

# STORY OF ME TOOLKIT



# TABLE OF CONTENT

Welcome Message 3

---

Why This Toolkit? 5

---

The 5 Principles of Story of Me 6

---

School Feedback 11

---

Class Activities 24

---

Get To Know Each Other 25

---

Ice Breakers 32

---

Warm Up Games 42

---

Starters 56

---

Dismissal Games 73

---

One off Activiites 73

---

Essay: Highers vs Loweres 79

---

Soap Opera Scheme 80

---

Essay: Advantages of Adaptive Teaching 83

---

The Door Project 85

---

Essay: Are You A Good Story Teller? 92

---

The Food Project 94

---

Essay: Will You Be Remembered? 102

---

Speech Writing Scheme 104

---

Essay: Diversity in Creative Writing 108

---

Stories From Us Project 110

---

Stories of Heritage 111

---

Comedy Writing Scheme 112

---

Poetry Writing Scheme 112

---

Charcoal/Mark Making Collage 116

---

# WELCOME MESSAGE

Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) was established by Paul Hamlyn in 1987. He died in 2001 and left most of his estate to the Foundation, creating one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK. PHF uses its resources to support social change, working towards a just and equitable society in which everyone, especially young people, can realise their full potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives.

Within PHF, the Teacher Development Fund aims to support delivery of effective arts-based teaching and learning opportunities in the primary classroom; and to embed learning through the arts in the curriculum. It aims to do this through supporting teachers and school leaders to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, confidence and experience. The Fund supports teachers and school leaders to work in partnership with arts/cultural organisations, to develop and sustain arts-based teaching practice, and the TDF prioritises work which supports the learning of pupils experiencing systemic inequity and disadvantage. PHF has been delighted to support The Story of Me in Barking & Dagenham and is excited by the legacy that the project is already having in the participating schools, and more widely in the borough. A complex project, bringing together a lot of teachers and school leaders, arts organisations and artists, the team worked responsively and flexibly throughout, to ensure that practice has always been bespoke for each teacher and their school context. It has been fascinating to see how, out of this approach, work that speaks to making the curriculum more diverse, representative and equitable has emerged in the schools.

*Catherine Sutton  
Head of Programme: Education, Paul Hamlyn Foundation*

# INTRODUCTION

The Story of Me started as a discussion between Inspiring Futures (the Cultural Education Partnership for LBBB) and a group of Headteachers; open, collaborative, creative and fearless...how could an arts-based programme impact their curricula? What were the needs they and their staff experienced? It started by looking at English as a Second Language and language acquisition and over the course of 2 years grew to be something so much more.

The Story of Me provided a platform for greater interrogation as to the impact of creativity and the arts throughout the curriculum. It expanded upon the acceptance that arts play a crucial role in the holistic development of the child and moved it beyond stand-alone subject matter to be a significant factor in the shaping and delivery of curricula. Importantly it ensured that pupils could see themselves in what they were being taught and allowed teachers to facilitate young people's culture and experience as a gateway to acquiring knowledge, language and learning.

Partnerships between artist and teacher, built upon trust, openness and collaboration allowed the classroom to become a place for hopeful disruption, where new ideas could be tested, interrogated and reflected on in the hope that new ways of working could be rigorously implemented.

I hope this toolkit serves a valuable resource that shares some of the valuable insight, experience and activities from the Story of Me journey and allows us to support as many teachers and staff members across all schools.

With thanks to the Paul Hamlyn Teacher Development Fund and all of the project partners, this work has and will continue to fundamentally shape the way Inspiring Futures works with schools and organisations, how we build programmes that best impact and serve our young people and schools.



*Martin Russell*  
*Culture and Wellbeing Lead (Education), London Borough of Barking and Dagenham*

# WHY THIS TOOLKIT

The Story of Me was a two-year CPDL programme for teachers involving seven primary schools in Barking and Dagenham. Teachers worked alongside 14 resident artists to interrogate curriculum design and delivery in order to embed artistic practice to better support literacy acquisition and to make the curriculum more reflective of the pupil population. Drama and storytelling were the primary forms of artistic practice. Through an appreciative enquiry process an initial enquiry question was developed:

*How can we support teachers to create a curriculum which is more accessible and representative of the Barking and Dagenham community?*

This programme was not just about artist led activity, nor was it about adding “more diverse” books and stories to the curriculum. It was a programme designed to change the system by which curricula are designed. Focus was on knowledge transfer between artist and teacher and visa-versa. Upskilling teachers to identify where creativity could be employed and also providing a toolkit of approaches, activities and behaviours that ensured everyone’s history, culture and experience was respected and valued.

*“While teachers impart information, facilitators help students absorb that information. Therefore, having the artist has allowed the pupils to get the information. By offering skills, strategies, and resources to boost productivity, the artists have made it easier for our pupils to participate in the learning process.”*

Educators adopted innovative approaches to all aspects of the curriculum and whole school approaches that went beyond the classroom engaging parents and the wider local communities. Celebrating diversity and culture and overtly welcoming it has been a gateway to pupils accessing the curriculum and garnering support for teaching and learning at familial level.

The *Story of Me* consolidates a lot of the outstanding work that the schools have been doing, especially around cultural capital, and expanding it across the curriculum not just limited to art & design. To maximise the impact on pupils literacy, language acquisition and curriculum engagement at this level requires a sizable commitment from both teachers and artists. The schools that have seen the greatest impact are those who have invested the most capacity.

Adopting small changes and activities; taking the approach of facilitator and trusting in creative approaches can unlock the potential of pupils and allow them access to their learning. Making curricula recognisable and reflective of the young people not only allows for better learning outcomes but impacts mental health and wellbeing, and community cohesion.

*“When planning schemes of work or lessons, I now consider how I can make it more representative for the students; whether the arts can be incorporated; and if my method is the most creative way to deliver the lesson. By being reflective in this way, the children’s engagement in the curriculum has improved and my passion fo teaching it has increased.”*

# THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF STORY OF ME

- Serious Consideration to Pupil Voice
- Behaviour, Knowledge, Understanding and Beliefs
- Building on Pupils Prior Learning and Experience
- Scaffolding Pupils Learning
- Range of Techniques

# Serious Consideration to Pupil Voice

Consideration is given to listening to pupil voice, hearing what they have got to say as part of the process of learning and teaching including translanguaging (when a multilingual person's full linguistic repertoire is used and honoured, instead of trying to keep narrowly focused on a single language). Exploring first languages through experience and personal stories acts as a conduit to pupil understanding and acquisition of language.

Giving pupils creative choice and creative freedom to make decisions that influences the outcome of creative exercises and allows them to see themselves in the work displayed, shared and assessed developing metacognition and greater independence through learning. This can then be transferred across the curriculum, for example role play that develops empathy for historical figures.

Emboldening pupil voice through performance and platforming oracy through group activity brings equality of voice and generates confidence and a sense of belonging within the learning activity. A good example of this is the introduction of a drama game at the start of a lesson; a parachute is held by the pupils, teachers and LSA's. An object that has relevance to the learning is placed in the centre of the parachute and all participants shake it vigorously, when the object lands in front of a participant they have to use an adjective and say it out loud to the class. The rules are that you cannot repeat an adjective already used, and it must be relevant to the object.

# Behaviour, Knowledge, Understanding and Beliefs

The Story of Me supported teachers to take risk and engage with the process and delivery as well as outcome and end point. The common effective behaviour that led to the greatest transformation is commitment and consistency. Welcoming artists and widening hospitality in the classroom promoted flexibility and freedom with motivating elements. Radical hospitality is a term used by New Town Culture – where artist and group lead create space to develop beneficial relationships with young people and consider hospitality in the classroom. It allowed teacher to inhabit the role of artist and visa versa.

Teachers have been willing to be learners, take risk and be vulnerable in the classroom but in return the knowledge base for effective practice has expanded through the interaction of subject matter knowledge, knowledge about approaches and knowledge about the children and their conceptual development. Subject knowledge and literacy has been approached constructively and openly using artistic methods as building blocks. Bringing contextually relevant cultures and creative approaches into teaching and learning enhances students' comprehension and confidence.

*“We did a beach holiday and had breakfast on the beach. We were a family and I had to help my older sister set up the lemonade stand. We spoke some of our lines in Bengali. We pretended to go swimming and look at seagulls.”*

Facilitator approaches have also benefitted classroom management as well as approaches to learning. A teacher recounted how a pupil taught in a previous year commented that the teacher's voice had changed, this was in response to the teacher now not raising her voice to get the class's attention. New techniques and drama facilitation had enabled her to manage her classroom in new and innovative ways.

# Building on Pupils Prior Learning and Experience

Acknowledging that pupils have a wealth of experience outside of the classroom and drawing upon this in the classroom unlocks learning. In celebrating cultures through food, dress, music and dance and introducing these in school through activities provides recognisable and familiar access points to the curriculum and all subjects. It engages pupils and develops their sense of place and belonging and a reason for learning.

Engaging with stories from their families is an effective approach to developing a scheme of work with a performative outcome – In class pupils work on interview skills, developing purposeful use of vocabulary; for homework children conduct interviews with family members. Following the completion of the activity common themes are drawn out from the research e.g. belonging, travelling, comparison of life ‘there’ and ‘the new country/England’, shops, weather etc. Objective: to give children a sense of self, empathy with others, how change happens, the emotional effects of making change.

Outcomes of activity made visible through performances, exhibitions, displays, whole school activities and theme days further strengthen a shared sense of self and belonging.

Making moments matter is also an important exercise within schools pressured with timetables, workloads and assessments. Taking time to recognise good work and creativity is important and can range in scale from culture days to displays of poetry.

# Scaffolding Pupils Learning

Creative scaffolds are effectively transitional in two ways: supporting a developmental change in the pupils; they also change themselves as the pupils develop higher levels of understanding – earlier scaffolds are no longer necessary and new ones are put in place to advance beyond the newly acquired stage.

The understanding of narrative is indicative of pupil development. Narrative is how we retell events or how a story is told. All scaffolds can be narrative. Narrative difficulties such as short sentences can be built on, increasing detail and reducing contradictions builds understanding and confirms knowledge. Narrative scaffolds begin with pupils understanding events, then predicting events, developing logical thoughts act as an empathy guide, shaping the actions pupils take. It develops social skills in how pupils interact with one another.

Emphasising the importance of discussion and dialogue, alongside the cultural context of the learning affords teachers the ability to scaffold pupil's learning beyond their current stage of understanding. Scaffolding strategies include games such as the True or False Game that engaged pupils in researching on the internet for facts and built communication skills by then getting the pupils to challenge their peers with guessing if the facts are indeed true or false. Tongue Twisters are simple ways of practicing diction.

*“Artists should liaise with teachers where their skills and suggested activities overlap with teaching of curriculum and seek to strategise those opportunities.”*

New approaches to poetry start with breaking the poem into parts, getting pupils to perform the poem first and getting them confident and familiar with orally ‘presenting’ it out loud before then approaching the words, vocabulary, structure and meaning.

# Range of Techniques

Diversifying the approaches to learning in parallel to diversifying the curriculum demonstrates consideration of the diverse needs of learners and provides equitable approaches to pupils in the classroom and beyond. Activities provide gear shifts in learning and multiple entry points.

Mystery Object example: Pupils encounter a mysterious door that appears in the playground. Teachers lead role-play activities, responses to the door through art and discussions to engage children before writing activities begin (Where does it lead to? Where did it come from? Who might answer the door if you knock?). Post-it notes are used to organise pupils story; using one post-it note for each time opener. Another post-it note for the verb. This is a strategy for planning and orally rehearsing before writing.

*“Evidence of confidence building, listening skills and engagement for learning is apparent in all children. Providing role-play, enabling children to make sense of their own identity by exploring meaningful situations that have parallels in the real world allowed children to shape the activities to reflect their interests and ideas.”*

Whole class, structured group work, guided learning and individual activity provides impactful and inclusive opportunities for pupils to engage with the curriculum, creativity underpins differentiation.

# SCHOOL FEEDBACK

Marsh Green Primary School

Becontree Primary School

Henry Green Primary School

Manor Junior School

Bean County Primary School

Ripple Primary School

# MARSH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

This project has helped support children to improve their oracy and build their vocabulary. Evidence of confidence building, listening skills and engagement for learning is apparent in all children. Providing role-play, enabling children to make sense of their own identity by exploring meaningful situations that have parallels in the real world allowed children to shape the activities to reflect their interests and ideas.

Training has been very helpful, insightful and improved aspects of all areas of the curriculum. We fed back CPD to all staff in order to promote our project. In addition, provided a bespoke training session for all class teachers in partnership with our arts specialists.

Very impactful, not only on pupils' academic achievements in writing, but also in their confidence, engagement, enjoyment and confidence. This was particularly apparent in the end of year showcase to parents.

The teachers involved have also benefitted – they are better teachers of writing now and are more confident to support all children to improve their writing through beginning with oracy.

The project has clearly shown that when children who are reluctant talkers and writers, are asked to begin with ideas that are about themselves, that great things can be achieved!

How do you think you will embed the learning from this project into your school?

The techniques developed will leave a legacy in our English curriculum and will continue to be embedded in our provision in Year 2 – but we also plan to share across the school so they can be used in each year group.

# MARSH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL :

## CASE STUDIES

### CASE STUDY 1

Child P entered Year 2 in September 2021 at the year below the expectation in writing. This child speaks three languages and English is a new language to him which he mostly speaks at school. By the end of the project Child P is at the expected level for writing in Year 3. We feel the vocabulary games, mystery objects, drama experiences and oral rehearsal have helped Child P to develop his ability and confidence in writing.

### CASE STUDY 2

Child M entered Year 2 in September 2021 a term below her peers in writing. She speaks two languages and English is not her first language. She started the project quite reserved and quiet. Over time Child M grew in confidence and supported less confident students. Child M is now in line with the expected standard for Year 3 in writing.

### WHAT ARE YOUR 3 TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS WHO ARE EXPLORING THIS KIND OF WORK?

1. Be open to change and explore new ideas.
2. Don't be shy – get involved and have fun.
3. Take one day at a time.

# BECONTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL

One highlight was being able to create a strong and healthy teacher/artist relationship. I would personally like to thank Tanya Pearce for building such a great relationship with us. Without her support/commitment to the project, this project would have never been so good; her drive, passion and understanding of the value of creativity. Because of this, the artists felt the teacher made them feel apart of the team where their work was valued and appreciated. They were able to share their creative ideas and have their thoughts acknowledged to help make the curriculum more diverse and fun. By the end of the project, the artists had a feeling of accomplishment that the skills shared proved useful for both the teachers' practise and the pupils' learning.

Another highlight of the programme was that the artists could work with all the teachers and children in the school from year 1 – year 6. As a result, this has enabled teachers to feel more confident in developing their literacy curriculum by adding in some new drama and story-telling techniques that had been modelled by the artists to help engage the children. Also teachers' whole class performances have improved since the project started like poetry recitals in assembly as they are now equipped with performance skills. We are all proud of the work we achieved.

WHAT ARE YOUR 3 TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS WHO ARE EXPLORING THIS KIND OF WORK?

1. Throw the text away when teaching poems by heart and in unison (let the children see the poems after they had tried to learn them)
2. Don't be afraid to think creatively, allow play and don't worry about getting it wrong
3. Don't be afraid to allow them to make noise; it shows the children are having fun.

# BECONTREE PRIMARY SCHOOL:

## CASE STUDIES

### CASE STUDY 1 (QUOTES FROM A YEAR 5 CHILD)

'I enjoyed the enthusiasm from Paul and Amanda and how they find new ways to teach us. The warm up activities for each day were engaging and fun to get us excited and be silly. I enjoyed the opportunity to act out scenes from our story because this helped us remember it when we did our diaries. I'm not a creative person but when I did the activities, it showed a different side of me. I could experiment with ideas in a safe space. I enjoyed being creative and making new styles of poems. They also helped us perform and memorise our poetry performance and made it exciting and dramatic. They listened and used our ideas and developed them further. I now enjoy poetry more.'

### CASE STUDY 2 (QUOTES FROM YEAR 3 CHILD)

I enjoyed the story square best because we all had a part to play and we could become the characters of the book. It was fun and simple. Paul encouraged and included all of us so that everyone felt valued. He thought of creative ideas for every movement in the story. Acting helps us to understand the story more and it helped me to concentrate. When we wrote our own ebb and flow poems we could share all the facts we had learnt from our topic work. I liked working with other children. I was able to get different ideas from my group which I had not thought of myself for my writing.'

# HENRY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

I am very pleased with the outcomes of the project for all. It has increased the confidence of our pupils had in speaking about their culture. They were proud to share things about themselves and their heritage with their peers and these were celebrated. The pupils took ownership of their projects and often worked on them in their own time. The teachers gained a great deal from working with the artists and will incorporate skills and knowledge from the project into their future teaching.

This project ties perfectly in with our school's wider work around race and social justice. Using many of the elements from this project, we will build a spine through the curriculum from nursery through to year 6 based on the 'Story of Me'. The children will learn about their heritage and culture and their part in history and the world today.

One of the most influential factors has been the Curriculum integration. We have integrated the themes and concepts of Race and Social Justice by exploring the "Windrush" into the existing curriculum across different subject areas. For example, we have incorporated personal narratives into language arts or creative writing lessons or used pupil stories as prompts for discussions in PSHE or characterisation with history.

We have paired older pupils or staff members with younger pupils to establish mentorship programs based on shared experiences and personal narratives. This has created a supportive environment where pupils learn from one another and develop strong connections within the school community.

The "Story of Me" project with parents and caregivers, have encourage them to engage in conversations with their children about their personal stories. We have organised workshops and events to involve parents in the learning process, creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.

# HENRY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY 1

Child A- “It has made me understand how our culture fits into the British History. I gained a bigger voice. I was able to speak louder. The moral lessons in the drama activities have been very useful.”

## CASE STUDY 2

Child K- “I have developed my drama skills. I have become a lot more confident. When we were acting, I didn’t feel shy.It has helped me to become more creative. We used exaggeration when acting and we showed our feelings in our actions so it has helped me with my expression.

What are your 3 top tips for teachers who are exploring this kind of work?

1. Approach the project with an open mind and be open to different of working.
2. Discuss expectations from the beginning.
3. Plan time to re-enforce what work introduced by the artist during the school week.

# MANOR JUNIOR SCHOOL

Taking part in 'The Story of Me' has allowed the teachers' creativity to flourish. It was an invaluable experience to work with artists who would approach learning from a completely different viewpoint. By harnessing the performance skills and taking inspiration from our artists, our teachers have developed pedagogy to deliver lessons involving more active learning and giving the children more freedom to express themselves. In particular, using poetry as an educational entry point inspired us to explore ways of engaging children at the beginning of a topic.

We have seen a significant improvement in the confidence of our children who participated. Through engaging in active learning, they developed confidence in their ideas and were able to get over some of their fear of making mistakes.

How do you think you will embed the learning from this project into your school?

'The Story of Me' will have a legacy in how we engage children in their learning across the curriculum. We will be incorporating poetry as a device for engagement into our school development plan for the next academic year and using this as a way to draw all children into the curriculum. We will be using poetry, and other art forms, as a vehicle to engage the children in their learning.

