



Climate Champions: Creative Writing Project

Welcome

This is a free creative writing project for all schools and home schooled children to use. It is primarily aimed at students aged between 9 to 11 years. This guide and the other documents form part of a learning resource which can be used and tailored to their own requirements.

The learning resource consists of:

- This Guide
- Suggested Session Plans
- Worksheet
- Quiz Questions and Answers
- Quiz Sheet
- Examples of Morals
- PowerPoint
- Story Plan.

A lot of the work during the sessions can be undertaken in groups to help individuals who may be unsure on issues surrounding climate change or maybe reluctant to discuss, on their own, issues and their ideas.

Background to Project

This resource forms part of the Climate Champions creative writing project for children aged 9-11 years of age delivered by literary arts organisation Read Now Write Now and funded by Arts Council England together with support in kind from six library services in the Liverpool City Region.

Course Objectives, Learning Outcomes and Story Structure

The central objectives of this project are:

- to help young people realise that they can help tackle climate change by showing them how other climate champions have done so and;
- to guide young people to write a story that can inspire others to become climate champions as well.

Although the theme is on climate change, the sessions will also help students with their general writing as well.

Students will:

- Learn (more) about climate change, its causes, effects and what can be done to tackle the biggest issue that the world now faces.
- Be shown how their own emotions and feelings about climate change can be used to make persuasive and powerful stories for others to read and take inspiration from.
- Use themselves to be the main character in their story
- Be introduced to four of the basic plot types used by authors
- Be introduced to the technique of show not tell to make their story come alive.
- Learn more on how to plan their stories before writing them.
- Enjoy a tremendous sense of creative and artistic achievement and a boost to their confidence and health and wellbeing.
- Feel confident in talking about themselves in the future and writing independently.

During the course we will look at structuring a story to include:

- Showing readers a negative situation caused by climate change and make them feel the same emotions as the author.
- Inspiring readers to become climate champions themselves by showing them what can be done by individuals to tackle climate change.

- Giving them a suitable moral at the end of the story.

For the first part of this structure we ask students to consider a scene, anywhere in the world, where climate change is affecting life on our planet. For example, this could be flooding near where we live, ice caps melting or cutting down trees to grow palm trees in the rainforest.

For the second part, students' stories can be located closer to home and do not necessarily have to follow the scene from the first part. As an example, a student could write about ice caps melting to show a negative scene and then show an inspirational story of what we can do locally to tackle climate change.

We would encourage students to think about just one area of climate change to write about, in the first part of the story structure, followed by looking at just one way that everyone can help tackle it in the second part.

Sessions and Stories

There is so much that can be written especially about issues locally and internationally and possible local and national and international solutions that the course has been left intentionally general to help fit around your school's own specifications for the sessions.

We wish students to make their own decisions about what their stories should be about and what happens at the end of it. We certainly advocate plenty of group work and subsequent plenary sessions to help students think about their stories.

It is therefore important for students to understand what climate change is, its causes, effects and what we can do to help combat it. During the course we will look into this by watching some videos on YouTube and undertaking a quiz.

Presentation of Stories

To encourage students to take part in this project they should have the opportunity to present in any form they prefer, for example:

- As a narrative story of no more than 1000 words
- As a poem or as lyrics to a song or rap

- As a diary
- As a letter or postcard

Showcasing and Exhibition of Stories

Young people should be able to see their new work exhibited or showcased just like an artist would. Seeing their work showcased should give them a deserved feeling of artistic pride and hopefully motivate them to continue to write.

This can be internally in schools and externally, for example, at a local library. It could include a display of the stories in an exhibition or a chance to perform their story in front of an audience.

Sharing Experiences and Feelings and Connecting with People

Young people are increasingly suffering from eco-anxiety and grief due to climate change. Having the opportunity to talk to their peers is one way of sharing their worries or concerns but we also believe that writing is another important way of doing so and can help people identify themselves in the world, connect with others and hear other people's point of view.

Consequently, we feel that students who take part in this project will feel a welcome boost to their mental wellbeing.

Moreover, letting others know about these thoughts and feelings is not only good for the individual student but also for readers of these stories who may share similar feelings. When readers do share such similar feelings, they connect more to the story and the author.

Taking away the main theme of this project, creative writers should always try and connect their stories, through the eyes of the main characters, to their readers.

