



33 NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING AT DRAGON HALL © LUKE WITCOMB

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The National Centre for Writing is supported by:



Stories From the Quarter is a National Centre for Writing project in partnership with Norfolk Record Office, made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It aims to document and celebrate the stories of the vibrant and diverse communities that live and work in Norwich.

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**N**  
NCW  
Teaching  
Resources

# Uncover Tales

Key Stage 2

Part of the National Centre for Writing  
Get Creative School Resources



# Introduction

## Teaching Resources Key Stage Two



National Centre for Writing is a contemporary literature house, based in Norwich at the heart of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, committed to the transformative power of stories for personal, social and community development. Rooted in Norwich and open to the world, we're a writing development agency with a local, national and international footprint.

### **Get Creative is National Centre for Writing participation programme**

We work with many schools and hundreds of pupils each year to foster a love of books, words and ideas. We recognise that creativity and a love of words and writing can begin at an early age, and increased confidence with words and ideas supports enjoyment and attainment throughout education.

As such, our work with schools aims to create meaningful creative experiences in and out of Dragon Hall for pupils of all ages. Our work is designed to nurture confidence with and pleasure in working and playing with words, supporting curricular aims related to vocabulary building, fluency, connection and wellbeing. We also endeavour (through programmes with young people out of school such as **Lit from the Inside**) to offer insights into careers in the arts.



# Stories from the Quarter: Norwich Communities

The background to this resource pack comes from our **Stories from the Quarter** project that explores, shares and celebrates the stories of the vibrant and diverse communities that live and work in Norwich.

The first edition of our **Stories from the Quarter** project has a focus on Norfolk's thriving Bengali and Sylheti-speaking communities, and over the last year we have collected 14 oral history interviews from community members including those associated with the mosques, hospitality, transport and NHS professionals. These form a journey of discovery and intrigue into the vibrant and diverse communities that have lived and worked on King St and Magdalen St and surrounding areas.

Inspired by exploring our sense of place and community this pack provides activities for the classroom. This pack is divided into two activities to use in the classroom.

## **Part 1** Poetry Activities and Creative Writing to support history learning

Creative Writing and poetry activities are suitable for KS2 pupils and can be used to support learning around a local history or heritage project using writing and storytelling as tools for exploration. There are three activities to choose from or do all three. *Developed by Stories from the Quarter Creative facilitator, Amanda Addison*

## **Part 2** Using Oral History in the classroom

Oral history activities are also suitable for KS2 and are more general exercises that demonstrate how heritage can be something that is both material, such as an object or a building, and non-physical, such as memories and stories. There is one more in-depth activity that could be extended across a number of sessions. *Developed by Stories from the Quarter Creative facilitator, Avani Shah*

● More information can be found here <https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/get-involved/communities/stories-from-the-quarter/>

# 01

## Using your senses

### Aim:

The purpose of this lesson is to get children writing in response to visual prompts; therefore, working especially well for visual learners.

### Output:

A sense poem and one/+ concrete poem(s)

### Materials:

Pen/pencil, plain paper, coloured pencils (optional)

### Stimulus:

An artefact or building – the example used is the heritage site of Dragon Hall, Norwich

### How to be a word detective:

The artist Grayson Perry said, 'My job as an artist is to notice things that other people don't notice.'

Writing is an art form, where the more you notice, the more interesting your writing will be.

Writers are detectives, noticing things and turning their observations into words. Our five senses are a fantastic prompt to getting started as a word detective.



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### Why is this?

It is because we notice more if we engage with all our senses.

Can you name your five senses?

**Answer: see, hear, smell, touch, taste.**

It is also because as readers, writing which includes such things as: smells of fresh bread, burnt toast, bird song, rumbling of traffic, paints a much more vivid picture.

### Try this out:

Close your eyes and listen carefully. What can you hear? You will probably hear sounds you hadn't noticed before. You are already being a detective!

# 02

## Five senses writing activities

**This works well when visiting a local heritage space with your class, such as a church, mosque, museum, a local statue or memorial.**

**You can also model this at school in the classroom or playground, with the intention of seeing a familiar space through new 'detective eyes'.**

- Set a timer for five minutes
- Make five lists, each with a sense as a heading. How many words that describe what you can hear, see, touch, smell and taste can you write under each heading?

**These are some words from this exercise at Dragon Hall, Norwich, where the National Centre for Writing is based:**

Dragon Hall is a medieval merchant's trading hall. It was built in 1427 from local oaks and stone brought from Normandy, and is the only such trading hall of this kind in Northern Europe. It is situated

close to the River Wensum and King Street; the perfect location between river and road allowed for trading of goods through Great Yarmouth and on to the low countries.

The children enjoyed visiting both the interior and exterior of the building and using their five senses to carry out primary research, identifying things such as building materials and the carved dragon.

Since 2018 it is the home of the National Centre for Writing.