We will have an increased focus on performance and are planning to work with a local poet to support us; we recognise the power of working with artists to find new ways of approaching the curriculum. Furthermore, we will use this work to empower the children to project their voices and to make their voices heard. As educators, we must help the children develop as active citizens, and a vital part of this is helping children to find their voice.

## WHAT ARE YOUR 3 TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS WHO ARE EXPLORING THIS KIND OF WORK?

1. Throw the text away when teaching poems by heart (let the children see the poems after they have tried to learn them)
2. Don't worry about getting it wrong
3. Make it lively to encourage active learning throughout.

# MANOR JUNIOR SCHOOL:

## CASE STUDY

### CASE STUDY 1

Year 1 . J, year four child.

J was a timid child. Being the only child at home has made him an introvert. J did not like communicating and expressing himself at the start of the year. He did not want to participate in our Art lessons, and sometimes he used to return home with complaints that he could not complete any of our Art lessons. After meeting with his parents, we discussed some ways I could use to make J like Art. I introduced him to Meera, one of our artists. Together we made a plan to make our lesson plans more fun and attractive for our pupils.

We also made our lessons more active by interleaving our curriculum text with our science and geography lessons. Slowly, I noticed that J was happier and willing to do more. Asking open questions and confirming that making mistakes is regular and that we grow and learn more by making mistakes, by the end of year 4, J was one of the most active learners in the class.

### CASE STUDY 2

During the second year of the Story of my project, our school created a flexible space to help with this project. We have used the studio for our artists to work with our students without having all groups with them. Instead, the groups were divided into six people. This is beneficial, particularly for a project outside of a standard classroom. The benefits are further increased as it also encourages team teaching and joined-up working between groups. The headteacher would encourage incorporating this studio in future lessons.

A.K. was the eldest child of a family of 4 with very young parents. Last year she missed too many school days, saying she wasn't feeling well. Once, she joined my class and was very quiet; she didn't like to ally herself playing with kids. However, once we started this year's project, she started talking with the artists and talking more about herself. Session after session, I could see her being more active and developing her confidence.

# BEAM COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The "Story of Me" project encourages students to reflect on their personal experiences, strengths, and goals. We have seen how this process has increased our pupils' self-awareness, helping them understand their unique qualities, values, and aspirations.

By exploring their personal stories, we have seen a clear indication that our pupils have developed a more profound sense of connection and engagement with their learning. This project has tapped into our pupils' intrinsic motivation by making learning more meaningful and relevant to their lives. For example, in DT the children were able to learn where different sources of food derive from, had the opportunity to make bread and explored the different types of bread from cultures within our school community.

Through sharing personal stories we have fostered a sense of empathy, understanding, and connection amongst our pupils, parents and teachers. Through this project, our pupils have the opportunity to learn about their peers' experiences, creating a more inclusive and supportive school community.

The "Story of Me" project has provided opportunities for our pupils to develop their communication skills, both orally and in writing. Pupils have improved their ability to articulate their thoughts and emotions, enhancing their overall communication and self-expression abilities.

This project has encouraged pupils to think creatively and critically as they reflect on their experiences and consider their own growth and development. It has stimulated their imagination, fostered divergent thinking, and encouraged them to question and analyse the narratives of others.

By engaging in the "Story of Me" project it has also provided teachers with opportunities for professional growth. They have learned new strategies for fostering pupil voice and self-reflection, developed their understanding of individual pupil needs, and refined their instructional approaches to support pupil development.

# BEAM COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL: CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDY 1

'I loved doing the dance. It made me feel free. I was able to communicate with actions, instead of words - which I sometimes struggle with. I now have more confidence to express my ideas. When I used movements, my true self came out. There were no rules. We could do what we felt at the time. I was also supported by my team so I didn't feel alone. We had the opportunity to be creative. I loved this. It made the learning fun.'

## CASE STUDY 2

'Our Great Fire of London day was so fun! When we came into the hall, there was a scene of London that has been set up and people were dressed in olden day clothes. They did a performance and taught us about how the Great Fire started and how it spread. It was so interesting because we found out about something that happened in our area a long time ago. We then made houses like those from the period with straw and cereal boxes. Miss then took us to the fire pit in the Eco Area and we set our houses up like a real-life London Street. The best part was when we set fire to them. The flames were so big and hot. We spoke about what we could hear, see, smell and how we would feel if that was really our house. On the flipchart, Miss wrote our ideas down so when we came back to class, we could write a description of the fire.'

The fire brigade then came and told us how to keep safe from fire. But they had to stop because there was an emergency so we heard the siren and they sped off. It was the best day ever!'

## WHAT ARE YOUR 3 TOP TIPS FOR TEACHERS WHO ARE EXPLORING THIS KIND OF WORK?

1. Attend workshops facilitated by artists to help consolidate learning through other areas of the curriculum.
2. Be led by children's interest and the curriculum
3. Showcasing the work covered by pupils for wider school community and parents.

# RIPPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Having agency to achieve ideas. Being part of a team of teachers with clear goals seeking ambitious outcomes. The ability for children to speak in cultural terms has brought a sense of investment to the participants, and a theme of caring into classes/the school. The play work has brought a sense of wholeness and identity to the classes.

This second year, (Year 3 children) seeing children understanding drama and becoming empowered by it. They are using tools of drama such as in rehearsals trying out ideas and selecting preferred outcomes. They are asking questions and coming up with suggestions, changing the action to improve. They are becoming dramatists!

One additional observation - during a lesson with the previous year's Story of Me cohort on a 'Musicals' lesson unit, I noticed how this cohort had an orientation, readiness and confidence to take on drama conventions that I attribute to previous year's work.

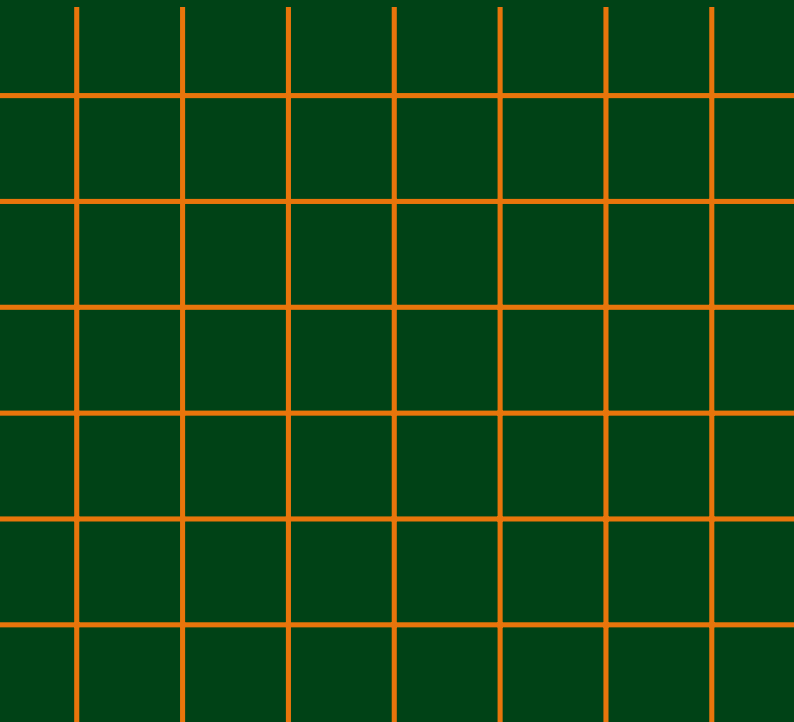
## CASE STUDY 1

Elias (yr 3); We did a play about a funfair at Eid. There were bumper cars and we were getting in and out. We had to demand money for the rides, like; "You need to pay £1 to get access."

## TOP 3 TIPS FOR TEACHERS EXPLORING THIS KIND OF WORK?

1. Teachers should have a clear understanding that they will need to work proactively with the artist and co-achieve the aims. (Not see it as a workshop delivery and use it as an opportunity to dip in to a bit of extra admin/PPA!)
2. Re above – teachers should meet regularly to discuss impact and direction and opportunities of project.
3. They should be supported by leadership so that they have a clear path into the project bearing in mind the issues of workload, and obligation in year groups to cover the curriculum.

# CLASS ACTIVITIES



# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

- Names and actions
- 2 truths and a lie
- The secret (paper)
- Introduce partners
- Partner mirroring
- Swap chairs

# NAME + ACTION

## **Format:**

Whole-class standing circle, one at a time + optional middle role

Class Suitability:

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle.
2. One at a time, each person steps forward, says their name clearly, and performs an action that reflects either their:
  - Their mood (e.g., yawning for tiredness)
  - Their personality (e.g., a spin for energetic)
  - A favourite thing (e.g., kicking a pretend football)
3. After each person performs, the whole circle copies their name and action together to reinforce memory.
4. Continue until everyone has had a turn.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Once everyone has gone, one person stands in the middle of the circle.
- They must call out someone else's name and perform that person's action.
- If they get both correct, they swap places — the person whose name was called becomes the new person in the middle.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with speech or communication differences can use signs, gestures, or visuals instead of speaking.
- Allow actions to be seated or small-scale for students with limited mobility.

# TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

## **Format:**

Seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Each student thinks of three statements about themselves:
  - Two of these statements must be true
  - One statement must be false (the “lie”)
2. Students take turns to share all three statements aloud in any order.
3. The rest of the group or class get three chances to guess which statement is the lie.
4. Once everyone has guessed, the student reveals the correct answer and may explain more about the truths.

## **Important Notes:**

- Teacher should explain that the “lie” should be playful or harmless, not about serious or upsetting topics.
- Set clear boundaries on what kinds of statements are appropriate (no lies about people’s identities, family issues, or anything that could upset others).

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Hot seat version: One student sits at the front while the whole class guesses.
- Scoring system: Give points to students who successfully fool the group or guess correctly.
- Themed rounds: Limit statements to a category (e.g., “school life,” “holidays,” “books I’ve read”).
- Act it out: Students perform the three “clues” silently, and the group guesses which is false.
- Reverse round: The class gives three statements about a well-known person or teacher — two true, one false — and guess together.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow written statements for students who are more confident writing than speaking.
- Pair students to create and present their statements together.
- For EAL learners or those with communication difficulties, provide sentence starters or picture support (e.g., “I have a...,” “I like...”).

# THE SECRET

## **Format:**

Seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Each student is given a slip of paper and writes a light, appropriate “secret” about themselves that others may not know (ie” “I hate bananas,” “I’ve never been on an airplane” etc).
2. All secrets are folded and placed into a concealed hat, box, or container.
3. The teacher draws one slip at a time and reads it aloud to the class.
4. As a group or individually, students guess who they think the secret belongs to.
5. Once someone guesses correctly (or a few guesses have been made), the person who wrote it can choose to reveal themselves.

## **Safeguarding Notes:**

- Set clear boundaries before starting. Tell students their secret must be:
  - Light-hearted
  - Safe to share
  - Not emotionally sensitive or involving family/trauma
  - Not about other people
- Make it optional: Students should not be forced to reveal themselves if they feel uncomfortable.
- Teacher should read through slips privately before reading aloud to ensure appropriateness.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Themed secrets: Restrict to school-related, food, hobbies, or childhood memories.
- Writing development: Turn it into a creative writing exercise – turn the secret into a short narrative.
- Anonymous compliments: Use the same format, but students write a kind anonymous note about someone in the class, and the person has to guess who wrote it (for team building).

# INTRODUCING YOUR PARTNER

## **Format:**

Students are placed in pairs

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students are placed in pairs and decide who is Partner A and who is Partner B.
2. Partner A goes first, telling Partner B about themselves in one minute – e.g., name, hobbies, favourite food, a fun fact, pets, etc.
3. Partner B then shares their own information to Partner A.
4. The class gathers together.
5. One pair at a time, each student introduces their partner to the class, speaking as if they were their partner (e.g., “Hi, I’m Alex, and I love swimming!”).
6. After each presentation, the teacher checks with the original person to confirm accuracy (e.g., “Alex, was that right?”).
7. Teacher reminds pupils beforehand that the goal is to listen carefully and remember key information.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Voice and movement imitation: Students not only recount facts, but also mimic their partner’s tone of voice, body language, or speaking style

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visuals or symbols for EAL/SEND learners to support memory and understanding.
- Allow drawing instead of verbal description as an alternative output if needed.

# PARTNER MIRRORING

## **Format:**

Pairs

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Divide the class into pairs and have them stand facing each other (about 1 metre apart.)
2. Label each pair with Person A and Person B.
3. Person A begins to move very slowly and smoothly
4. Person B's job is to mirror A's movements as accurately and fluidly as possible (like a reflection in a mirror)
5. After 1–2 minutes, swap roles so Partner B leads and Partner A follows

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Shared Control: Both participants try to mirror each other at the same time without a designated leader. They must communicate non-verbally, focusing closely on each other to stay in sync
- Moving pairs: Ask pairs to continue mirroring while slowly moving around the room together, maintaining distance and focus. Pairs must avoid bumping into anything or anyone

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with limited mobility, can engage in the activity seated with just their upper body or hand movements
- Use visual prompt cards (e.g., stretch, bend, wave) to support EAL/SEND learners
- For non-verbal students, encourage expressive movement using props like scarves or ribbons

# CHAIR SWAP

## **Format:**

Seated circle with chairs

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Arrange chairs in a circle – one per child.
2. The teacher begins to call out statements ie “I have a pet”, “I like pizza” etc
3. Anyone the statement applies to stands and quickly swaps chairs with anyone else who is standing

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Themed rounds: Limit statements to a topic (e.g., history, science, “Swap if you know a planet”).
- Student-led: Let children take turns as the speaker.
- Targeted PSHE use: Use it to build empathy – “Swap if you’ve ever felt nervous”, “Swap if you’ve helped someone today.”
- Inclusive adaptation: Allow students with mobility needs to signal by raising their hands instead of having to move from their chairs.

# ICE BRAKERS

- Yes/no statements
- Touch something (colour, size wtc)
- Stop and go
- The order
- The line
- Shape making
- Im Sorry but I can't laugh
- Find the clap
- 21
- Find the object

# TOUCH SOMETHING...

## **Format:**

Open space

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The teacher asks students to find a space standing by themselves
2. The teacher then calls out a colour (e.g., “Touch something red!”).
3. Students quickly move around the room to find and touch an object that matches the colour.
4. Once all students have found something and touched it, they teacher then calls them back into the space and calls out a new colour

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Category switch-up: Use other attributes instead of colour such as shapes, textures, letters etc. (eg: “Touch something soft / cold / wooden / starts with the letter B / makes a noise.”)
- Time limit: Add a countdown to add excitement (e.g., “ Find something soft in 5 seconds!”).
- No repeats: Students can’t touch the same object twice – encourages observation and memory.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with limited mobility, place coloured or textured items within reachable areas.
- Create pair or buddy systems for visually impaired learners or younger students.
- Use hand-held colour cards for those who can’t physically move. They can hold up a matching colour instead.

# STOP – GO

## **Format:**

Open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students begin by walking freely around the space, making sure to:
  - Fill the entire space,
  - Not just walk in circles
  - and change direction regularly
2. The teacher will then call out simple movement commands such as:
  - “Stop”
  - “Go”
  - “Jump”
  - “Clap”
3. The game continues with the teacher calling instructions until the students are comfortable with them.
4. If someone performs the wrong action, they can be:
  - Out of the game, or
  - Given a “strike” or forfeit” (especially for younger children)

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Add more reversals:
  - “Stop” means go/walk
  - “Go” means stop
  - “Jump” means clap
  - “Clap” means jump
- Speed round: Rapid-fire commands

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual symbols alongside verbal instructions for students with communication or processing needs
- Adjust physical actions (e.g: “jump” can be a hand raise for students with mobility needs)
- Pair students with a buddy for support
- Instead of elimination, use a points system, or allow a student who’s out to become a helper or co-instructor

# THE ORDER

## **Format:**

Open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students stand in a horizontal line, shoulder to shoulder, facing the teacher.
2. The teacher gives a category for the students to re-order themselves in.

Examples may include:

- Birthdays
- Height
- Hair colour (lightest to darkest)
- Shoe size
- Alphabetical by first name or surnames

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Time limit: The group must work together to form the correct order within a set time limit
- No talking challenge: Students must organise themselves silently using only gestures, pointing, facial expressions, or body language
- Eyes closed variation: Students close their eyes while moving (with safety support)
- One speaker only: Only one person can speak and must lead the entire group to reorder
- Timed challenge: Students compete in teams for fastest correct order

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Provide visual cue cards or symbols for students with speech, language, or communication needs
- Allow use of assistive communication tools (e.g., whiteboards, PECS cards)
- Assign peer buddies to support students with physical or sensory needs during movement
- Pre-assign or modify categories to ensure all students can participate confidently (e.g., avoid birthdates for students who may not know theirs)

# THE LINE

## **Format:**

Open Space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ask students to stand anywhere in the space and imagine a straight, invisible line running across the floor on their left or right hand side
2. Teacher explains that each side of the line represents opposite emotions. For example:
  - One side is Happy, the other side is Sad
  - One side is Excited, the other is Calm
3. The teacher then calls out an emotion for the students to embody their best representation of.
4. The teacher then calls out the opposite emotion and students must cross the imaginary line and shift their body language accordingly.
5. If needed, the teacher can prompt the students movement, posture, and facial expressions in order to embody each emotion clearly.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Frozen statue: Students freeze in a still pose showing the emotion after crossing
- Scenario-based: The teacher calls out a situation (e.g., “You lost your toy”) and asks students where on the line they’d place themselves
- Pair talk: After a scenario, students turn to someone next to them and explain why they chose that side

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use emotion cards or visuals for younger, EAL, or neurodiverse learners
- Let students observe first if they’re unsure or anxious
- Provide sentence starters for those verbalising their emotions (e.g., “I feel \_\_\_ because \_\_\_.”)