Planning your Activity with this Learning Resource

Sessions

The suggested session plans and worksheet templates are based on working in a school for 2x3 hour sessions including breaks. Please feel

free to tailor the worksheets and session plans to your own requirements. For example, you may wish to remove the section on showing our emotions or drawing characters. A PowerPoint is included to help explain parts of the course to the students.

You may wish to hold a short third session looking at helping students to plan their stories and help them start to write it up.

These sessions do not include time for students to write up their stories. It is suggested that should take place either in another session or as homework.

Some of the sessions introduce elements of show not tell. We appreciate that this literary device is only really looked at in Key Stage Three however we have experience of children in Key Stage Two understanding and using this device to make their stories become more vivid in the imaginations of their readers.

Below is some extra information and guidance on the resources used in the template worksheets and session plans. Feedback and responses from young people attending our live courses have been provided to help you deliver the sessions in school (see the session notes).

Session One

The purpose of this session is to find out what students know about climate change, how it makes them feel, what can be done and to think about a main character for their story.

The showing emotion section does not have to be undertaken if you feel it is a little too advanced for students in Key Stage Two however, in the live sessions we delivered as part of this project, the students really enjoyed this activity.

Listed, on the session plans, are suggested videos from YouTube for students to watch. At the start, after an initial video, there is a little quiz for students to work on in groups. This will allow teaching staff to work out group and individual knowledge on the subject.

Some of the answers to the questions may require a little more thinking than others and there are some with multiple possible answers. We have

given some example answers to these – for example, name some effects of climate change – however the students will definitely come out with their own ideas.

As this session progresses, please remind students that the worksheets contain space for them to write down any notes they feel our relevant. As they progress through the session they will have time to think of one area of climate change they would like to write about and think about possible solutions to the problem. Please be aware that we will also look at possible solutions in session two.

Session Two

The purpose of this session is to allow students to think up a setting for their story, more on what climate change is and what they can do to help, plus look at some of the basic plots used in stories, dilemmas and a moral for their story.

There is another video to watch concerning Greta Thunberg to help inspire students to think about a main character. We would suggest students use themselves as the basis of their character, in particular, what they look like. Of course, the most important aspect of a character is their personality and students can use either use themselves or elements of other inspirational characters to help them.

When looking at what they can do in terms of trying to tackle climate change, as stated earlier in this guide, ideas and solutions do not have to follow the scene they created in the first part of this course and can simply be about what they can do to help tackle climate change where they live.

The video that can be shown in this section is very inspiring and talks about children doing things to their strengths and this should be discussed with students.

When looking at basic plot types, ask children to think of any stories or films, not just to do with climate change. Looking at the plot types should be interesting to students in terms of creative writing and not just about climate change and help them understand more about what they can write about in their stories in general although we do appreciate this could be a little heavy for some students.

As an example from the live sessions of using the plots to help think about what they could write about, some children thought about a tragic tale which was, nevertheless inspirational as their moral was all about showing people that we all need to do something about climate change. On the PowerPoint are some examples of ideas for stories from the live sessions.

The main dilemma in a climate change story, at face value, is climate change itself however, in reality, the dilemma is really the human race for not tackling the problem as quickly as possible for a whole variety of reasons including reluctance, ignorance or disempowerment.

We would suggest that the dilemma and solution has to be something tangible. We cannot sprinkle some fairy dust or use a spell from the wizarding world to help tackle climate change. We feel that students should be free to talk about whatever they want to in relation to climate change but that teachers may wish to persuade students to think about real solutions that can help.

During session two, the students will be asked to think of their own moral for their story. On the PowerPoint will be examples of morals from our live courses and there is also a separate document including more examples of these morals to help.

Planning the Story

Students should always be encouraged to plan their story before writing it in full. Within this Learning Resource is a loose plan to help them think what needs to be in their story although, given the theme, and that the project is student led, it is up to them what goes into their story.

There are six sections to the plan. Section One is all about setting the scene to show a negative situation about climate change. Sections Two to Five are all about writing an inspirational story to show others what we can do and Section Six of the plan is finishing the story with the moral.

Other Points

Writing in the First Person

In this project, the students are advised to use themselves as their main character and, therefore, they should be encouraged to write in the first

person as this can help them talk about themselves and their experiences and show their personality, point of view and feelings in a more honest way.

Queries

Should you require any more information or wish to provide feedback then please contact charles@readnowwritenow.org.uk