of an escaped school hamster or tensions arising between items thrown into a schoolbag together.

Art inspiration

Give each pupil a postcard or show them a painting or illustration from a book, not giving them any information about the artist or what the picture is meant to depict. This can form the basis of a dialogue, description or short story. For pupils who need more support, you could use multiple images from a picture book or graphic novel; good examples include illustrations by Oliver Jeffers, Shaun Tan and Levi Pinfold.

Super power

Ask pupils to imagine they have been given a superpower. What advantages does it give them over everyone else? Does it bring any disadvantages? In the end of their story, do they decide to keep the super power or go back to normal?

Sport or other hobbies

This might be a particularly useful topic to engage students who are very talented athletes, footballers or artists but are reluctant writers. Pupils might start writing about one of their own sporting achievements and imagine what might have happened next: perhaps there was a talent scout in the crowd; the goal mouth was actually a portal to another world; or once they had won the 100m sprint they couldn't stop running.

Warm ups and starters

Before your pupils begin work on their piece of writing for the anthology, loosen up their creative muscles with a fun warm up game.

Word tennis

Pupils stand opposite each other in pairs. State the topic (e.g. 'fruit') and the pairs must take it in turn to say words based solely around that topic (e.g. "banana", "strawberry", "fruit salad") OR play a game of association which can end up in a completely different area (e.g. "banana", "yellow", "colour", "paintbrush"). The first to hesitate is out.

Alphabet Spaghetti

Each pupil must write the letters of the alphabet in the margin of their notebook, one letter per line. Give pupils a topic and challenge them to come up with a noun related to that topic for as many letters as they can, working from A down as far as they can without skipping letters. For example, the topic 'holidays' might produce: "Aeroplane, Baggage, Caravan, Deckchair..." etc.

Haiku bingo

Challenge pupils to write a haiku, it could be about a current news headline, a member of their family or their favourite food. The first person to complete their haiku shouts "Haiku Bingo!"

Idea thief

Show your pupils the importance of taking inspiration from each other and their favourite authors. Give pupils a one minute group challenge such as "how many synonyms for 'hot' can you write?" and when the time is up, ask them to count how many ideas they wrote down. Then play a siren noise announcing that there is a thief here to steal their ideas. Move energetically around (as the idea thief) from table to table shouting out best words from each group. Then give the groups a chance to complete the timed challenge again showing them how many more ideas they get when they collaborate and share.

Free-write

Place objects around the classroom (e.g. a leaf, an orange and a spoon) and challenge pupils to describe the object, writing for five minutes without thinking and without stopping. If they get stuck, they can just write "and and and..." until the thought flows again. At the end of the free-write, ask them to look back over their work and read out a phrase each. Write these phrases down on the board as they read them out. They could then incorporate these phrases in their piece of writing later in the lesson.

Metaphor inventor

Put images of objects up around the classroom, for example a sunflower, a tree, an apple etc. Ask the pupils to think about someone they like and then go and write that person's name on the image that reminds them of the person most. When they are back in the seats ask them to write down this comparison as a metaphor, extending it as far as they can. For example: "Lauren is a sunflower, brightening my day".

Draw what you hear

Play a piece of music and ask pupils to draw a scene that matches what they can hear. Play the music again and get them to walk around the classroom (like an art gallery) adding words, noun and verb phrases to one another's pictures. This could then be developed into a piece of creative writing where pupils have to include all the phrases and words written on their original drawings.

Persuasion

Hold up a chocolate bar (or other treat) and state that the class have two minutes to write the most persuasive speech they can, explaining why they deserve the reward. To save time, ask pupils to choose the best speech from their group or table to be performed.

Freeze frame

Choose a photograph to inspire pupils' next piece of writing and give pupils time to create a freeze frame that replicates the image. Tap their shoulders and ask them to speak aloud what their characters might be thinking or saying. This can be an excellent starting point for developing dialogue to include in a piece of writing.

One sentence story

Ask one pupil to begin telling a story – it could be a fairy tale, the story of their journey to school or something completely made up. When they are mid-sentence, point to another pupil who will continue the story and continue around the room, with each pupil adding something to the story. Choosing pupils at random will ensure the whole class is paying attention to the person speaking and help maintain momentum.