# SHAPE MAKING

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students begin by walking around the room at a steady, relaxed pace.
2. The teacher calls out the name of a shape (e.g., “Triangle!” “Square!” “Circle!”).
3. Students group together to form the shape using their bodies.
  - They can stand, lie down, stretch arms, or use different levels.
4. Once the shape is formed, the teacher can walk around to observe and encourage more creative approaches and cooperation.
5. After a few seconds, teacher calls out a new shape and the cycle repeats.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Specific group sizes: “Make a triangle using 3 people” or “Make a square with 5 people!”
- 3D shapes: Challenge older groups to form cube, pyramid, or sphere
- No talking round: Forces students to use non-verbal communication
- Timed rounds: See who can form the shape fastest (without running)
- Shape storytelling: Ask the group to “come alive” as their shape (e.g., the triangle is a mountain, the circle is a moon)
- Math link: Call out properties — e.g., “A shape with 4 sides” instead of saying “square”

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use shape flashcards or visuals to support understanding
- Mixed-ability grouping to ensure all students are included
- Let students observe and describe shapes if they’re not comfortable forming them physically

# I'M SORRY BUT I CANT LAUGH

## **Format:**

Seated or standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group forms a circle, either seated or standing.
2. One person is chosen as “the Joker” and they must go to the middle of the circle and choose someone to make laugh (without touching them.)
  - This could include silly voices, accents, dance moves, dramatic kneeling, etc.
3. That person chosen by the Joker must then reply them with the words” I’m sorry but i cant laugh” without smiling, giggling or laughing
4. Once the Joker has heard this, he must then move on to the next person
5. In the event that the person does laugh, they will either be out and sit down or swap roles with the Joker.
6. If they successfully deliver the line without smiling, the speaker must move on and try someone else.
7. Continue the game around the circle until either:
  - Everyone has had a turn, or
  - Only one person remains un-laughed.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- No repeating styles: Jokers must find new ways to make people laugh (e.g., opera voice, robot voice, interpretive dance)
- Winner’s circle: If you make someone laugh, you stay in; if not, you’re out and the next level of the game will challenge to the successful jokers
- Timed reaction: Give the responder 3 seconds to say their line without smiling
- Character mode: Assign characters or themes (e.g., pirate, superhero, Shakespearean actor)

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students who are non-verbal or have communication differences can use a card or gesture for their line
- For students who may be uncomfortable performing, allow them to be a judge, pick the next joker, or join in as part of a duo
- Provide pre-written tactics to support EAL/SEND learners
- Create a safe environment by reminding everyone the goal is fun, not embarrassment

# FIND THE CLAP

## **Format:**

An standing or seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ask the students to form a circle
2. Tell them their goal is to clap together at the exact same time — but without a countdown or cue.
3. Explain that they will need to use eye contact, body language, and group awareness to feel when the moment is right.
4. After a pause, the class attempts to clap once, all together.
5. If it's out of sync, no one is "out", they simply try again.
6. Repeat as many times as needed, aiming to get closer and closer to a unified clap. This can be a continuous activity and does not need to be accomplished in one day

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Eyes closed: Once the group improves, try the game with eyes shut to increase reliance on sound and intuition.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Silent countdown: Depending on the class you are dealing with, the teacher can provide students with the option of count silently in their heads — "1, 2, 3... CLAP"
- Switching the Action : Teacher can switch the clap with a different action (e.g., tapping knees, clicking fingers, etc")
- Teacher to allow students with mobility differences to make a sound in their own way
- For students who struggle with timing, allow them to observe first and join when ready
- Reinforce that it's not about perfection — the focus is on connection, not competition

# 21

## **Format:**

Seated or standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group sits or stands in a circle.
2. The aim is to count aloud from 1 to 21 as a class without a predetermined sequence
3. Depending of the size of the class, each student must say between 1 and 3 numbers or only 1
4. Students must say numbers in consecutive order if a number is skipped, the class must start again
5. If more than one student says a number, the class must start again
6. This can be a continuous activity where the teacher can keep record of the highest number each class is able to achieve within each lesson until they are able to get to 21

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Backwards order: The class starts at 21 and count down to 1
- Timed round: Once students are comfortable with the game, the teacher can incorporate a timed challenge between other classes where the class who is able to achieve it in the shortest amount of time, wins a prize

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Provide number cards to support non verbal students

# FIND THE OBJECT

## **Format:**

Small groups of (3–6 students)

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students are placed into small groups.
2. Each group nominates one person to be the object retriever — this person will physically collect and bring the item.
3. The teacher reads out a riddle or descriptive clue for an everyday classroom object or item in the surrounding environment.
  - E.g., “I have pages but I’m not alive. You read me but I don’t speak.” (Answer: a book)
4. Groups discuss the riddle quietly to figure out the object.
5. Once they agree, their nominated person goes to retrieve the object and brings it to the teacher or central point.
6. The first group to correctly bring the item wins a point.
7. The teacher keeps score and rotates riddles for multiple rounds.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Riddle difficulty: Use more abstract or layered riddles as the game progresses (e.g., “I see everything but have no eyes, what am I?” → a mirror).
- Category rounds: Focus riddles around curriculum themes:
  - Maths objects (ruler, calculator)
  - Nature/science (leaf, magnet)
  - Classroom zones (coat peg, reading corner)
- Switch retrievers: Change the nominated person each round so everyone gets a turn.
- Bonus points: Award extra points for creativity or for being able to explain the riddle after solving it.

## **Variation:**

- No movement: Instead of bringing the item, students point to it or describe its location to promote descriptive language.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Offer visual riddles or object images for EAL or younger learners.
- Use classroom-safe zones to limit chaos (e.g., “Only choose objects from your desk or reading area”).

# WARM UP GAMES

- Group making
- Walk like a
- Yes lets
- Pass the clap
- Pass the object
- Pass the movement
- Pass the clap
- Splat
- Zip, Zap, Bong
- Heads Down, Eyes Up
- King of the Jungle
- Bean Bag sequence
- Energy Ball

# GROUP MAKING

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ask students to walk around the space at a normal, steady pace.
  - Encourage them to fill the space evenly and change directions often.
2. The teacher then calls out a random number (e.g., “3!”).
3. Students must quickly form groups of that number.
  - They can link arms, hold hands, or stand in a close circle.
4. Anyone who does not find a complete group is either:
  - Out (if playing an elimination version)
  - Or does a forfeit (e.g., 3 jumping jacks) and re-joins
5. Teacher continues calling different numbers

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- No talking: Students must find their group without speaking
- Mixed criteria: Call numbers with conditions, e.g.:
  - “Group of 4 — everyone has brown shoes”
  - “Group of 3 — different heights”
- Maths link: Call out sums or number facts instead of plain numbers (e.g., “2 + 2!” or “Double 3!”)
- Themed groups: “Group of 5 — act like dinosaurs!” or “Group of 4 — look scared!”
- Roleplay twist: After forming groups, give students 5 seconds to freeze in a pose (e.g. “a spaceship,” “a birthday party”)

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual numbers or signs for EAL/SEND learners
- Give time warnings before calling numbers for anxious students
- Use music or clapping to set rhythm for walking
- Instead of elimination, let ungrouped students observe and choose the next number

# WALK LIKE A ...

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students spread out so they can move around safely without bumping into each other.
2. Teacher asks students to walk around the space
3. The teacher calls out a prompt:
  - “Walk like a lion!”
  - “Walk like jelly!”
  - “Walk like you’re carrying something heavy!”
4. Students respond by moving around the space in a way that matches the movement, energy, and feeling of the prompt.
5. Teacher continues changing the prompt every 10–20 seconds to keep the activity dynamic and engaging.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Silent round: Students must do the actions without making any noise .
- Narrative twist: Turn it into a story — “Walk like a pirate looking for treasure... now you’re walking through a swamp..”
- Curriculum-linked: Tie the activity with a learning topics (e.g., “Walk like a spinning planet,” “Walk like a Victorian child,” “Walk like a water droplet through the water cycle”)

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Encourage movements that can be done seated or using just upper body
- Use visual cue cards for each prompt to support EAL/SEND learners
- Adjust pace and intensity to suit sensory needs or mobility levels

# YES LETS

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group stands in a space where they can move freely.
2. One student (or the teacher begins with) suggests an action for the class to do together by saying. For example:
  - “Let’s walk like dinosaurs!”
3. The whole group enthusiastically responds:
  - “Yes, let’s!”
4. Everyone performs the action together for a few seconds.
5. After a short time, the teacher chooses another person to make a new suggestion (e.g., “Let’s jump in slow motion!”), and again the group responds, “Yes, let’s!” and does it.
6. Continue until everyone has had a turn or the energy begins to settle.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Topic-linked prompts: Tie the activity into classroom learning:
  - History – “Let’s march like Roman soldiers!”
  - Science – “Let’s orbit like planets!”
  - Literacy – “Let’s act like the Big Bad Wolf!”

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with physical limitations, allow actions that can be done seated or with upper body only
- Use visual prompt cards or images for non-verbal learners or EAL students to make suggestions
- Encourage students to suggest actions they feel comfortable doing to promote confidence and inclusion

# PASS THE CLAP

## **Format:**

Standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle, facing inward.
2. One student begins by turning to the person next to them and attempting to clap at the same time. The idea is to make eye contact and synchronise the clap with that person.
3. That person then turns to the next person and does the same until the clap passes all the way around the circle.
4. If the clap falls out of sync, encourage players to reset calmly and a try again until they are able to achieve a synchronised clap.
5. Once everyone has had a turn, the teacher can choose to reverse the direction or repeat the round.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Speed it up: Gradually increase the pace with each round to test reaction and focus
- Random pass: Instead of going around the circle, allow students to pass the clap to anyone across the circle. This will require strong non-verbal cues and anticipation
- Double clap / rhythm clap: Change the pattern — e.g., “clap-clap” or “clap-snap” before passing

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow seated play with tapping instead of clapping
- Place students who may need additional support with someone they are comfortable with

# PASS THE OBJECT

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle, facing inward.
2. The teacher mimes holding an imaginary object which they show through their movements and reactions, (e.g., cradling and stroking a kitten, bouncing a basketball, shivering while holding ice).
3. They walk across the circle and hand it to someone else, who must receive it in the same form and mimic the original action presented to them
4. Then that person transforms the object into something new using only their mime and body language (e.g., the kitten becomes a heavy dumbbell).
5. They then walk to another person and pass the new object.
6. This continues until everyone has had a turn as both giver and receiver. To manage this, students can sit down once they've had a turn

## **Stretch and Challenge**

- Add sound effects: Students add an appropriate sound to match the object (e.g., “meow” for the kitten, “splash” for a bucket of water)
- Topic-based objects: Tie the game into your current curriculum:
  - Science – magnetic object, volcano model, test tube
  - History – Roman helmet, Victorian toy
  - Literacy – magical book, character item
  - Geography – globe, weather props (e.g., umbrella for rain)

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Seated version: Students stay in their spots and mime passing the object across the circle or to someone next to them
- Use prompt cards or picture symbols to help spark ideas for objects
- Allow smaller, more subtle movements for students with reduced mobility — e.g., finger tapping to show typing, or head movements for nodding dog toy

# PASS THE MOVEMENT

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle, facing inward.
2. One person begins by performing a simple movement or gesture (e.g., clapping hands, spinning, shoulder shrug) and passes it to the person next to them
3. That person repeats the exact movement, then creates a new one and passes it on
4. This continues until everyone has received and passed a movement at least once.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Themed movement rounds:
  - Use topic-based prompts — e.g., science (volcano eruption, magnet pulling), history (marching like a Roman soldier), or emotions (sad slump, excited hop)
- Speed round: Students to pass the movement quicker each round, with no hesitation.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with limited mobility can use smaller gestures (e.g., facial expressions, finger movements)
- Use visual prompt cards for those needing inspiration or support with initiating movements
- For EAL or SEND learners, allow them to practice their movement with a buddy before passing to the whole group

# PASS THE SOUND

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle, facing inward.
2. One person begins by making a simple sound (e.g., a stomp, clasp, whistle, whoosh etc.) and passes it to the person next to them
3. That person repeats the exact sound, then creates a new one and passes it on
4. This continues until everyone has received and passed a movement at least once.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Themed movement rounds:
  - Use topic-based prompts — e.g., science (volcano eruption), or emotions (a laugh, giggle or joyful tone )
- Speed round: Students try to pass the sound quicker each round, with no hesitation.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual prompt cards for those needing inspiration or support with initiating movements
- For EAL or SEND learners, allow them to practice their sound with a buddy before passing to the whole group

# SPLAT

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students stand in a wide circle, with one person (the “Splatter”) in the middle.
2. The Splatter spins around and suddenly points at someone, shouting “SPLAT!”
3. The person being pointed at must duck down quickly.
4. The two people on either side of the person who ducked must immediately turn to face each other and shout “SPLAT!” while pointing at each other.
5. The first person to shout “SPLAT!” correctly stays in, and the slower person is out.
6. If the person in the middle points at someone and they fail to duck in time, they are out.
7. The last two people standing go back-back and listen for a key word in a story. Once the key word is mentioned, the first person to turn around and say splat wins and becomes the next Splatter, or the game restarts.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Memory variation: Instead of saying “SPLAT!”, the person in the middle calls out the person’s name

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow a seated or low-movement versions: participants point or raise hands instead of physically ducking
- For visually impaired students, add a sound cue (e.g., bell or name call) instead of relying solely on pointing
- If needed, assign a helper to support students with processing delays or movement coordination

# ZIP, ZAP, BONG

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The class stands in a circle, facing inward.
2. The game moves around the circle using three main actions:
  - ZIP – Pass the energy to someone next to you (left or right) by pointing and saying “ZIP”
  - ZAP – Send the energy to anyone across the circle by pointing and saying “ZAP”
  - BONG – Blocks a zip by saying “BONG” with hands up in the air. This sends the energy back to the person who just sent it
  - If this is the students first time playing the game, introduce each movement step by step before playing the first round.
3. Players must react quickly and clearly.
4. If a player: Hesitates, Does the wrong action, Says the wrong word ...they are out and sit down, or the game resets.

The last person standing wins.

## **Stretch and Challenge / Variations:**

- Add more actions:
  - ZING – Spin in place before sending the energy
  - ZOOP – Send the energy underhand to someone crouching
  - Let the class invent their own actions with specific rules!

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with mobility needs, allow seated gestures (e.g., finger pointing, nods)
- Use visual action cards for students who need cues or for EAL learners
- Assign a support buddy for students who need help with pace or memory
- Allow a practice round to help all students feel confident before playing at full speed

# HEADS DOWN, EYES UP

## **Format:**

A Standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students stand in a circle, facing inward.
2. The teacher gives the command: “Heads down” making all students look down at the floor.
3. After a pause, the teacher says: “Eyes up” making students look directly at one person in the circle.
4. If two students make direct eye contact with each other (ie they are both looking at each other), they are both out and must sit down or step out of the circle.
5. If students don’t make eye contact with anyone, they stay in.
6. Teacher must emphasise the important rule that students cannot change who they look at once they have chosen, therefore they must be honest and step out.
7. The game continues until a final pair or small group remains.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Speed round: Decrease the time between commands to increase tension.
- Strategic variation: Encourage students to think tactically — “Should I look at someone who’s not likely to look at me?”.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students who struggle with direct eye contact (e.g., due to ASD), allow modified rules: they can point subtly or nod at who they chose and check with teacher support.
- Use visual cues for students with hearing impairments (e.g., signs for “down” and “up”).

# KING OF THE JUNGLE

## **Format:**

An open space,

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The teacher begins by introducing a set of animal actions that can be mimed physically
  - Examples:
    - Monkey: Scratch armpits
    - Crocodile: Clap arms in front of you like jaws
    - Flamingo: Stand on one leg, flap wings
    - Elephant: Use arm as a trunk
  - The teacher can add as many animals as they like, but keep it manageable for memory.
2. The group practices all the animal actions together to ensure everyone knows them.
3. Once ready, the teacher says: “3... 2... 1... Pick!”
  - On “Pick!”, the students and the teacher freeze in one of the animal positions.
4. Any student who picked the same animal as the teacher is out and sits down or moves to the side.
5. The game then repeats until one student remains.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Memory mode: Introduce a new animal every round.
- Themed rounds: Use animals from specific habitats — rainforest, savannah, arctic, ocean, etc.
- Surprise call-out: Instead of countdown, teacher suddenly calls “Pick!” for added unpredictability.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Ensure all animal movements are physically accessible or offer modified versions (e.g., seated version of flamingo = one leg crossed)
- Provide visual animal cards or posters for EAL learners or those with processing needs
- Allow more processing time for countdown or give practice rounds before elimination begins
- Let students who are “out” become the judging panel or call the countdown

# BEAN BAG SEQUENCE

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Students stand in a circle,
2. The teacher starts by introducing Bean Bag 1 (e.g., red bean bag):
  - Teacher says a student's name, makes eye contact, and passes the bean bag to them.
  - That student does the same: says a new student's name (who hasn't received it yet), passes it along.
  - This continues until every student has touched the bean bag once, and the final pass is back to the teacher.
  - This becomes Sequence 1.
3. The class then practices Sequence 1 a few times until it flows smoothly.
4. Once mastered, the teacher introduces Bean Bag 2 (a different colour, e.g., the blue bag): which will start off a new sequence
  - Again, each student touches the bag only once in this new path, ending with the teacher.
  - Repeat practice with both bean bags so two sequences are running simultaneously.
5. More bean bags (with distinct colours) can be added to increase the challenge.
  - Each new bean bag has its own sequence, which must be memorised and followed precisely.
  - The class continues until all sequences are being run simultaneously, with bean bags crossing paths

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Silent version: Students must pass the bean bag in silence, using eye contact only to indicate the next receiver.
- Reverse sequence: After mastering the sequence, try reversing the order for each colour.
- Speed challenge: Time how fast a single sequence can travel. Can the class beat their record?

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with mobility needs can have peers bring the bean bag to them, or remain seated in the circle
- Use larger, softer bean bags for students with fine motor concerns
- EAL students can be given their sequence on a name card until memorised
- Encourage students to coach each other through sequences. This will help boost collaboration and inclusion

# ENERGY BALL

## **Format:**

A standing or seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group stands or sits in a circle.
2. The teacher begins by creating an imaginary ball of energy between their hands with a sound (e.g., “Whoosh!” or “Zzz!”)
3. The teacher then passes the energy ball to the next person in the circle
4. That person receives the energy ball by mimicking the energy and then adds more to it (e.g. bigger motion, louder sound etc).
5. The ball is passed around the circle, and each person increasing the size, intensity, or sound — never decreasing it.
6. The final person gives it a massive energetic send-off to “release” the energy into the room, or can “absorb” it with a dramatic gesture.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Reverse round: After the first round, try passing it in reverse order.
- Emotion ball: Pass the energy as a specific emotion e.g., happy ball, angry ball, silly ball..
- Energy duos: Two students balls are created on and move in opposite directions around the circle.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with limited mobility can keep movements small but expressive. Focus can be more on sound and facial expression.
- Allow students to opt into different levels of participation i.e watching and copying from their spot is okay.

# STARTERS

- Imagine...
- What's in the bag
- Story Sequencing
- Lead with ...
- Follow the leader
- The art of precision
- Voice projection
- What are you doing?
- Who am I?
- How does a..?

# IMAGINE...

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The teacher asks students to close their eyes and “imagine a door” in front of them.
2. The teacher slowly describes what’s behind the door, using rich sensory language. For example:
  - “Behind this door is a shimmering golden castle, where the walls hum with soft music. The air smells like cinnamon buns and the floors are covered in purple moss...”
3. The teacher uses multiple senses to paint a full picture:
  - What can they see? (colours, shapes, creatures)
  - What can they hear? (music, animals, silence)
  - What can they smell or taste? (food, flowers, forest air)
  - What’s the mood? (exciting, peaceful, mysterious)
4. Once the scene is described, the teacher gives students a prompt such as:
  - “Step inside
  - How do you feel inside it
  - What do you see, eat, or feel first
5. The teacher then calls the students back into the space with the following options:
  - “Turn to a partner and describe what you found.”
  - “Draw what you saw behind the door.”
  - “Write a short story set in this world.”