**See:** Wooden beams  
**Hear:** Footsteps, creaky floor boards  
**Smell:** Dry paint  
**Taste:** Hot air  
**Touch:** Rough wood

### Why this exercise works well:

**This tactile approach to Creative Writing means that this activity is accessible to all learners. Children will be able to contribute to discussions and go on to use their detective/research skills in a particular location and write a response. Some children will write extensive lists and use their observation skills to great effect.**



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# 03

## Group poem activity

### A STORY OF A PLACE IS A COLLAGE OF LOTS OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE'S STORIES

#### You will need

- Flipchart paper or whiteboard

Either at your heritage site or in the classroom begin with the name of your heritage site and ask children to contribute to a group poem by selecting their three favourite words or phrases from their five senses lists. Everyone then chooses one from their list to share.

The facilitator writes them down as a list which will form the basis of the group poem.

Some favourite words about Dragon Hall are: ancient, creaky floorboards, oak, beams...

#### Example:

Here is a group poem written at Dragon Hall.

#### Dragon Hall is:

Rough wood  
Bricks and bumpy  
Wind through the walls  
Horseshoes  
Tacky walls  
Dry paint  
Footsteps  
Creaky floor boards

Once the words are written up it is worth reading the whole poem back to the children several times.

#### Why this exercise works well:

This group poem is inclusive and allows young writers to see the value of different points of view about a place, building an understanding of different perspectives. It demonstrates how the creative arts can be a collaborative experience.



# 04

## Concrete/shape poetry

### RECORDING INFORMATION THROUGH DRAWING

#### Why shape poems?

The combination of the written and visual gives children the confidence to explore research and imaginative material without the limitation of completing a standard page of writing.

#### What is a concrete/shape poem?

It is a poem which looks like what it is about.

#### How to get started

Whilst at your heritage venue allow pupils ten minutes to draw whatever they find visually interesting. At Dragon Hall drawings of ceiling beams and old windows made for a popular choice. Not to forget the carved dragon, too!

Shape poems can be made whilst on site or back in the classroom using shapes of architectural features: windows, doors, and also trees, rivers, plants, statues... Material collected whilst doing the sense exercise and drawing, combining the visual with words makes for an engaging record of a visit to a heritage site.

You can use spaces between shapes to write words too!



# 05

## Exploring oral histories

### Aim:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce children to the idea of oral history; to listen to other people talk about their heritage; to develop curiosity in other people's stories and perspectives.

### Output:

A game of bingo, an interview experience, a piece of writing exploring point of view.

### Materials:

Pen/pencil, paper, Makhduma Akhter's oral history excerpt <https://nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writing-hub/makhduma-akhter/>

### Stimulus:

An artefact or building – the example used is the heritage of the space or artefact's or of someone else's story

### WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S STORIES?

Using oral histories to imagine and engage with what a heritage space might have been like in a different time or for a different person.

### Where?

- A classroom or other indoor learning space

### Equipment:

- Oral history recording from Makhduma Akhter
- Something to write on
- Something to write with

### Listening activity:

Dim lights. Lie back and close eyes. Are your other senses heightened when your eyes are shut? What can you hear/smell/touch? Listen to audio.

If audio is low quality or difficult to understand, use worksheets to aid focus (templates included):

### Discussion questions:

- Is this person's life different to my own? In what ways?
- What would you like to know more about?
- What do we have in common?
- What did you find most unusual/interesting about this person's life?



MAKHUMA AKHTER AND FAMILY © ANDISAPEY

# 06

## Follow up activity

Sometimes telling other people our stories can help us think about our own lives differently. Pair up and interview each other.

### Example questions:

- What is your earliest memory?
- Where were you born and do you live there now?
- What is your favourite thing about where you live?
- What would you want to tell children of the future about your life today?

### WHAT STORIES HAVE WE INHERITED AND WHAT STORIES WILL WE PASS ON?

### Where?

- A classroom or other indoor learning space

### Equipment:

- Examples of personal heritage objects, such as: clothing, religious item, recipe
- Something to write on
- Something to write with

### The ideas:

- Stories are our heritage. They have been passed down to us and they are ours to pass down.
- What are some things we have inherited? These can be objects, public buildings, rituals, recipes, habits, hobbies, ideas, what we look like, etc. How do we use these things to tell stories about ourselves?

### Writing activities:

Think of some thing you have inherited from a family member, teacher or friend, your country or your community – remember it doesn't have to be an object!

For example, giving presents on birthdays, a special board game, a love for singing, brown hair, making mooncakes for Mid-Autumn Festival, a blanket, support for a sports team.

Write from the point of view of three people who have also experienced the same thing: the person who gave it to

you (a parent or older relative, a friend, a teacher, your community or country), the person who has it now (you!), and someone you might share it with in the future (a future child, a friend, aliens visiting from another planet!).



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