

Where and when:

Date: Wednesday, 25 September 2024

Time: 11:00

Duration: 30 minutes

Location: bbc.co.uk/livelessons

This programme is available to view from home or school, and no sign-up is required. Simply visit the website on the day and follow the instructions on the page to watch.



Curriculum links:

KS2 English (National Curriculum, England) / KS1 and 2 Language and Literacy (National Curriculum, Northern Ireland) / Literacy and English 1st and 2nd Level (Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland) / Language, Literacy and Communication, progression step 2 (Curriculum for Wales)

Pupils should:

- Understand, enjoy, and create stories.
- Discuss and plan their ideas for writing before beginning.
- Create and compare settings, characters and plot.
- Use language and structure in their writing to engage their readers.
- Think about the audience and purpose of their writing.

Setup:

This Live Lesson will broadcast live on the CBBC channel and simultaneously on the BBC Teach website at 11:00 on Wednesday 25th September 2024. It will remain online afterwards to be used as a teaching resource whenever you need it.

We will be running a live commentary page on BBC Teach during the live broadcast to share contributions from children watching from home and school.

Children will be asked during the lesson to choose and note down an everyday object (e.g. a cup, key, button or a bag) to use as a starting point for their story. They can do so from where they are sat during the lesson, however, you may want them to have a look around and select something in advance of the show. Or you may wish to display objects around the class for inspiration.

Pupils will still be able to follow the activities if they don't have printed activity sheets to hand.

Lesson content:

This programme supports creative writing and is designed to engage primary learners aged 7–11. It is linked to the curricula of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

This lesson is designed to support the launch of the 500 Words 2024 competition which opens on Tuesday 24th September and closes on Friday 8th November 2024 at 9pm. Last year over 44,000 stories were submitted.

Find out all you need to know, including terms and conditions, [here](#). The competition is open to 5-11 year olds. This Live Lesson is most suitable for 7-11 year olds, but you will find resources to inspire younger children with their entries [here](#).

Section 1 - Seeking inspiration from everyday objects

- Pupils are encouraged to choose an object around them and note it on activity sheet 1.
- They then think about a character who owns the object and note why it's special, the character's name, and optionally, what their character looks like.
- For inspiration, additional objects are provided on the activity sheet, and students can choose to start by drawing their character instead.

Download activity sheet 1 [here](#)

Section 2 - Interesting characters

- This section examines how to create a character.
- On activity sheet 2 we ask students to describe their character using a sentence with the word 'but'. Encourage pupils to think about their character's motivation and potential problems or conflicts their character might face.

Download activity sheet 2 [here](#)

Section 3 - Plot

- In this section we explore plot, and how you might follow a simple story structure called the story mountain.
- In the lesson we plan our own story mountain plot structure, and the authors share their top tips on creating a plot.
- In activity 3, children have one minute to start jotting down ideas as to what might happen at each step of their own story mountain. This is an activity which can be expanded on after the lesson.

Download activity sheet 3 [here](#)

There are lots of different ways to plan and write a story. Check out these links to find out more:

- 500 Words [Who am I? Creating characters](#)
- 500 Words [Wonderful words and fantastic phrases](#)
- 500 Words [What happens next? Building a plot](#)
- 500 Words [Finish with a flourish](#)
- 500 Words [Edit, improve and read aloud](#)
- BBC Bitesize [How is a story structured?](#)
- BBC Bitesize [How to invent a new character](#)
- BBC Bitesize [What is a setting?](#)
- BBC Bitesize [How to plan your story](#)
- BBC Teach [500 Words 2023 – Live Lesson](#)

Further follow-up activities:

- **Example 500 Words story.** 500 Words judge and children's laureate Frank Cottrell-Boyce will write his version of the story we plan during the lesson. This will be shared afterwards on the BBC Teach website as soon as it is ready. For further examples, you can read and listen to the finalists from the 2023 competition [here](#).
- **Character-building.** Ask pupils to think of characters from stories they know well who are likeable-but-flawed. Ask the children to generate a list of story-book characters and then to try describing them in a sentence using the word 'but'. For instance, Peter Pan is 'brave but mischievous'. This works well as a group discussion activity rather than a written task, with multiple children putting forward descriptions of a character.
- **Hot-seating.** Children take turns to sit in the hot-seat and play the role of their 500 Words character, while their classmates ask them questions. Taking the example of Archie, the Rock n Roll Rabbit (from the Live Lesson), children might ask the character: 'You've won the guitar competition, what's next for you?' and the person in-role might respond, 'I want to record a song next and then? You know what? A world tour.' For children unfamiliar with the activity, it may help if the teacher takes the first turn in the hot seat, to model how it's done.
- **Mountaineering.** Pupils could use the 'story mountain' concept to explore a story they know well. Can they spot the key features of the plot (opening, build-up, problem, resolution, ending)? Pupils could draw and annotate a story mountain diagram for their chosen book or use a second copy of activity sheet 3 for the task. This activity particularly suits paired working because of the discussion points it generates.
- **Illustrations.** Children could draw a set of illustrations to go with their 500 Word story. This activity can help children focus on descriptive detail in between drafting and revising their stories. It's also effective as a way of helping reluctant writers commit to their story and of refreshing the task to help any child who 'gets stuck' while drafting a story.