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Student-led scenes: Invite students to describe their own imagined worlds to the class.
- Story follow-up: Have students write a full story that takes place behind the door.
- Role-play: Students act as characters from the imagined world and interact with each other.
- Art link: Students create paintings or dioramas of what they imagined.
- Soundscape: Students create sounds that match the world (claps, hums, stomps, etc.).

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual prompts or props (e.g., door frame, fabric, coloured light) to support imagination.
- Allow non-verbal responses: drawing, moving, pointing, or acting.
- Describe worlds that are emotionally safe and inclusive of all backgrounds and experiences.
- Offer sentence stems for discussion:
  - “I saw...”
  - “It smelled like...”
  - “The creatures were...”

# WHAT'S IN THE BAG

## **Format:**

A seated or standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Prepare a bag or box that contains a selection of mystery items. These items should stimulate one of the five senses:
  - Touch: Feathers, buttons, fur, coins, sponge, sandpaper
  - Smell: Coffee beans, vanilla pod, citrus peel, perfume strip, garlic
  - Taste (optional & only with proper hygiene and allergy checks): Raisins, cornflakes, chocolate, lemon
  - Sound: Crinkly wrapper, keys, rattle, shaker
  - Sight (if using a peek-based version): Patterned objects, bright colours, textures
2. Students take turns using one specific sense (e.g., only touching without looking) to guess what the item is.
3. Teacher may choose to narrate or guide with prompts:
  - “What does it feel like?”
  - “Is it rough or smooth?”
  - “What does it smell like?”
  - “Does the sound remind you of anything?”
4. After students have guessed, the item is revealed by the teacher and they continue with another item.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Descriptive language focus: Students must describe the item in detail before guessing — great for building vocabulary
- Blindfolded version: Adds mystery and challenge (especially for older groups)
- Category guessing: Students guess the category of the object first (e.g., food, tool, toy)
- Write and guess: Students write their guess before the item is revealed

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual supports (e.g., symbol cards showing each sense)
- Offer verbal prompts or multiple-choice guesses for students who need support
- For sensory-sensitive learners, allow opt-in participation or use observation roles
- For blind/visually impaired students, lean into touch and sound items, with high-contrast or tactile features
- Keep taste station optional and check for allergies/dietary restrictions in advance

# STORY SEQUENCING

## **Format:**

A seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Each student creates a story following this Pixar Story Structure:
  - Once upon a time...
    - Introduce the character and setting. (eg “Once upon a time, there was a curious cat who lived on a quiet farm.”)
  - Every day...
    - Show the character’s routine or normal world. (eg “Every day, the cat would nap in the sun and chase butterflies.”)
  - One day...
    - Introduce a problem or major change. (eg “One day, a noisy parrot arrived on the farm.”)
  - Because of that...
    - Show a consequence or action taken by the character. (eg “Because of that, the cat lost its favourite napping spot.”)
  - Until finally...
    - The turning point or resolution. (eg “Until finally, the cat and parrot agreed to share the tree and became friends.”)
  - And ever since then...
    - The new normal — how life has changed. (eg “And ever since then, the cat has enjoyed parrot stories while sunbathing.”)
2. It is advised to model a couple examples to the students prior to their independent/paired or group engagement.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Add two “Because of that...” statements to deepen the chain of cause and effect
- Genre switch: Ask students to write the story in a specific genre ie horror, sci-fi, comedy etc
- Comic strip: Ask students to illustrate each step of the story as a comic

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use visual templates or sentence starters for each story step
- Provide group work opportunities for students who may find individual writing challenging
- Allow drawing, storytelling, or typing as alternatives to handwriting
- Use audio recorders for students to speak their stories aloud
- Ensure scaffolds are available for EAL learners or those with additional needs (e.g., picture cues)

# LEAD WITH

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ensure students are spread out with enough room to move safely.
2. Instruct students to walk naturally around the space, avoiding patterns like walking in a circle.
3. The teacher then gives a series of prompts:
  - “Lead with your nose.”
  - “Now lead with your elbows.”
  - “Try leading with your knees, hips, shoulders, feet, stomach...”
4. Students must continue walking, adjusting their posture and movement to lead with the named body part.
5. Encourage safe, imaginative, and exaggerated movement, while maintaining awareness of others.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Add music: Play different tempos or styles and ask students to adjust their speed and energy accordingly.
- Character movement: Ask students to combine the body part with an emotion or character, e.g.
  - “Lead with your nose like a curious detective.”
  - “Lead with your belly like a proud pirate.”
- Stillness challenge: Call “freeze!” and choose a handful of students for the class to observe a
- Creative link: After the activity, asks students to draw a character inspired by one of their movements.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Give students time to explore each body part at their own pace.
- Offer modifications or alternative prompts for students with mobility or sensory differences (e.g., “lead with your hand in place” or “gesture with your eyes”).
- Use visual aids (images of body parts or simple icons) alongside verbal instructions.

# FOLLOW THE LEADER

## **Format:**

A seated or standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group stands or sits in a circle.
2. The teacher begins as the first leader, performing a simple movement or action . For example:
  - Waving hands
  - Jumping in place
  - Patting knees
  - Making a silly face
3. The students then copy the teacher's action all together.
4. Once the action has been copied a few times, the next person in the circle becomes the leader.
5. This continues around the circle, with each student creating and leading their own unique action for the group/class to follow.
6. Encourage creativity and enthusiasm

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Theme-based actions: Teacher encourages students actions to relate to specific topic (e.g., sea creatures, space, jungle animals, jobs)
- No repeats rule: Each action must be different from those that came before

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Actions can be done seated or adapted for different mobility levels
- Allow students to choose from a set of visual cue cards for movement ideas
- Provide structured examples or starter actions to help shy or unsure participants
- Reinforce the importance of respect and encouragement — every action is celebrated!

# THE ART OF PERCIAUSION

## Format:

Paired work

## Class Suitability:

KS2 upwards

## Rules:

1. Divide students into pairs.
2. Each pair is given two different objects (e.g., a scarf and a beanbag).
  - Student A holds one object,
  - Student B holds the other.
3. The goal is for each student to try and persuade their partner to give them their object whilst protecting their own.
4. Before the task commences, the teacher must emphasise the following rules:
  - Students must not snatch, grab, yank, or make sudden aggressive moves.
  - If someone grabs or pulls their partner's object, the teacher can pause the game and discuss respectful play.
5. The round ends when:
  - One person successfully gains their partner's object,
  - Or after a set time limit (e.g., 30 seconds to 1 minute).
6. Students can then switch partners or objects and repeat.

## Stretch and Challenge:

- Team play: Create small groups where each person guards one object and tries to collect from another

## Inclusive Adaptation:

- Offer different types of objects for varying grip abilities (e.g., large soft items for easier holding)
- Provide clear visual modelling or peer demonstrations for students who need concrete examples
- Reinforce safe, respectful physical boundaries for students who may need sensory space
- Use slow, calm music in the background to help set a controlled tone

# VOICE PROJECTION

## **Format:**

A standing or seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. You'll need one soft bean bag
2. Students form a circle.
3. The teacher selects a student to start and gives them a sound or 1-syllable word (e.g., "Go", "Hi", "Ah", "No").
4. The student must:
  - Toss the bean bag upward
  - As the bean bag rises, the student must project their voice to match the height the bean bag reaches
  - Advise students to try to stretch the word or sound it out so it rises with the beanbag
5. Give the student a couple attempts to practise.
6. Once complete, they then pass the bean bag to the person next to them and the teacher gives them a new word or sound.
7. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a go.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Vocal emotion: Ask students to say the word in a specific emotion — happy, angry, sad, etc.
- Vowel focus: Rotate through vowel sounds (A, E, I, O, U) to work on clarity and articulation
- Syllable game: Older students can project 2-syllable words, stretching each part with the bean bag's movement
- Pitch match: Challenge students to varied pitches ie high or low
- Word build: As students gain their confidence, the teacher can increase the number of syllables or complexity of sounds e.g., "Go" → "Going" → "Going now!"

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with limited mobility can toss the bean bag gently from seated position or mime the throw
- If throwing is difficult, use a balloon, scarf, or foam ball to slow the action down
- EAL learners or those with speech needs can use repeated vowel sounds or focus just on pitch and volume

# WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

## **Format:**

A standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The group forms a circle. Student A steps into the center and begins miming an everyday action, such as:
  - Brushing teeth
  - Washing dishes
  - Walking a dog
  - Tying shoelaces
  - Eating spaghetti
2. After a short time (approx. 10–20 seconds), the another student (student B) steps into the circle and asks student A : “What are you doing?”
3. Student A must then respond with a completely unrelated action to what they are actually doing . (For example: If they’re miming brushing teeth, they might answer: “I’m juggling bananas.” Or if they’re washing dishes, they could say: “I’m riding a rollercoaster.”)
4. The Student B must immediately begins miming the new action Student A has mentioned
5. Student A leaves the circle and a new student (Student C), will repeat the cycle.
6. The process continues until everyone has had a turn in the center.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Rapid-fire version: Reduce the time for each scene. Encourage fast thinking and transitions
- Themed rounds: Encourage students to only mention actions from a certain category (e.g., sports, historical jobs, space activities)
- No repeat rule: No action can be repeated

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with speech or language needs, offer visual prompt cards or allow them to gesture their answer
- Use paired acting for students who are shy or need extra support
- Allow seated miming or adjust physical actions for accessibility
- Use themes related to curriculum for scaffolded creativity (e.g., science experiments, historical characters, fairy tales)

# WHO AM I?

## **Format:**

Two teams

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Split the class into two even teams – Team A and Team B
2. The teacher first calls a member from Team A and privately shows or whispers a well-known story title (e.g., Goldilocks, The Gruffalo, Cinderella).
3. That student then steps forward and mimes actions related to the story to help their team guess what it is. The student demonstrating is not allowed to speak, mouth words, or use any sound effects.. They can only use actions or gestures.
4. The student's team has a time limit (e.g., 30 seconds) to guess correctly.
5. If they guess correctly, their team gets a point. If not, the other team has one chance to steal their point if they guess it correctly.
6. Alternate between teams so all students get a chance to perform.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Include a prop: Students can use a neutral object (e.g., scarf, stick) to help mime scenes
- Theme rounds: Focus on stories from a certain genre (fairy tales, myths, school texts)
- “Three Clues” rule: Student must act out three separate parts of the story (beginning, middle, end)

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow students to choose between miming or drawing (on a whiteboard) for accessibility
- Let shy students work in pairs to mime together
- Use visual story cards as prompts for younger or EAL learners
- Pre-select familiar and inclusive stories to ensure confidence across the class

# HOW DOES A..?

## **Format:**

A open space

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ask students to find their own space in the room, with enough room to move safely.
2. Ask students to begin with a neutral walk - walking naturally around the space to warm up.
3. Call out prompts using the structure:
  - “How does a \_\_\_ walk?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ sit?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ stand?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ talk?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ react when scared/happy/confused?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ sleep?”
  - “How does a \_\_\_ eat/drink/play/etc.?”
4. Example prompts:
  - “How does a lion stand?”
  - “How does a robot walk?”
  - “How does a queen sit?”
  - “How does a puppy talk?”
  - “How does a wizard cast a spell?”
  - “How does a child react to ice cream?”
5. Encourage full body responses not just facial expressions.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Character layering: Combine multiple characteristics (e.g. “How does a tired astronaut sit?” or “How does a nervous fairy talk?”)
- Link to curriculum: Use objects/characters from stories, history, or science (e.g. “How does a Roman soldier stand?” or “How does a volcano erupt?”)

## **Inclusive Adaptations:**

- Provide visual aids or images to help with abstract characters.
- Offer options to act while seated for students with limited mobility.
- Allow verbal responses only for students uncomfortable with physical movement.

# DISMISSAL GAMES

- Spin the bottle
- 7 up
- In the river, on the bank
- Blood potato
- Cat and mouse

# SPIN THE BOTTLE

## **Format:**

A seated circle using a bottle (or any spinner)

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Have the class sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs.
2. The teacher begins by spinning a bottle in the middle of the circle.
3. When the bottle stops spinning, the person it points to can either:
  - Start packing up their things.
  - Line up at the door.
  - Take charge of the next spin.
4. Repeat the process until everyone is dismissed.
5. If the bottle lands between students, the teacher can decide or call for a quick “rock, paper, scissors” match to decide.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Add tasks before dismissal: e.g., “Say one thing you learned today” or “Give a compliment to someone.”
- Use it as a recap tool: The student must answer a question from the lesson before leaving.
- Add themed spins (e.g., spin while striking a pose, clapping, or in slow motion).

## **Inclusive Adaptations:**

- Use a digital spinner on a whiteboard for hygiene or accessibility.
- Allow students with mobility needs to stay seated and simply tidy around them or choose a helper.
- Allow opting-out for sensory-sensitive learners and give them a role (e.g., bottle watcher, spinner helper etc).

# 7 UP

## **Format:**

Standing circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 and upwards

## **Rules:**

1. One person starts by saying “1” aloud and placing one hand across their chest to touch the opposite shoulder.
  - This gesture sets the direction of play (clockwise or counter-clockwise).
2. The next person in that direction says “2” and makes the same gesture.
3. The counting continues in this way (3, 4, 5, 6...) around the circle.
4. At any time, a player can change the direction by placing the opposite hand across their chest when saying their number.
5. When someone gets to “7”, they put one hand above their head and point clearly in the direction they want the new count to restart from.
  - That person next to them in which ever way they are pointing restarts the count at “1”.
6. If a player says the wrong number, uses the wrong gesture, or hesitates too long, they are out.
7. The game should continue, increasing in speed to raise the challenge.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Have students invent a movement to replace “7” for creative engagement.
- Introduce a time limit to keep the pace up.
- Incorporate emotions for each number (e.g., say numbers in an excited, sad, or angry voice).

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Students with limited mobility can point instead of gesturing across their chest.
- Allow practice rounds and support for neurodiverse learners.

# IN THE RIVER, ON THE BANK

## **Format:**

A Line

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. The teacher marks out a vertical invisible line in the space which all students must line up on, one behind the other
2. The left side of the line is “in the river”
3. The right side of the line is “on the bank”
4. The teacher stands at the front of the line (ie 1 meter apart) and gives one of two main commands:
  - “In the river” students must jump to the left side of the line.
  - “On the bank” students must jump to the right side of the line
5. The group should move immediately when they hear each command.
6. The teacher tries to confuse students by:
  - Changing the order quickly
  - Repeating previous commands when the students are expecting you to say the other one
  - Pausing between instructions to test reaction control
7. If a student moves incorrectly or flinches, they are out and can start packing up
8. Continue until one person remains and they are the champion!

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Student caller: Let students take over giving the instructions to trick their classmates.
- Add more commands: Introduce a new action:
  - “Shark!” = duck
  - “Fish!” = spin on the spot
  - “Splash!” = freeze

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- For students with mobility differences, use arm movements to signal “in” or “on” (e.g., arms up = river, arms down = bank)
- Allow for slower pacing during early rounds
- For EAL or neurodiverse learners, use visual aids: have flashcards that show “River” or “Bank” with colour cues

# BLOOD POTATO

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Ask all students to close their eyes and keep them shut. (No peeking allowed!)
2. The teacher chooses 2-3 murderers - Everyone else becomes an innocent "potato."
3. Students then begin to walk around the space carefully still with their eyes closed
  - Emphasise moving slowly and quietly.
4. When two people meet, innocent potatoes must whisper "potato" to each other.
  - If both say "potato," they part ways.
  - But if one of them is a "murderer", they must whisper "blood potato," and the other person must:
    - Scream dramatically, pretending to die, and step out of the game area.
5. The murderers continues secretly, trying to eliminate all the potatoes.
6. The game ends when all the innocent potatoes are eliminated.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Detective version: Introduce a detective who can call "Freeze!" and guess who the murderer is
- Add roles: Include one "healer" who can whisper "life" and bring someone back
- Time limit: Give murderers a time cap to win. This will encourage strategy

## **Safety & Inclusion Notes:**

- Stress moving very slowly with arms slightly out to avoid collisions
- Set clear boundaries in the space, and have helpers (who may not want to participate), watch closely
- Use softer flooring or avoid cluttered spaces
- For younger or SEND students, consider playing with eyes open and soft blindfolds, or just slow walking with eyes open and a tag-on-the-shoulder mechanic

# CAT AND MOUSE

## **Format:**

A seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

Early Years upwards

## **Rules:**

1. All students form a large seated circle
2. Two students are chosen:
  - One is the Cat (the chaser)
  - One is the Mouse (the runner)
3. On the teacher's signal, the the chase begins
4. The Mouse starts outside the circle with the Cat chasing them
5. The Mouse's goal is run all the way back to their seat without being caught by the Cat
6. The Cat's goal is to catch the Mouse before they get back to their seat
7. If the Cat catches the Mouse, the Mouse is out
8. If the Cat does not catch the Mouse, the Cat is out

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Multiple cats or mice: Add a second Mouse or Cat for added chaos.
- Obstacle variation: Add cones or safe zones inside the circle for the Mouse to dodge or hide behind.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Use a walking-only rule to reduce speed and improve safety or accessibility.
- Pair students with buddies if mobility is a concern. One can be the thinker/strategist, the other the mover.
- Have a version where the Cat and Mouse move around a table or sitting circle, reducing need for running

# ONE OFF ACTIVITIES

- Park bench
- Game creation
- Off, off, off with they heads
- Word circle story
- Yes/no statements

# PARK BENCH

## **Format:**

Pair-based improvisation

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Set up a single chair or bench at the front or centre of the room. This is the “park bench.”
2. Actor A sits on the chair first. Their goal is simple: stay on the bench.
3. Actor B enters the space and must use dialogue, character, and performance to try and get Actor A to willingly leave the bench — without any physical contact.
4. Actor B might:
  - Pretend the bench is reserved or dangerous
  - Act as a strange or annoying character
  - Start an awkward conversation
  - Pretend to be a long-lost relative or celebrity
5. Actor A must stay seated unless they genuinely feel compelled to leave because of the situation or dialogue.
6. If Actor A gets up, they leave the bench and Actor B takes their place, and a new person, (Actor C ) enters to repeat the cycle.
7. If Actor A doesn't get up after a reasonable time (e.g. 1–2 minutes), the teacher can call “freeze” and swap the pairs.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Add character prompts before entering (e.g., “You are a detective,” “You're terrified of germs”).
- Double up: Two actors try to get one person off the bench.
- Silent version: Try the game without speaking. Students can only use facial expressions or gestures
- Add a time limit to keep the pace snappy.

## **Inclusive Adaptations:**

- Students with limited mobility can participate as observers, focusing on character delivery.
- Offer pre-written ideas for nervous or non-verbal students

# GAME CREATION

## **Format:**

Group work activity

Students work in small groups (3-6 per group)

## **Class Suitability:**

KS2 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Teacher divides the class into small groups of 3-6
2. Teacher provides each group with 2-3 objects.
  - Examples: ball, scarf, cone, beanbag, balloon, paper cup, dice, card, string, etc.
3. Each group's task is to invent a game using the objects they have received.
  - They must give their invented game a name
  - Create clear rules for how to play.
4. Groups have a set time limit (e.g., 5-15 minutes) to design and practice their game.
5. Each group presents their game to the class and demonstrates how it works.
6. The class or teacher votes on the best game based on creativity, fun, and clarity of rules.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Random object mix: Give groups random objects with no obvious connection for extra creativity.
- Theme challenge: Set a theme (e.g., space, sports, nature) that the game must follow.
- Rule twist: Groups must include a specific rule type (e.g., players can only move on one foot, or must use only their non-dominant hand).
- Cooperative games: Challenge groups to make games that require teamwork rather than competition.
- Time challenge: Groups must design a game that can be played in exactly 5 minutes.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow groups to choose objects suited to their physical abilities.
- Encourage students with different strengths (creative, strategic, verbal) to take on different roles.
- Provide visual supports or templates for younger or neurodiverse learners to help organise their ideas.
- Allow presentations in various formats ie verbal, drawings, or demonstrations.

# OFF, OFF, OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

## **Format:**

Group work

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Divide students into small groups (3-5 per group).
2. Scenario: They have arrived late to the Queen's party and must come up with a creative excuse explaining why they were late.
3. Each group is given 3 -5 minutes to prepare their excuse together.
4. Once the time is up, groups present their excuse to the class. They can be as imaginative or funny as they like!
5. After each presentation, the rest of the class votes whether the excuse is valid or not.
6. If the excuse is accepted, the group is allowed to "enter the palace" and remain safe.
7. If the excuse is rejected, the whole class joins in chanting: "Off, off, off with their heads!" and the group is "banished"

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Acting challenge: Groups must perform their excuses using dramatic gestures or voices.
- Question round: After each excuse, allow the class to ask 1-2 questions to test the excuse's believability before voting.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow use of notes or cue cards to support students who find speaking difficult.
- Encourage non-verbal or visual presentations (e.g., drawings, gestures) if needed.
- Provide sentence starters or vocabulary banks for EAL learners to help frame their excuses.
- Ensure a positive and supportive atmosphere so no group feels singled out harshly.

# WORD CIRCLE – STORY

## **Format:**

A seated circle

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Arrange the class in a circle.
2. The teacher or a volunteer starts the story by saying one word aloud.
3. Moving clockwise (or any chosen direction), each student adds one word at a time to continue the story.
4. The story must not end mid-sentence. Encourage the group to think ahead about sentence structure.
5. Encourage the group to create a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
6. The activity continues until the story naturally concludes or after a set time limit.

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Themed stories: Give the class a theme or genre to focus their story on (e.g., adventure, fairy tale, space).
- Timed rounds: Set a timer so the group has a limited time to complete their story.
- Paired words: Each student says two words instead of one for more complex stories.
- Drama twist: After the story is finished, place the class in groups with the goal of acting out their story.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Provide vocabulary lists or word banks for younger or EAL learners.
- Allow students who are shy to contribute by whispering their word to the teacher who will say it aloud.
- Use visual aids or story prompts to guide the story direction.
- For students with speech difficulties, encourage signing or pointing to words to contribute.

# YES / NO STATEMENTS

## **Format:**

An open space

## **Class Suitability:**

KS1 upwards

## **Rules:**

1. Set up the room so there's a clear division of two sides:
  - One side = YES
  - Other side = NO
2. The teacher explains that they will read a series of statements aloud.
3. After each statement, students must move to the side that reflects their personal answer or opinion.
4. Examples statements:
  - "I had a good summer holiday."
  - "I like ice cream."
  - "I have a pet."
  - "I enjoy reading books."
  - "I prefer maths to art."
  - "I like working in groups."
  - "I have felt nervous before a test."

## **Stretch and Challenge:**

- Optional discussion: After students choose a side, pair students together to briefly discuss why they chose it.
- Add "Maybe" or "Not sure" as a middle zone to encourage nuance and discussion.
- Debate mode: After students choose a side, ask two volunteers from each side to explain their position.
- Reflective writing follow-up: Ask students to choose a statement and explain their opinion in writing.
- Student-led prompts: Let students create their own yes/no questions to ask the group.

## **Inclusive Adaptation:**

- Allow students who don't want to move to point, use cards, or stay seated to show their answer.

# ESSAY: HIGHERS VS LOWERS

As educators, we've all seen it — the students who seem to thrive in our classrooms are often those who neatly align with the traditional model of learning. They are typically visual learners, able to process and retain information through reading, watching, and note-taking. These “highers,” as they are often labelled, have been unintentionally favoured by systems that reward output over process, product over experience.

On the other hand, we have the “lowers.” And yes, I say that term with hesitation, because what does it really mean? Many of these students are kinaesthetic, active learners. They learn through movement, interaction, and emotion. They do not always fit into the structures we provide, which are often rigid and focused on outcomes rather than exploration.

Here is the challenge — only one learning style is being consistently catered for.

In our recent project, we made a conscious decision to remove the binary of “right” and “wrong.” We took away rubbers, which surprisingly became a point of genuine anxiety for some students. Without the ability to erase, they were asked to sit with imperfection, to value process over correction. And what happened next was remarkable.

The project evolved naturally into a space centred on emotion and wellbeing. Vocabulary became empowered through necessity, not memorisation. Students found themselves using language to articulate feeling, and for many, this was the first time they had ever “acted” — not to perform in a traditional sense, but to physically express emotion.

It is easy to forget how young and, in many ways, innocent our students are. They are still making sense of the world, often lacking the life experience to fully comprehend or verbalise what they are feeling. Introducing drama, dance, and movement gave them an alternative route — a non-verbal language — to process and express.

For some, it was the first time they truly “acted out” their emotions. Not behaviourally, but artistically. Not for show, but for self. And it reminded us that every student deserves access to learning that meets them where they are.

We cannot keep teaching to only one type of learner. We must make space for the kinaesthetic, the emotional, the expressive. Because when we do, we do not just raise attainment — we raise confidence, connection, and care.

# SOAP OPERA SCHEME

## By Ministry of Stories

**Year Group:** KS2

**Length:** 6 Week

**Key Focus:** To explore narrative structure, character development, and emotional expression through the melodramatic world of soap operas

### Resources needed:

- Whiteboard or flipchart (for planning characters and story arcs)
- Sticky notes or index cards (for plotting A1, B1, A2, B2, AB3 scenes)
- Drama hats, scarves, sunglasses (basic costume props for character play)

## WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

### WEEK 1 – WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF SOAP OPERAS

**Focus:** Introduction to genre and key conventions

#### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Melodrama Freeze Frames (e.g., “You betrayed me!”, “I have a secret!”)
- Class discussion: What makes a soap opera? (Settings, characters, themes)
- Group task: Create a Soap Opera Setting (hospital, school, café, etc.) and character web (who’s related to who, who’s in love with who — keep it messy!)
- Plenary: Share character webs, reflect on typical soap storylines

**Homework/Extension:** Watch a clip from a soap (EastEnders, Coronation Street, etc.) and note examples of melodrama and tension

## **WEEK 2 – CREATING CONFLICT: SCENE A VS SCENE B**

**Focus:** Devising dual storylines and building tension

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Overheard Conversations (students secretly plan a betrayal or reveal a secret)
- Introduce Storyline A and B concept
- Groups plan A1 and B1 scenes
- Focus: Include one conflict or secret in each scene
- Rehearsal time and short performances of A1 and B1

**Plenary:** Reflect on what makes a good cliffhanger. What do we want the audience to feel?

## **WEEK 3 – ESCALATING THE DRAMA**

**Focus:** Developing story arcs and emotional expression

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Slow-motion Soap Moments (use music to build tension)
- Groups plan A2 and B2 scenes — build on previous week, escalate the drama
- Focus on character objectives (What does your character want? Who or what is in their way?)
- Rehearse A2 and B2, emphasis on vocal tone and body language to show emotion
- Perform A1–B2 in sequence for feedback

**Plenary:** Which storylines are starting to link? Predict possible twists.

## **WEEK 4 – THE BIG REVEAL: AB3 PLANNING**

**Focus:** Connecting storylines in a climactic final scene

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Character Interviews (students speak as their character to reveal inner thoughts)
- Groups plan AB3 — the final scene where the two stories meet
- Focus: What's the twist or revelation? How do characters react?
- Rehearsal: Block the scene, use dramatic pauses and stage positioning to build tension

**Plenary:** Peer feedback on AB3 ideas. Are the connections clear? Is there a strong cliffhanger?

## **WEEK 5 – POLISHING THE SOAP**

**Focus:** Rehearsal and refinement

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Soap Opera Soundscapes (music, heartbeat, gasps — create atmosphere)
- Groups rehearse full sequence: A1 → B1 → A2 → B2 → AB3
- Teacher feedback on pace, clarity, and melodrama
- Introduce simple costume or props if desired (e.g., letter, phone, sunglasses for drama)

**Plenary:** Self-assessment: What is working? What needs polishing?

## **WEEK 6 – FINAL PERFORMANCE: THE CLIFFHANGER EPISODE**

**Focus:** Performance and peer evaluation

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: Line Roulette (random dramatic lines delivered with different emotions)
- Final rehearsal and performance of all group soap operas
- Audience notes: Identify strongest cliffhanger, best use of soap conventions, most dramatic moment
- Group reflection: What did you learn about story structure, performance, and collaboration?

**Optional:** Film performances for future review or parent showcase

## **TEMPLATE EXAMPLE**

NAMES:

TITLE OF PLAY:

A1	B1
A2	B2
A&B3	

# ESSAY: ADVANTAGES OF ADAPTIVE TEACHING

Let's start with a reality check. No two students are the same. No two classes are the same. And no lesson has ever gone exactly to plan – unless that plan included a broken whiteboard, a fire drill, and someone crying over a glue stick.

This is where adaptive teaching swoops in – not as some fancy new initiative, but as the thing good teachers have been doing forever. So what is it?

Adaptive teaching is all about adjusting your approach to meet the actual needs of the learners in front of you. Not the hypothetical learners in the scheme of work. Not the imaginary students in the textbook example. The real ones. The ones sat in your classroom right now, staring at you with a mix of hope, confusion, and the occasional smirk.

Here are the big advantages:

1. It keeps students engaged.
2. When teaching is flexible, students feel seen. They feel like the lesson is for them, not just at them. And let's be honest – nothing switches a student off faster than a teacher ploughing through a lesson like a robot on autopilot. Adaptive teaching says: I see you, I hear you, let's make this work together.
3. It supports progress for all.
4. Whether you've got high flyers, reluctant readers, EAL students, SEND support, or all of the above in one class (welcome to Tuesday period 5) – adaptive teaching means everyone can access the learning. It's about scaffolding up, not dumbing down. And that's the sweet spot. Challenge with support.
5. It builds stronger relationships.
6. Students notice when you adapt. They know when you've tweaked a task for them. Given them a nudge. Offered a different way in. That builds trust. It shows them they matter. And when students trust you, they try harder.
7. It keeps you on your toes.
8. Let's face it – adaptive teaching keeps the job interesting. Predictable? Never. Boring? Not a chance. It means you're constantly thinking, responding, growing. Yes, it's more work. But it's also more rewarding. It's the craft of teaching, not just the delivery.
9. It leads to better outcomes.

10. When students are taught in a way that suits them, they learn more. Shocking, I know. But it's not about reinventing the wheel – it's about knowing when to change gear, switch lanes, or take a slight detour.

But isn't it exhausting? Yes. And no. Yes, if you try to change everything for everyone all the time. But no, if you build habits of flexibility. Small tweaks. Targeted scaffolds. Quick checks. Clever groupings. Adaptive teaching doesn't mean chaos. It means controlled flexibility. Think jazz, not free-for-all.

Final thought. Adaptive teaching isn't a buzzword. It's the difference between "I taught it" and "they learned it". It's the difference between surviving a lesson and winning one.

So adapt. Flex. Respond. Because when you do, the classroom becomes less about managing students and more about empowering learners.

And that's when the magic happens.

# THE DOOR PROJECT

By Gail Egbeson and Eshy Moyo

**Year Group:** KS1

**Length:** 12 Week

**Key Focus:** To explore imagination, sound, movement, emotions, and creative writing through the mysterious journey of a magical door that “moves” and opens portals to new experiences.

## WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

### WEEK 1 – THE DOOR APPEARS

**LO:** To explore and imagine where the door came from and what it might do

#### Activities:

- Dramatic reveal of the door in a mystery location in school
- Explore: Can it open? Where’s the key? What’s it made of?
- Group discussion: share theories about the door
- Creative writing task: “Where did the door come from?”

(Model first to support “lowers”, e.g., “I think the door fell from the sky because...”)

#### **Drama extension:**

- Act out finding the door — reactions, emotions, sounds
- Experiment: try to open it using different actions (jumping, clapping, dancing)

#### **Plenary:**

- Show and tell: Students share one theory or action they used on the door
- Question: “If you could ask the door ONE question, what would it be?”

#### **Homework:**

- Draw the door at home and write 3 describing words
- Ask family: “If you saw this door, would you open it? Why/why not?”

## **WEEK 2 – DESCRIBING THE DOOR**

**LO:** To develop rich descriptive vocabulary through sensory play

### **Activities:**

- Revisit the door. Explore textures, sounds, visuals
- Vocabulary brainstorm: magical, dusty, mysterious, gigantic, leafy, decorated
- Sensory table: students touch different materials (wood, fabric, metal) and compare to the door
- Group storytelling: “What happens when someone opens the door?”

### **Drama extension:**

- Group movement: students become the door with their bodies – creak, slam, slowly open
- Soundscapes: use instruments or body percussion for door sounds

### **Plenary:**

- Vocabulary “showdown”: what’s your favourite word for the door and why?
- Group chant of top describing words

### **Homework**

- Write a list of places a magical door might lead to (real or imaginary)

## **WEEK 3 – SAFE SPACES BEHIND THE DOOR**

**LO:** To imagine and describe a personal safe place using visuals and words

### **Activities:**

- Shared story: Teacher models finding a safe place through the door
- Students draw and label their own safe place
- Discuss: What makes a place feel safe? Does it have people? Food? Sounds? Colours?
- “Lowers” can use sentence starters: “My safe place has...”
- Vocabulary support for “highers”: eerie, glowing, peaceful, crowded

### **Drama extension:**

- Act out travelling through the door into their space
- Explore movements and emotions in that space (e.g., swimming in ocean, bouncing in castle)

### **Plenary:**

- Gallery walk: Students tour drawings and share one thing about their space
- Reflect: “Is your safe place quiet or noisy? Light or dark?”

## **WEEK 4 – COLLECTIVE CREATION OF SAFE SPACES**

**LO:** To work collaboratively and use imagination to build safe environments

### **Activities:**

- In a hall or classroom, provide props: pillows, pans, toys, books, scarves
- In groups, build their imagined spaces using these items
- Prompt: What food and games would happen here?
- Discussion: “Who lives in this space? What happens each day?”

### **Drama extension:**

- Role-play in their safe spaces: cooking games, adventures, tea parties
- Create signature movements or chants for each space

### **Plenary:**

- Walkthrough tour of each space – students explain their creations
- “Guess the game”: other groups guess the game or food in each space

### **Homework:**

- Write a recipe or menu for their safe space (real or imaginary food)
- Bonus: Invent a new game they’d play in that space and draw how it works

## **WEEK 5 – THE DOOR MOVES (MISSING!)**

**LO:** To describe a spooky setting using adjectives and comparison

### **Activities:**

- Discover the door has vanished – dramatic reveal
- Vocabulary brainstorm: haunted, dusty, red-blooded, invisible, creaky
- Create missing posters with descriptions, feelings, and last known location
- Group discussion: “How does the door feel now it’s gone?”

### **Drama extension:**

- Act out searching for the door – scared, excited, confused
- Use music for mood shifts (eerie music, fast beats for tension)

### **Plenary:**

- “Where do YOU think the door is now?” Students share one theory
- Emotion vote: hands up if you feel angry, sad, suspicious, excited

### **Homework:**

- Write a clue for someone to help find the door

## **WEEK 6 – WRITING LETTERS TO THE DOOR**

**LO:** To express emotion and persuasion in letter form

### **Activities:**

- Explore letter writing features – address, greeting, emotions
- Group drama: pretend to call, email, or text the door – what would you say?
- In pairs: persuasive game (e.g., trade a toy using polite language)
- Students write a formal letter to the door, asking it to return  
(Starters: “Dear Door, I miss you because...”, “Please come back because...”)

### **Drama extension:**

- News report role-play: interview the public about the missing door
- Create a “breaking news” report with eyewitnesses and police

### **Plenary:**

- Share letters and discuss: “What offer did you make to get the door back?”
- Reflect: “Was your letter kind, persuasive, or emotional?”

## **WEEK 7 – OH DOOR, OH DOOR (POETRY WEEK 1)**

**LO:** To explore emotions through rhyme and poetic structure

### **Activities:**

- Revisit the missing door: “How do we feel about it now?”
- Emotion hunt: act out happy, angry, surprised, amused, disgusted, sad
- Brainstorm rhyming words for each emotion (e.g., sad–bad, happy–snappy)
- Compose a group chorus: “Oh Door, Oh Door...”
- Students write or dictate two lines about how they feel, ending in a rhyme

### **Drama extension:**

- Emotion freeze frames: move through emotions and say their lines
- Add simple actions or claps with each chorus repeat

### **Plenary:**

- Group poem performance with actions and chorus
- Reflect: “Which emotion did we show best?” “What new word did you learn?”

## **WEEK 8 – POETRY WRITING (FREE VERSE EDITION)**

**LO:** To create free verse poetry expressing feelings about the door

### **Activities:**

- Re-read parts of the poem from last week
  - Introduce free verse – poetry that doesn't rhyme but uses feeling and imagery
  - Students choose favourite lines and rearrange them
  - Compose three-line poems with focus on imagery and emotion
- (Starters: "I miss the door because...", "The door made me feel...")

### **Drama extension:**

- Whisper chain: each student says one line while moving slowly across the room
- Add music for mood and perform their free verse in a circle share

### **Plenary:**

- Emotions thermometer: point to how they feel about the door today
- One "brave share" – one student reads their poem aloud

## **WEEK 9 – COMMUNICATION AND PERSUASION (LETTER WRITING)**

**LO:** To write a letter using persuasive language and emotion

### **Activities:**

- Recap: ways to communicate (text, call, email, letter) – draw icons
- Persuasion game: £1 coin swap – convince your partner to trade
- Role-play: Call the door and persuade it to return (drama pairs)
- Main task: Write a formal letter to the door

Include: how much you miss it, why it should return, a special offer

### **Drama extension:**

- Divide into police, reporters, and storytellers – act out door search and make "news reports"
- Share breaking news bulletins about the missing door

### **Plenary:**

- Letter read-aloud – whose offer was most persuasive?
- Word spotlight: write one persuasive word on a sticky note (please, promise, must, etc.)

## **WEEK 10 – MOVEMENT & EMOTION GAMES**

**LO:** To express emotions through movement and cooperative play

### **Activities:**

- Step through the line: tired vs energetic, happy vs sad, scared vs confident
- Compliment circle: in pairs, share a compliment (students naturally say “thank you”)
- Object description game: describe toys using beanbags – 2 words for higher, 1 for lower
- Parachute game: move fast/slow based on emotion words

### **Drama extension:**

- Object “in the middle” game – throw beanbags to describe the object
- Partner mirroring: follow each other’s movements

### **Plenary:**

- What emotion did you enjoy showing most today?
- Movement vote: jump, clap, or wiggle to show how you felt today

## **WEEK 11 – CLUE GAMES AND DRAMA PUZZLES**

**LO:** To describe and act out clues using imagination and teamwork

### **Activities:**

- Clue writing: “I am straight and love lines” = ruler
- I Spy riddle game around class: e.g., coat, bin, bag, gluestick
- Go fetch game: find an object that matches a clue
- Drama: wink murder, trust games, follow the leader
- Group task: draw the door using clues only – partner guesses what it looks like

### **Drama extension:**

- Treasure hunt clues: students create clues for hidden door locations
- Perform clue skits: act out “finding” the door using movement and speech

### **Plenary:**

- “What clue would YOU leave if the door was hiding?”
- Guessing game: match the clue to the object

### **Homework:**

- Create 3 clues about something in your room and get your family to guess what it is

## WEEK 12 – MAP MAKING AND FINAL EXPLORATION

**LO:** To create and describe an imaginative world using maps and names

### **Activities:**

- Visit local park or playground
- Draw a map of the area – mark key places
- Create new fantasy lands through the park

Example names:

- The Footpath of Dirty Trolls
- The Ramp of Pixie Tears
- The Mud Bath of Dagenham Park
- The Garden of Hidden Balloons
- Students name places and design symbols

### **Drama extension:**

- Act out travelling the map – obstacles, weather, animals
- Create group stories using 3 map places and drama scenes

### **Plenary:**

- Map show-and-tell: “What’s your favourite place and why?”
- Closing circle: “If the door returns, where should it go next?”

# ESSAY: ARE YOU A GOOD STORYTELLER

Bad storytelling. We've all heard it. We've all suffered through it.

"Anne has 5 sweets. She needs to share them with 3 of her friends."

Right. And? Why am I here? Why should I care about Anne, her sweets, or these mysterious friends who seem to appear solely for snack distribution? There's no tension, no intrigue, no reason for anyone to stay awake past that first sentence. Yet how many times do we see this exact kind of storytelling slip into our classrooms? Into our staff meetings? Into our schemes of work?

Let's be honest. Bad storytelling is not just boring. It's ineffective. It loses the room. It loses the point. Whether you're teaching a lesson, writing a scheme, leading a training session, or just trying to explain what happened on break duty – how you tell the story matters.

So why does "Anne and the Sweets" fail so miserably?

1.No Hook.

2. A good story needs to grab us. There's no spark here. No reason for our ears to perk up. Anne is not interesting. Her sweets are not special. Her friends are nameless extras in a plot that feels like it was scribbled on the back of a worksheet. Where is the mystery? The twist? The reason to care?

3.No Stakes.

4. What happens if Anne doesn't share the sweets? Is there a friendship-ending fallout? Are they in a classroom where sweets are banned? Are the sweets the last thing keeping the group together after a dramatic fallout in the lunch hall? We don't know. And without stakes, there's no tension. No tension? No story.

5.No Voice.

6. This story has no personality. It's cold. Mechanical. A soulless maths problem in disguise. As teachers, we know that voice brings a story to life. Voice creates connection. This story? Monotone. Lifeless. The literary version of beige.

So what makes a good storyteller?

1.Make us care.

2. About the character. About the problem. About the why behind it all. If we don't care, we won't listen.

3.Create conflict.

4. No conflict, no story. Something needs to be at stake. Something needs to go wrong. Or at least feel like it might.
5. Start strong.
6. Hook us from the first sentence. Start with a question, a moment of tension, or a surprise. Start with something real.
7. Use detail with purpose.
8. Not just “sweets”. What kind of sweets? Who wants them most? Who’s being left out? Add flavour. Make it specific.
9. Let your voice come through.
10. Your voice as a teacher. A storyteller. A human. Be warm. Be sharp. Be clear. Be you.

Final thought.

Storytelling is not just for novelists or drama teachers. It’s for all teachers. Every lesson is a story. Every explanation. Every example. You are always telling a story. The question is – is it a good one?

So. Are you a good storyteller? Or are you still sharing sweets with Anne?

# THE FOOD PROJECT

By Lasana Shabazz and Gail Egbeson

**Year Group:** KS1

**Length:** 6 Weeks

**Focus:** To explore the origins, preparation, and emotional impact of food through sensory learning, role play, and practical drama activities. Pupils will engage with food in imaginative and creative ways, developing emotional literacy, teamwork, and understanding of the world around them.

## WEEK 1: MILK – FROM MOO TO YOU

**Learning Objective:** To explore the journey of milk from farm to table and represent milk-based foods through movement and still images

### **Resources Needed:**

Access to YouTube and projector

A3 paper and pens (for optional freeze frame labels)

Space for movement and group work

**Visual Aid:** YouTube – “Magnificent Milk: from farm to you” (2:33)

### **Teaching Notes:**

Milk arrives in 28,000-litre tankers

Heated to 72°C for 15 seconds

Spun 4000 times per minute to separate cream

Types of milk:

Whole = all cream

Semi-Skimmed = some cream

Skimmed = no cream



### **Class Activities:**

Discuss foods made with milk and emotions linked to them

Students embody milk (movement, sound, posture)

Create freeze frames of milk-based foods

## WEEK 2: EGGS – CRACKING THE MYSTERY

**Learning Objective:** To understand how eggs are formed and creatively explore the emotions associated with different egg dishes.

### **Resources Needed:**

Drawing paper and colouring materials

Access to YouTube and projector

Space for group performance

**Visual Aid:** YouTube – “Excellent Eggs: What is an egg?” (2:27)

### **Teaching Notes:**

Eggs come from chickens and birds like quail, duck, ostrich

Egg sizes depend on hen's age; colours vary

Takes 25 hours to form an egg, 21 hours for shell

Shell made from calcium carbonate

One hen can lay 300 eggs per year

### **Class Activities:**

Discuss favourite egg dishes

Draw “emotional eggs” – using colours and shapes

Group drama: unloved egg dish (e.g. scrambled egg with no fans)





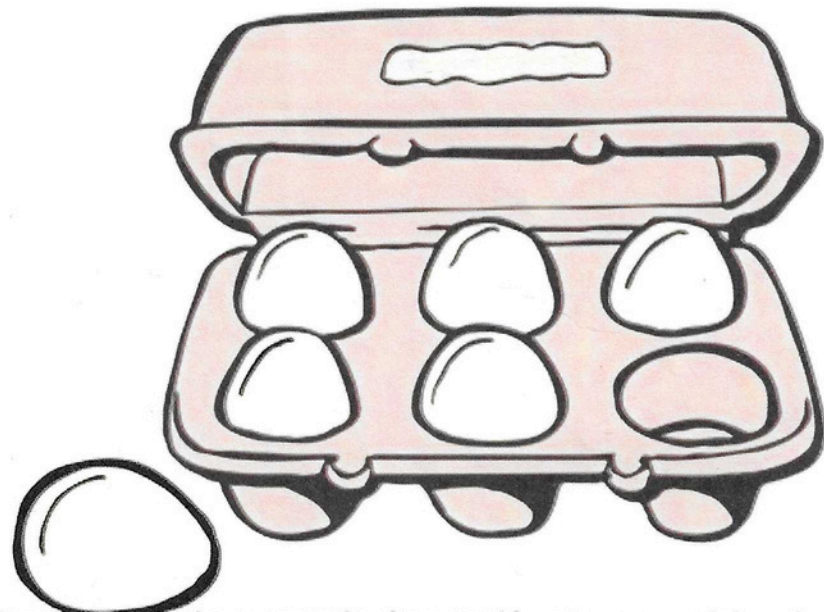
# EGGS

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

- BENEDICT
- CHICKEN
- DEILED
- DOZEN
- EASY
- EAT
- FRY
- JUMBO
- LARGE
- PICKLED
- POACHED
- SALAD
- SANDWICH
- SAUSAGE
- SCRAMBLED
- SIX
- SMALL
- TOAST
- WHITE

L	E	N	E	K	C	I	H	C
J	L	D	A	L	A	S	S	E
T	U	A	X	I	S	A	C	G
C	A	M	M	G	U	N	R	R
I	D	E	B	S	G	D	A	A
D	O	E	A	O	E	W	M	L
E	Z	G	V	H	H	I	B	T
N	E	S	C	I	F	C	L	S
E	N	A	T	R	L	H	E	A
B	O	E	Y	S	A	E	D	O
P	I	C	K	L	E	D	D	T

The words appear UP, DOWN, BACKWARDS, and DIAGONALLY.  
Find and circle each word.



## WEEK 3: FLOUR – ANCIENT GRAINS TO FRESH BREAD

**Learning Objective:** To understand how flour is made and explore foods created using flour through sensory drama.

### **Resources Needed:**

Access to YouTube and projector

Discussion chart or whiteboard

Optional: Small samples of flour foods for sensory reference (e.g. cold bread, warm biscuits)

**Visual Aid:** YouTube – “Baked Bread: how flour is made” (2:48)

### **Teaching Notes:**

Flour made for 6000+ years

Made from wheat grain, harvested in August

Processing stages: Sampled, Cleaned, Gristed, Milled, Tested

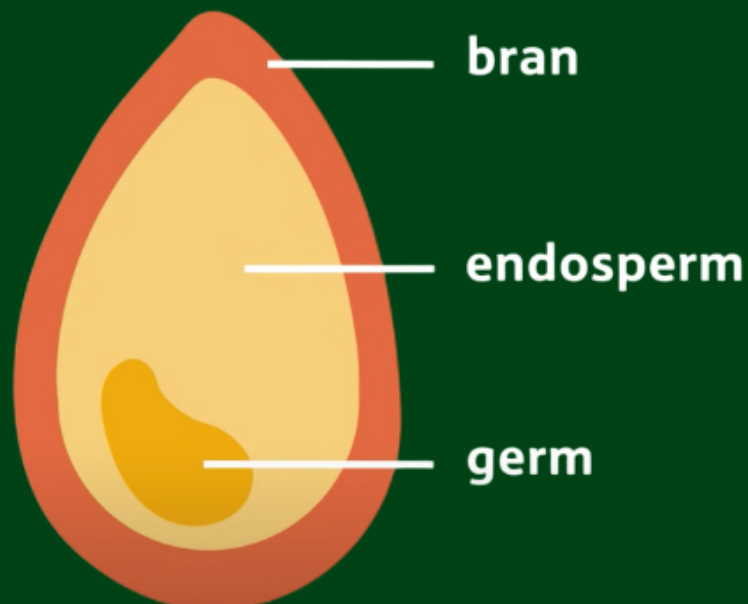
Milled with a Plansifter

### **Class Activities:**

Share favourite flour-based recipes

Group challenge: list dishes using 2+ ingredients studied

Sensory drama: eating flour foods hot vs cold



## WEEK 4: TYPES OF DIETS

**Learning Objective:** To explore different dietary choices and food alternatives, and reflect on their emotional impact.

### **Resources Needed:**

Milk alternatives (almond, oat, soya, etc.) in small cups

Access to visuals/slideshow or printed food images

Napkins, tasting spoons, bin or waste bag

Reflection sheet (optional)

**Visual Aid:** Visual support recommended – e.g., food images/slideshow

### **Teaching Notes:**

Diet Types: Vegan, Vegetarian, Pescatarian, Flexitarian, Meat Eater

Food Laws: Kosher, Halal, Haram

Alternatives:

Egg: Apple sauce, tofu, chia

Milk: Almond, oat, coconut

Flour: Rye, chickpea, cassava

### **Class Activities:**

Discuss dietary choices and emotions they evoke

Reflect on personal food experiences

Taste test: compare milk alternatives, share preferences



TOFU



FLAX SEED



SOY MILK



RICE MILK

## WEEK 5: FOOD ALLERGIES & INTOLERANCES

**Learning Objective:** To understand common food allergies and intolerances and reflect on the emotional impact of dietary restrictions.

### **Resources Needed:**

Poster paper, markers, stickers  
Scenario cards or meal planning sheet  
Access to printer (optional allergy info sheets)

**Visual Aid:** Optional – child-friendly allergy video or make posters in class

### **Teaching Notes:**

Food Allergy = immune reaction (eggs, milk, peanuts, etc.)

Intolerance = digestion issue (lactose, gluten, caffeine)

Lactose = milk sugar; Gluten = wheat protein; Caffeine = tea/coffee/chocolate

### **Class Activities:**

Create allergy awareness posters  
Plan a safe meal for someone with allergies



## WEEK 6: MAKING PASTA DOUGH

**Learning Objective:** To experience making pasta dough and explore food through tactile and sensory play.

### **Resources Needed:**

Flour (enough for all groups)  
Eggs (plus spares)  
Mixing bowls, spoons  
Rolling pin (shared)  
Table covers (paper/newspaper)  
Wet wipes/handwashing area

**Visual Aid:** Live demo or simple video showing dough making

### **Teaching Notes:**

Dough Steps: Flour hole → Crack egg → Mix → Roll  
Hands-on session focused on sensory experience

### **Class Activities:**

Make pasta dough in groups  
Reflect on sensory aspects: touch, smell, sight

Step 1: Make a hole in the flour



Step 2: Break an egg into the hole



Step 3: Mix the egg and flour all together



Step 4: Roll the mixture into a ball



## WEEK 7: CUTTING & COLOURING PASTA

**Learning Objective:** To cut and shape coloured pasta dough using creativity and fine motor skills.

### **Resources Needed:**

Pizza dough (prepped ahead)  
Red and green food colouring  
Extra flour for kneading surface  
Spatulas for each student  
Table covers  
Rolling pin (used by adult)

**Visual Aid:** Live demo of cutting and colouring techniques

### **Teaching Notes:**

Use pre-prepared pizza dough dyed red/green  
Students cut pasta into fun shapes – “rose pasta,” “apple pasta”  
Maintain illusion: pretend it’s their dough from last week

### **Class Activities:**

Cut coloured dough into shapes (guided and freestyle)  
Share and describe pasta designs



## WEEK 8: THE GREAT PASTA TASTE TEST

**Learning Objective:** To explore food preferences through sensory tasting and express opinions with confidence.

### Resources Needed:

Pre-cooked: Fusilli, Red Lentil Pasta, Spinach Pasta  
Disposable plates, forks/spoons  
Rating cards  
Cooking access or pre-cooked samples  
Napkins, waste bag

**Visual Aid:** Live tasting session – no video required

### Teaching Notes:

Taste: Fusilli, Red Lentil Pasta, Spinach Pasta  
Tasting guided with rating cards  
Encourage students to articulate taste, texture, and preference

### Class Activities:

Taste each pasta type  
Use rating cards (1–10)  
Class discussion and voting: best/worst pasta



## RATING CARD TEMPLATE

Rate Fusilli out of 10

Rate Spinach Farfalle out of 10

Rate Red Lentil Fusilli out of 10

Circle the pasta you liked the best:

A. Fusilli

B. Spinach Farfalle

C. Red Lentil Fusilli

Circle the pasta you hated the most:

A. Fusilli

B. Spinach Farfalle

C. Red Lentil Fusilli

# ESSAY: WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?

Here's a cheerful thought for your lunchtime sandwich. Will you be remembered? Not in a tragic, Shakespearean "Et tu, Brute?" sort of way. I mean as a teacher. As a person. As someone who passed through a school and left more than a fading label on a plastic drawer.

Because let's be honest. Schools are busy places. Loud. Chaotic. People come and go. Posters fade. The laminator breaks. Someone eats your yoghurt from the fridge. It's easy to feel like you're just part of the machine. A cog in the timetable. Deliver the lesson. Mark the books. Go home. Repeat. Forever.

But here's the question. Will you be remembered? And if so... for what?

Let's look at the options.

1. The Strict One.
2. Oh yes. The teacher who didn't play. The one who could silence a class with just a raised eyebrow. Feared. Respected. Or was it... just feared?
3. The Fun One.
4. Loud. Energetic. Slightly chaotic. Lessons may or may not have followed the scheme of work, but by golly the kids loved it. Whether they learned anything is still under investigation.
5. The Missing One.
6. No one's quite sure if they were part-time, cover, or on a mysterious secondment. But they floated through the corridors like a legend. Occasionally spotted. Never forgotten.
7. The Memorable One.
8. The teacher who made something stick. A phrase. A lesson. A moment. Not because they were loud or strict or mysterious – but because they connected. They saw the student. They made them feel seen.

So which are you? And do you even get to choose?

Here's the truth. You will be remembered for moments. Not for your marking. Not for your displays. Not for your seating plans or your perfectly colour-coded spreadsheets. You'll be remembered for the time you listened. The time you laughed. The time you showed up when someone didn't expect you to.

You'll be remembered when you were human.  
So what now?

No, you don't need to put on a show. You don't need to be that teacher from the inspirational film who changes lives with a single monologue in slow motion. But you do need to ask yourself – what am I leaving behind?

A classroom culture. A feeling. A memory. A sense that you mattered. That you didn't just pass through the building unnoticed, like an OFSTED inspector trying to sneak out early.

Final thought.

Will you be remembered? Yes. The real question is – for what?

And before you say “for my brilliant emails” or “for my perfectly labelled glue sticks” – think again. You'll be remembered for who you were in the small moments.

# SPEECH WRITING SCHEME

## By Ministry of Stories

**Year Group:** KS2 (ideal for Year 5 or 6)

**Length:** 6 Weeks

**Focus:** Empowering students to find their voice through imaginative, courageous speech writing in a safe, respectful environment.

### Resources Needed

- Sticky notes
- Room signs (0, 5, 10) for opinion exercises
- Speech planning sheets
- Clips: MLK, Greta Thunberg, Malala, etc.

## WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

### WEEK 1: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY?

**LO:** Discover topics students feel passionate about and create a safe space for sharing ideas.

**Starter:** What makes a good speech? Show a clip of Martin Luther King (“I Have a Dream”) or Greta Thunberg.

#### **Main:**

- Group brainstorm: What do you really care about?
- “I believe...” sentence starters – silly to serious (e.g. “I believe everyone should get free cake...” to “I believe kindness matters”)
- Sticky Note Rule: Each student has 2 sticky notes. They “spend” one each time they speak. Ensures everyone takes part.

**Plenary:** Discuss: How did it feel to share your ideas? Was it scary or fun?

**Homework/Extension:** Write down 3 things you wish grown-ups listened to more.

## **WEEK 2: OPINION GYM – BUILDING SPEAKING CONFIDENCE**

**LO:** Express and defend opinions in a respectful way.

**Starter:** Opinion Lines – Room split into zones: 0, 5, 10.

- Pose questions: “Homework is pointless”, “Pets are better than people.”
- Rule: You can’t stand on 5 or 10 – you must choose where you stand in between.
- Try rephrasing the questions to see if students move.

**Main:**

- Discuss why students stood where they did. Encourage sentence starters: “I believe...”, “Some people might say...”

**Plenary:** What makes a speech respectful?

**Homework/Extension:** Interview someone at home about one belief they hold and why.

## **WEEK 3: EMBARRASSMENT IS LEARNT – LET’S UNLEARN IT**

**LO:** Build a classroom culture where mistakes are safe.

**Starter:** Mini-Drama Sketch: Act out “Hiding the Rubber” scene – discuss why students hide mistakes.

**Main:**

- Group discussion: Have you ever felt embarrassed to speak up? Why?
- Write “Permission Slips” to yourself: “I give myself permission to make mistakes because...”
- Share stories of people who failed first, then succeeded (J.K. Rowling, Thomas Edison, etc.)

**Plenary:** Let’s make mistakes together – silly word challenges or tongue twisters.

**Homework/Extension:** Write about a time you were embarrassed – and what you learnt from it.

## **WEEK 4: SPEECH STRUCTURE MADE SIMPLE**

**LO:** Plan a mini speech using a simple, empowering structure.

**Structure:**

1. “I believe that...”
2. 3 things that aren’t obvious (e.g. not “football is fun” but “football teaches teamwork”)
3. One fact/story only you can tell

**Starter:** Model a speech using this format (can be silly or serious).

**Main:** Students pick one topic they care about and plan their speech using this structure.

**Plenary:** Pair-share your first sentence – give warm feedback.

**Homework/Extension:** Find a speech or video clip you like. Why do you remember it?

## **WEEK 5: CHALLENGE TIME – COUNTER ARGUMENTS AND CONFIDENCE**

**LO:** Introduce the idea of respectful disagreement.

**Starter:** Game – “You may not agree because...”

- Students make a statement, others respond with “You may not agree because...”
- Discuss: Does disagreement make you feel nervous? Why?

**Main:**

- Add counter-arguments to their speech plans: What might someone say against your belief?
- How can we respond with respect and confidence?

**Plenary:** Build confidence – small group practice of speech introductions.

**Homework/Extension:** Ask someone at home to play “You may not agree because...” and respond calmly.

## **WEEK 6: SPEAK IT OUT – EMPOWERED SPEECH PERFORMANCE**

**LO:** Perform speeches to the class with confidence.

**Starter:** “Power Pose” Game – how we use our body and voice to show confidence.

**Main:**

- Speech sharing in small groups or whole class.
- Audience feedback: What did they believe? What stood out?

**Plenary:** Reflect: How did it feel to share your voice? What would you tell your Year 5 self about embarrassment now?

**Extension:** Create a class “speech wall” – quotes, photos, and topics from everyone’s speeches.

## **OPTIONAL LINK: ALMEIDA YOUNG LEADERS / REAL-WORLD INSPIRATION**

- Watch clips from young leaders’ speeches.
- Discuss: Why are some speeches memorable? What do they believe in?
- Challenge: What change do YOU want to make?

# ESSAY: DIVERSITY IN CREATIVE WRITING

Diversity in creative writing is often treated like an optional spice rack — something we reach for when we want to “add flavour,” rather than a foundational ingredient in how we nurture young voices. But in a world where stories are everywhere. From books and telly to TikTok and that oddly emotional voiceover on a supermarket ad he types of stories we tell, who gets to tell them, and how we respond to them in schools matters more than ever.

Let’s be real. If I had a pound for every time a child’s story started with “Once upon a time...” and ended with “they lived happily ever after,” I’d have enough for a new beanbag for the reading corner (and maybe a flat white). But the problem isn’t just predictability — it’s the invisible boundaries around whose stories get told, whose voices are heard, and what we allow in our classrooms as “good writing.”

## Who Gets to Be the Hero?

Take a look at most storybooks on a typical KS1 or KS2 shelf. How often is the main character Black? Disabled? From a working-class background? Neurodivergent? Now ask yourself: How often do we encourage our students to write heroes who look or sound like themselves, or like their community?

Children are hyper-aware of what’s “normal” in stories; the princess lives in a castle, the superhero wears a cape, the grand adventure takes place in a faraway kingdom with dragons and knights who never use public transport. When we fail to question these defaults, we send an unspoken message: some stories are worth telling more than others.

By actively encouraging diversity in characters, settings, and themes, we open the door (not that magical classroom one we keep moving) to representation, empathy, and creative freedom.

## Language and Identity

Another biggie: language. Many students speak more than one language at home, or use different dialects and slang in different settings. Yet in school writing, we often push for “proper English” as if that’s the only valid voice.

Creative writing offers a golden opportunity for students to write in their own voice — the way they think, feel, and speak. One Year 4 student wrote dialogue entirely in Nigerian Pidgin, and not only was it hilarious and sharp, but it authentically reflected his world. Did it “tick a grammar box”? Maybe not. Did it spark the kind of buzz and pride that leads to a lifelong love of writing? Absolutely.

### Diverse Formats, Diverse Thinking

Diversity isn’t just about who or what is written it’s about how it’s written. One child might write a poem; another, a rap or comic strip. Some kids might never write more than a sentence but act out entire sagas with plastic dinosaurs or cardboard props. It’s all storytelling.

Creative writing doesn’t have to be linear, formal, or polished. Encouraging diverse formats means giving all learners including SEND students and EAL learners — a way in. It’s not about lowering expectations, but broadening the routes to success.

### Breaking the “Right and Wrong” Mentality

Let’s not forget the minute writing becomes about getting it “right,” many children opt out creatively. They become obsessed with spelling “beautiful” correctly instead of writing something meaningful. But in diverse creative writing, we shift the focus from correctness to expression.

As educators, it’s our job to say: Your story matters. Your voice matters. Even if it doesn’t sound like everyone else’s. That empowerment, especially for students who often feel “othered” or unheard, can be life-changing.

### Final Thoughts

Diversity in creative writing isn’t a box-ticking exercise. It’s a call to action. To disrupt the norms, amplify different voices, and create space for stories that challenge, comfort, and connect.

Because when a child writes a poem about their grandma’s cooking, or a story about a hero who lives in a council flat, or a comic strip about a penguin with anxiety, they’re not just writing. They’re saying, I exist. My world matters. Listen.

And isn’t that what all great writing and great teaching is about?

# STORIES FROM US PROJECT

By Paula David and Selina Brown

## LESSON 1

**Objective:** To give a cultural context to the project

- Introduces students to a cultural history using powerpoint.
- Children discuss their family backgrounds and changes in their family histories.

**Homework:** Ask students to interview their family members on their cultural heritage

## LESSON 2

**Objective:** To give children a sense of self, empathy with others, how change happens, the emotional effects of making change.

- Children bring in their homework – interviews they have conducted with family members.
- We work on interview skills for further work at home.
- Common themes are drawn out from the research – e.g. belonging, travelling, comparison of life ‘there’ and ‘the new country/England’ – shops, weather etc.

## LESSON 3

- Begin to draw more on the themes.
- Where could our story take place?
- Use discussion to create a location.
- Begin to think about characters – who would be in this place?
- How would the people we populate our places with help the themes of our story? (E.g. farmers having to leave, a family discussing opportunities abroad)
- Work with character templates – name, family relationship, age, gender, job, hopes, challenges.

## LESSON 4

- Begin to use mime and music to establish characters in their location – this builds confidence and makes their actions ‘overt’ – children learn that drama is direct communication with a ‘mute’ audience.

## LESSON 5

Develop characters and actions in their setting, use stage conventions

## LESSON 6

- Begin to bring dialogue into our scenes.
- Making your drama meaningful and ‘from our character’, now that we have established and spent time with our characters, the children are more successful.

# STORIES OF HERITAGE

**By Amanda Holiday and Paul Andrew**

## **REPRESENTATIVE:**

### **The Enchantress of the Singing Sands by Jamila Gavin**

This folktale shows a one parent, black family from Africa with a strong message that we should not talk to strangers).

## **Objectives:**

To retell a folktale using special language.

## **Introduction:**

Children to be given background information about Botswana.

## **Hook:**

Story Square activity. Read the story to the children and they act out the scene.

(USING ARTS AND CREATIVITY- the children use drama to bring the text to life.

ACCESSIBILITY- all children are involved, they take on the roles of the characters and scenery e.g. somebody can even be the acacia tree.)

## **Shared work:**

share the special vocabulary used in the story e.g. begone, enchantress, herdsman, For a moment. The children provide a retelling orally with a partner, trying to use as many of the special words as possible. Model using the language in a shared writing task so the children know what to expect. (DEVELOPING LITERACY AND LANGUAGE SKILLS- children to widen their vocabulary and know the steps to success when writing a folktale)

## **Individual work:**

To retell the folktale that they have just heard and acted out. The next session they can be more creative as they will have the same characters and plot but the setting will change.

## **Plenary:**

Time to ABC edit for improvements (add in features, better words, check punctuation) using a different coloured pen.

# COMEDY WRITING SCHEME

## By Ministry of Stories

**Year Group:** KS2

**Duration:** 6–8 weeks

**Key Focus:** Creating and sustaining original comedy through character development, conflict, and comedic structure

### Resources:

- Lined paper
- Comic strip templates
- Clipboards or mini whiteboards for quick writing/drawing tasks
- Markers, coloured pencils, felt tips
- Sticky notes for quick ideas, one-liners, and joke prompts
- Word bank sheets (puns, silly words, sound effects)

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO COMIC CHARACTERS

**LO:** Develop a comic character from a given prompt using exaggeration, physicality, and faults.

#### Activities:

- Warm-up: Exaggeration relay – students act out “Overeager hairdresser” and “Bossy student” in 10 seconds.
- Character selection: Choose a character from the provided list OR invent a new one using random prompts.
- Exploration: Physicality, voice, and gestures – how does this character move and speak?
- Worksheet: Fill in Who is your character, Faults, What do they want, Why can’t they get it?

**Plenary:** Introduce internal drive – what’s pushing this character forward? Are they aware of their own flaws?

**Homework:** Watch an episode of Mr Bean or a clip from Only Fools and Horses and note the character’s faults and wants.

## WEEK 2: SUSTAINING THE JOKE – CONFLICT AND CHARACTER DEPTH

**LO:** Explore how flaws and internal drive lead to conflict and comedy.

### **Activities:**

- Recap: Present characters to the class in 30-second “speed date” introductions.
- Task: In pairs, explore leader/conflict dynamic (e.g. bossy vs lazy, chatty vs forgetful).
- Introduce structure:
- Setting
- Intention
- Problem
- New intention
- New problem
- Payoff

**Workshop:** Short improv using character intentions and everything that can go wrong.

**Plenary:** Discuss backstories vs active conflict – why comedy doesn’t always need history, just immediate tension.

**Homework:** Write a 5-point bullet list of all the things that can go wrong for your character.

## **WEEK 3: PIXAR'S STRUCTURE IN COMEDY WRITING**

**LO:** Apply Pixar's narrative structure to shape a sketch.

### **Pixar's Story Structure Simplified:**

1. Once upon a time...
2. Every day...
3. Until one day...
4. Because of that...
5. Because of that...
6. Until finally...

### **Activities:**

- Apply this structure to Bossy Therapist (example sketch)
- In groups, plan a scene using structure above for their own character.
- Emphasise cause/effect and escalating problems.
- Whole-class feedback – “does your structure escalate the comedy?”

**Plenary:** Reflect – where's the payoff? What will make the ending satisfying?

**Homework:** Draft your group's full Pixar-style scene plan.

## **WEEK 4: SCENE DEVELOPMENT – BLOCKING AND TIMING**

**LO:** Block a comedy scene with attention to timing, rhythm, and physical comedy.

### **Activities:**

- Warm-up: “Freeze frame disasters” – improvise scenes that freeze at the moment everything goes wrong.
- Blocking workshop: Start rehearsing scenes with clear setting, intention, and conflict.
- Emphasise: Pause, reaction shots, repetition – timing is everything.

**Plenary:** Peer feedback – what landed? What dragged?

**Homework:** Bring a prop or costume piece that reflects your character (exaggerated or symbolic).

## **WEEK 5: REFINING THE COMEDY – FEEDBACK AND REVISION**

**LO:** Refine scenes through peer feedback and performance evaluation.

### **Activities:**

- Dress rehearsal runs.
- Peer observation: Tick sheets focusing on character clarity, escalation of problems, and payoff.
- Teacher feedback: Are jokes sustained, not repeated? Does the character change or remain gloriously the same?

**Plenary:** Write one sentence – “My character is funniest when...”

**Homework:** Polish your performance – lines, blocking, timing.

## **WEEK 6: PERFORMANCE WEEK – SHARING COMEDY SKETCHES**

**LO:** Perform and evaluate original comedy sketches.

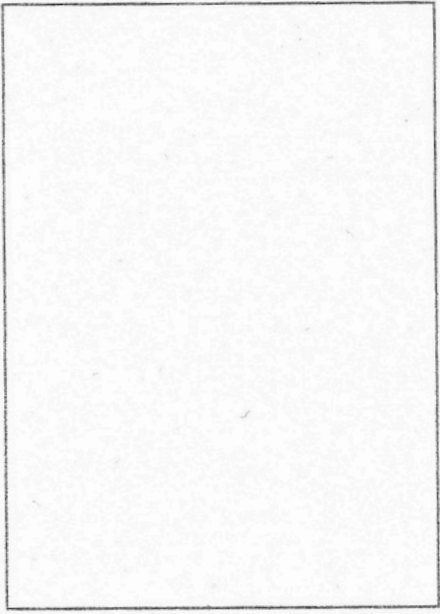
### **Activities:**

- Perform scenes to the class or wider audience.
- Feedback focus: Audience reaction, character depth, structural clarity.
- Optional filmed performance for reflection.

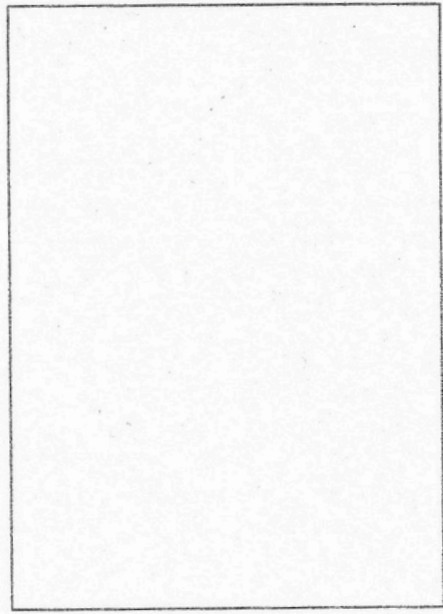
**Plenary:** Reflect – “How did we create comedy that lasts?”

**Homework:** Written reflection – What worked well in your performance? What would you change?

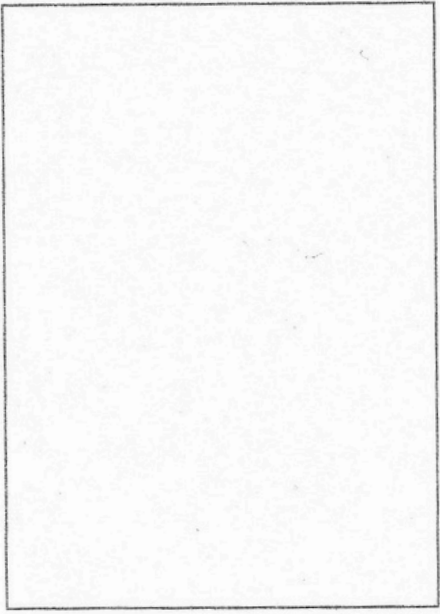
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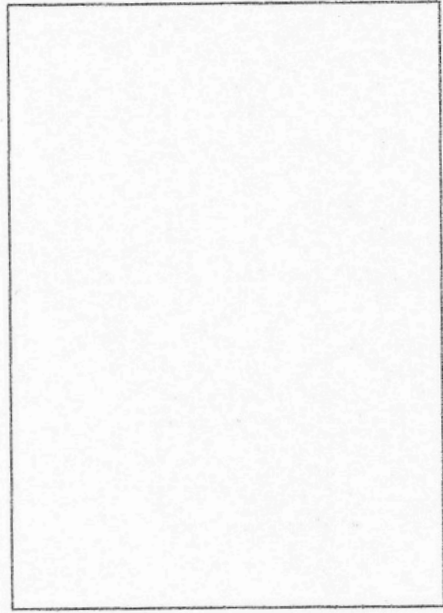
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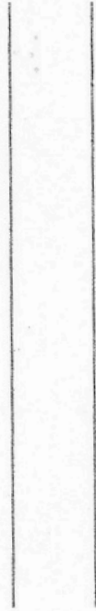
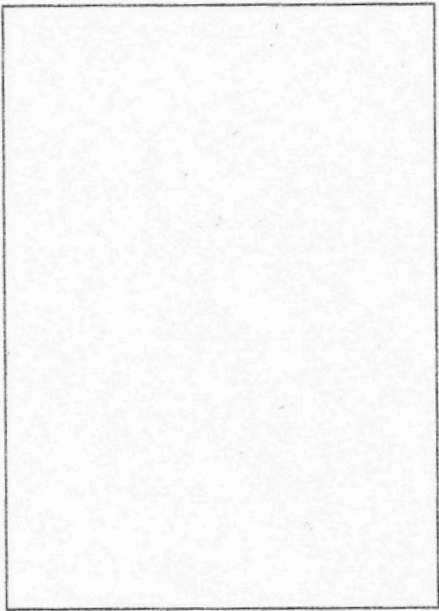
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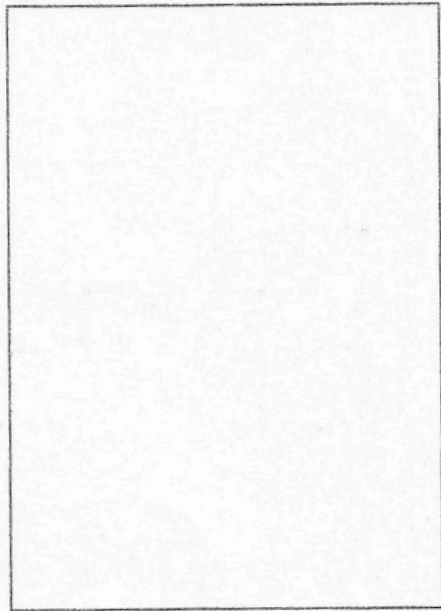
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# POERTY WRITING SCHEME

By Gail Egbeson

**Year Group:** KS2

**Length:** 6–8 weeks

**Theme:** Hear Me Now

**Focus:** Exploring self-expression through poetry, building confidence in writing and performing original poems.

## Resources Needed

- Sticky notes
- A3 paper for spidergrams
- Coloured pens
- Poetry examples (printed or digital)
- Access to videos for performance study

## WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

### WEEK 1: WHAT IS POETRY? FINDING OUR VOICES

**LO:** Understand what poetry is and start exploring personal voice.

#### Activities:

1. What is a poem?

Discuss with students:

- It's saying something interesting in a small space.
- It uses imaginative language, rhythm, and sometimes rhyme.
- It's a way to share feelings and free your mind.

2. Read/Perform 1–2 Poems (Choose diverse, engaging examples: fun vs serious).

Let students vote for their favourite one and explain why.

3. Spidergram: What makes a poem engaging or memorable?

Write "POETRY" on the board. Gather ideas: rhythm, emotion, strong images, rhyme, humour, etc.

4. Theme Discussion: Introduce "Hear My Voice". What does it mean? Why is it important to be heard?

5. Stand Up If... Game

• Statements:

"I have a gentle voice", "soft voice", "strong voice", "funny voice", "serious voice"

- Stand up, switch places with someone who stood too.

6. Group Formation

Group children based on similar voice traits. Note names carefully! – some will try to swap groups

## WEEK 2: WRITING FROM EXPERIENCE – OUR THOUGHTS MATTER

**LO:** Write honest, personal thoughts as poetic material.

### **Activities:**

1. In groups, hand out individual papers. Read these prompts slowly – pause after each one:

- One thing that bothers you
- One thing you're proud of
- Two things you are thankful for
- Two things you hate
- Three things you notice around you
- One question you'd ask the world
- One thing you'd change if you ruled the world

(After each prompt, do a recall to keep them focused.)

2. Spidergram – Emotions and Voice

On a new sheet, explore:

- What are things that are important to you?
- How does it feel when your voice isn't heard?
- How does it feel when someone does hear you?

## WEEK 3: BUILDING POETIC LINES – PRACTICE 1 & 2

**LO:** Create poetic lines using structured outlines.

### **Activities:**

1. Outline Practice 1

In groups, fill in:

- I want to tell you \_\_\_\_\_
- My voice is \_\_\_\_\_
- Repeat 3x each
- Final line: “But you won't listen” / “And you will listen”

2. Outline Practice 2

- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ (x3) + own ending
- Will you listen if I \_\_\_\_\_ (x3) + own ending
- When will you \_\_\_\_\_ (x3) + own ending

## **WEEK 4: FIRST DRAFT – COMBINE AND CREATE A POEM**

**LO:** Write a first poem draft using lines from the outlines.

### **Activities:**

#### 1. Create a First Draft

- Take lines from outline tasks.
- Mix and match 2 or 3 outline types.
- Aim for no more than 12 lines.

#### 2. Finish this sentence:

“Our poem is about \_\_\_\_\_ and it should make you feel \_\_\_\_\_.”

## **WEEK 5: REWRITING AND REFINING – WORDS HAVE POWER**

**LO:** Understand that writing is rewriting – develop poetic skills.

### **Activities:**

#### 1. Mini-Lesson: Show Rewriting in Action

- Use your own example poem using the same outline.
- Ask students to suggest better words, swap word order, or add rhyme.

#### 2. Rewriting Task

- Students revise their own poem using different coloured pen.
- Encourage: “What can I say differently or more clearly?”

#### 3. Final Drafts

- Rewrite two neat copies:
  1. Standard copy (for teacher)
  2. Performance copy (for practising delivery)

## **WEEK 6: PERFORMANCE SKILLS – SHARING OUR VOICE**

LO: Learn performance techniques and prepare to perform.

### **Activities:**

1. Watch Poetry Performances (same-age examples)

- [https://youtu.be/OYN\\_zDUYP1Y?si=QXbRKi\\_omPj7Vjo6](https://youtu.be/OYN_zDUYP1Y?si=QXbRKi_omPj7Vjo6)
- <https://youtu.be/-G71wM4F7ak?si=aSuiOwl-hus79aaA>
- Discuss: How do they use voice, gesture, eye contact?

2. Performance Planning

- In pairs/groups: How will you perform your poem?
- Plan use of volume, pace, gesture, space, rhythm.

3. Rehearse and Share

- Perform to the class with peer feedback (2 stars and a wish style).
- Teacher can film performances for final sharing.

## **WEEK 7/8 (OPTIONAL): POLISHED PERFORMANCE**

LO: Rehearse and refine for a class showcase or assembly.

### **Extension Options:**

- Create a class poetry book or poetry wall.
- Invite parents or other classes for a performance day.

# CHARCOAL / MARK MAKING COLLAGE

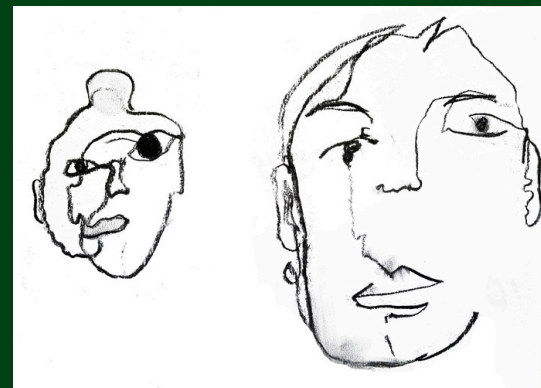
by Mary Martin and Meera Osborne

## Prep before session

Print edited Frozen North pages in to sugar paper-  
12 pages per table (6 tables in total) A4 = 72 + 10 spares = 82 pages

## Resources needed:

Charcoal and pencil  
Rubbers  
sugar paper  
HAIRSPRAY/fixer for the charcoal  
Photocopied pages from Race to the Frozen North  
Pritt Stick  
Paper  
Scissors



## Success Criteria

1. I can experiment with charcoal to create different textures and effects
2. I can express the meaning of words and phrases in an abstract way using an appropriate charcoal technique

## Introduction video to Matthew Hensen

[Matthew Henson's historic expedition to the North Pole | The Kid Should See This 00-1min](#)

Charcoal presentation

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BOr-gjW3Z2WTZvMFXNGAuMljE8IHze-xh2ygIVCP408/edit?usp=sharing> William Kentridge - 2nd hand reading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEfUjg5viGk>

## **Session themes**

Charcoal and pencil drawing on sugar paper. The rubber drawing.

Translation of words to images

Playing with the format of the book.

## **Activity**

Children choose as many words as they want from *Race of the Frozen North* to draw images directly onto the photocopied pages of the book. Use these words to inspire the children's imagination for their drawings.

## **Reflection**

Children present their drawings and explain how the words relate to their images.

GREEN HAT (creativity): Explain yourself: Which word has inspired your imagination, and how has this made you create these images?

Class teacher to scan all the work – turn into stop motion if time permits.

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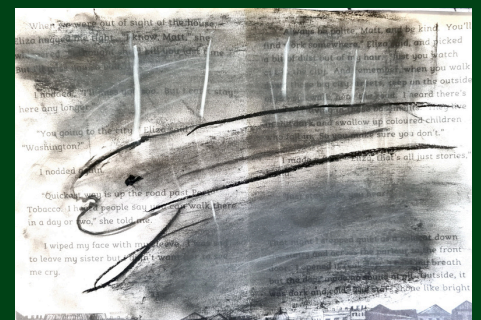
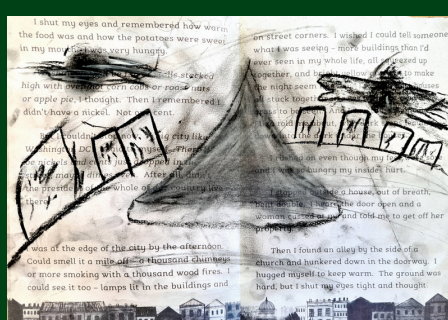
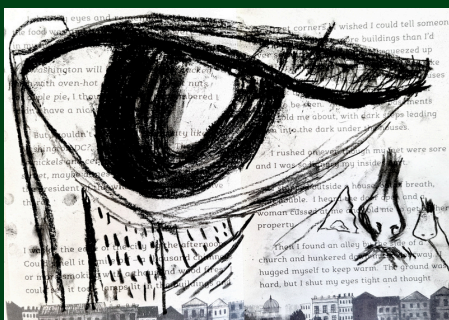
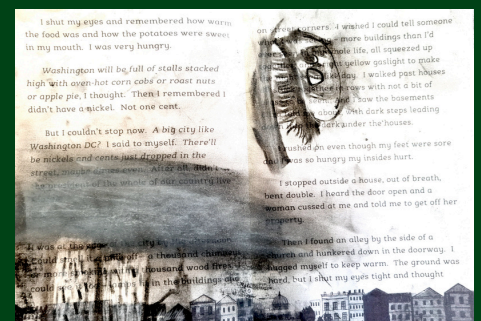
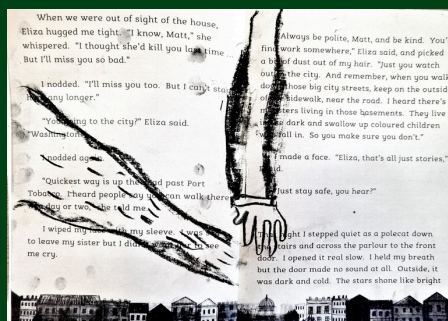
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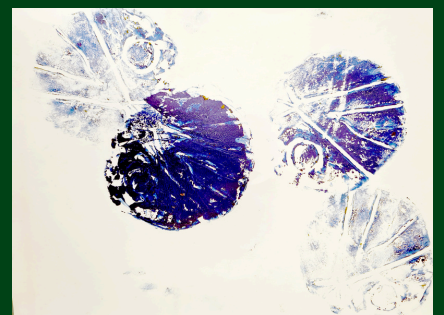
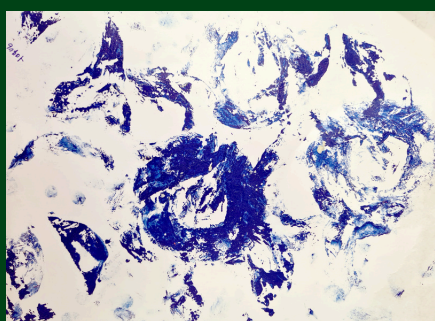
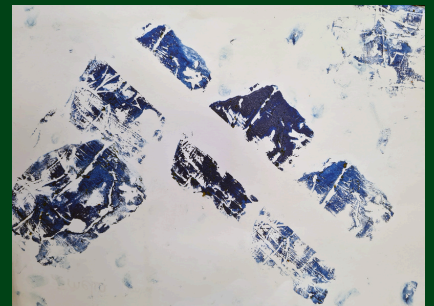
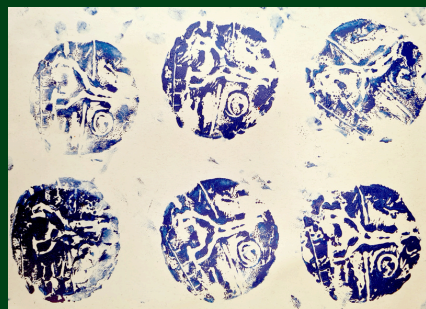
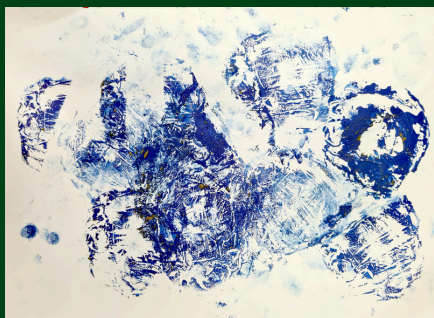
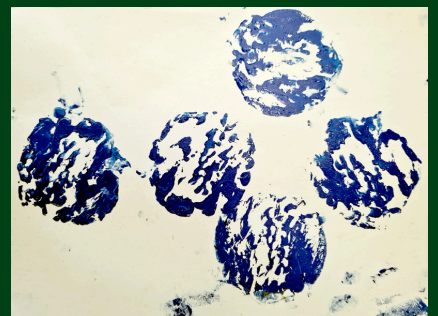
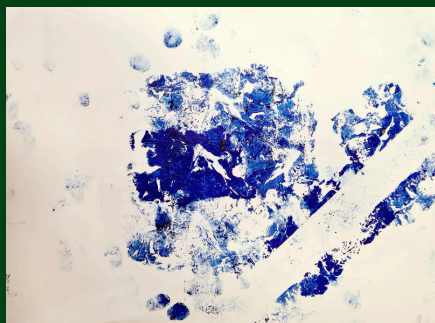
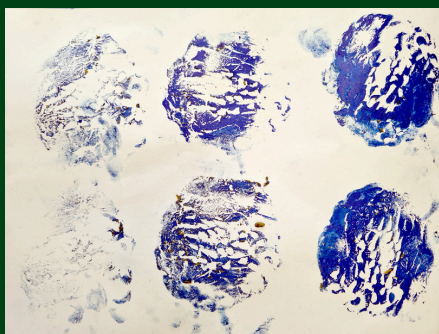
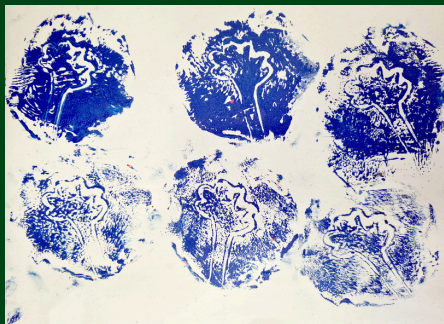
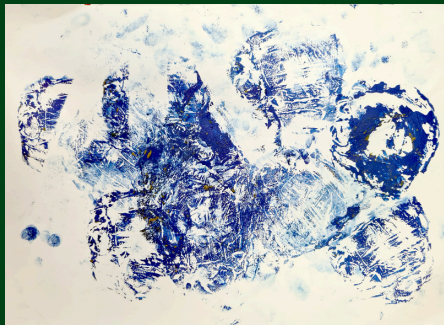
# EXAMPLES OF STUDENT'S WORK



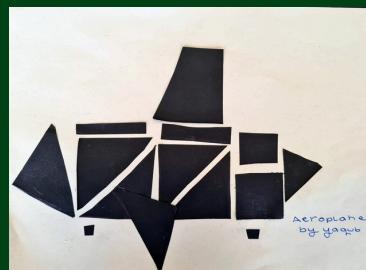
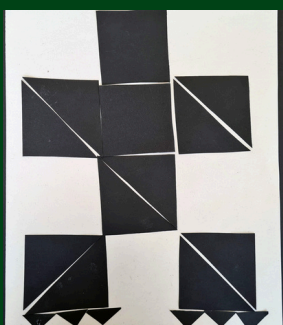
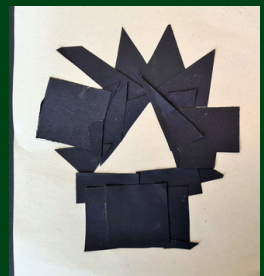
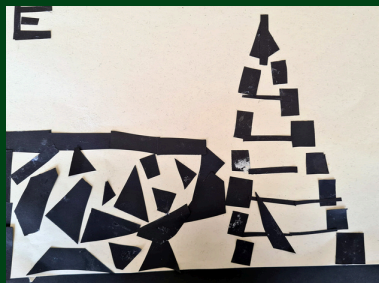
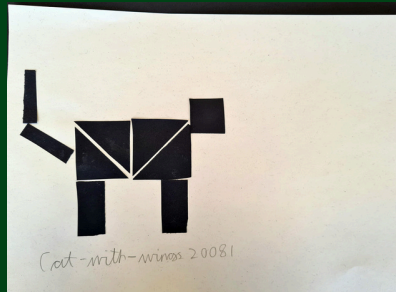
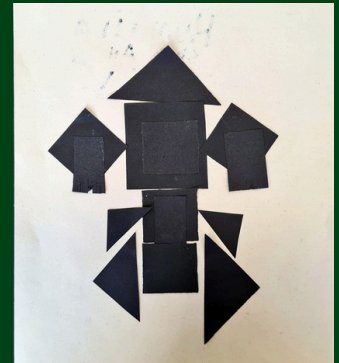
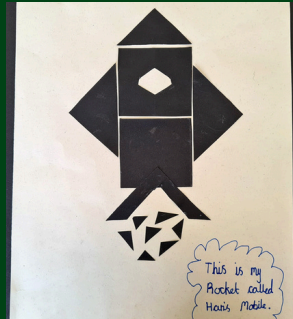
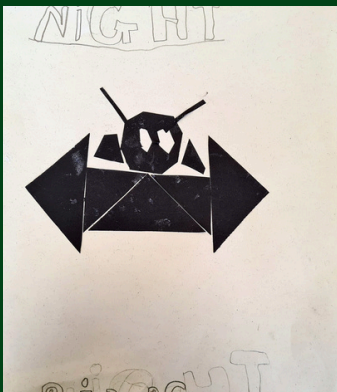
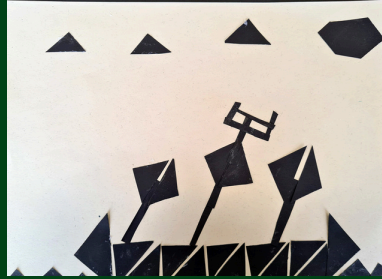
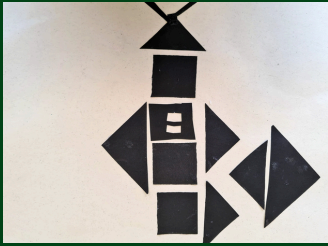


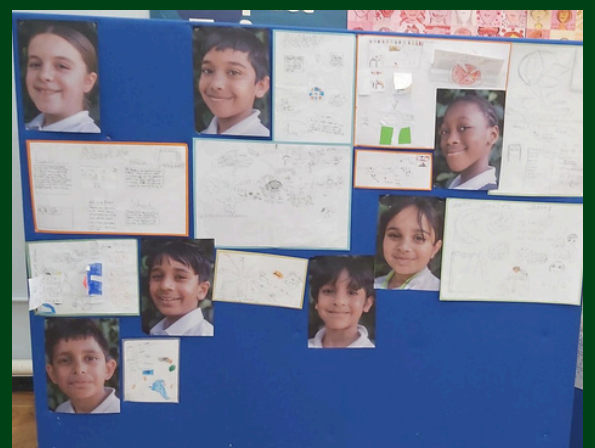
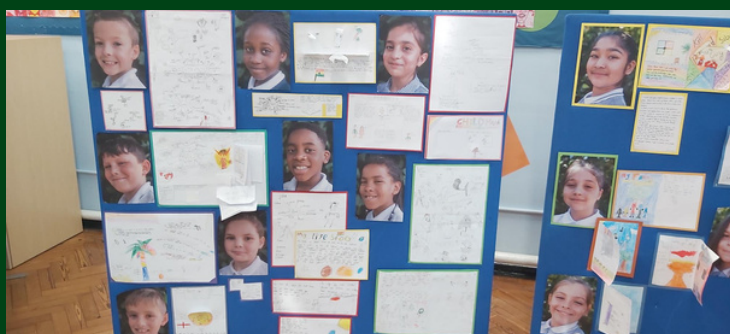


# MONOPRINT WORKSHOP



# GEOMETRIC SHAPES WORKSHOP





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# WITH THANKS

The staff and pupils at:  
Beam Primary School  
Becontree Primary School  
Eastbury Community Primary School  
Henry Green Primary School  
Manor Junior School  
Marsh Green Primary School  
Ripple Primary School

The Mercury Theatre, Colchester

The Ministry of Stories

All participating and contributing artists

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