

Storytelling

Home Learning Pack 005



Welcome to the Home Learning pages of *Checkpoint Kids*.

In this issue we have been inspired by two storytelling games.

In *The First Tree* the player uncovers objects which symbolise key moments in the narrator's childhood. As each object is uncovered, the story unfolds. In *Assemble with Care* a variety of items are broken and need fixing. As they are repaired, their story is revealed. In both games the player gains some insight into how complicated relationships and growing-up can be and have the opportunity to reflect on their own life.

In both these games people tell stories about their lives. We decided to focus on a type of writing that does just that - autobiography.

What we would like you to do this time is write an episode from your own autobiography.

You can write it, either on a word processor or on paper, or you could publish it in a small booklet. Watch this VC from the Hepworth Art Gallery for guidance:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU5U4Qlj5S0&mc_cid=054399e390&mc_eid=27a34ec947

Or you could record it, using either sound or video. If you choose video, you could tell the story using the items that matter to you, just like in the videogames we have featured in this issue of *Checkpoint Kids*.

Whatever you choose to do, we would love to see it. But don't forget to complete a permission slip!

Home learning guidance

1. Research

IN THESE days of instant messaging, we can tell our stories to each other immediately, either by text, image or video. Talking seems to be a thing of the past, but the oral tradition is where our storytelling began. From the earliest times, our ancestors used to tell stories about how the world was created and where things like day and night came from.

CHECK OUT these early creation myths from Australia and America:

- <https://www.kullillaart.com.au/dreamtime-stories/The-Rainbow-Serpent>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76bizcNc1RM>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Coyote-mythology>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRlZUvtBBww>

FUN FACT:

autobiography is made up of three parts:

auto - meaning self
bio - meaning life
graphy - meaning written.

So, autobiography means writing about your own life!

FUN FACT:

The first ever text message was sent by Neil Papworth on 3rd December 1992. It said 'Merry Christmas'.

WHY NOT ask an older person to tell you something about their past? It could be about when they learnt to drive, or their first mobile phone, or even about when they were born!

NOW, YOU need to find something of yours that has a story connected to it. It can be absolutely anything. Remember, this is your autobiography and your story.

IF YOU need some inspiration and you haven't played The First Tree, or Assemble with Care, don't worry. You can get a good idea of what the games are like by watching VCs on YouTube. Here are some you could try:

- the trailer for The First Tree
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85CPlv3kz6c>
- the first few minutes show the fox digging up objects from the narrator's past which trigger memories



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mXhAXiyXLs>

- this toy train reminds the narrator that his father used to carve him toys from Alaskan Weeping Cedar. He loved the train more than anything and he wanted to grow up to be a lumberjack, like his father.

or

- the trailer for Assemble with Care
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04i8usL2lFO>
- the game explores how mending objects can mend lives

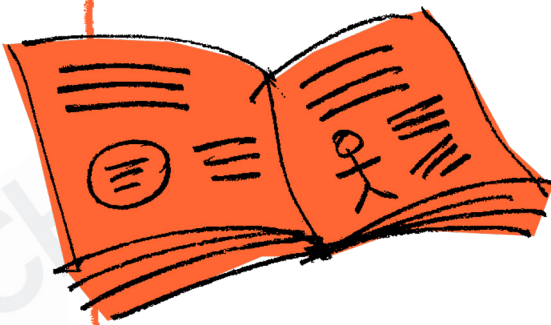


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAXe6uy_aZA

- this camera belongs to Helena who is visiting her sister Carmen. The text suggests that Helena doesn't 'see' things clearly and needs help.

NOW YOU have found your item, make some notes about the following:

- can you describe it - what is it made from, how big is it?
- can you remember where you got it, or who gave it to you, or what you were doing at the time?
- how old is it?
- does it have a name?
- why is it so important to you?

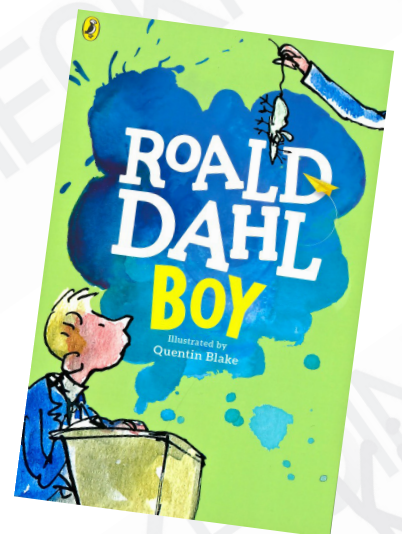


Remember

A LOT of designers use a notebook to keep all their ideas in when they are creating something new. It's a good idea to do this, but it doesn't have to be a book. It can be post-it notes, scraps of paper or an app. Try to use something that you can carry with you easily. That way, when you have a great idea or you see something that inspires you, you can make a note of it.

ANOTHER important part of research is to look at how other writers have created their autobiographies. Have you read any of these?

- Roald Dahl - *Boy*
- Gerald Durrell - *My Family and Other Animals*
- Jacqueline Wilson - *Jacky Daydream*
- Dylan Thomas - *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*
- Laurie Lee - *Cider with Rosie*
- Raina Telgemeier - *Smile*



LET'S HAVE a look at how one of these writers uses techniques to make their autobiography interesting and entertaining. Read this extract from Roald Dahl's *Boy*.

My four friends and I had come across a loose floor-board at the back of the classroom, and when we prised it up with the blade of a pocket-knife, we discovered a big hollow space underneath. This, we decided, would be our secret hiding space for sweets and other small treasures such as conkers and monkey nuts and birds' eggs. Every afternoon, when the last lesson was over, the five of us would wait until the classroom had emptied, then we would lift up the floor-board and examine our secret hoard, perhaps adding to it or taking something away.

One day, when we lifted it up, we found a dead mouse lying among our treasures. It was an exciting discovery. Thwaites took it out by its tail and waved it in front of our faces. "What shall we do with it?" he cried.

"It stinks!" someone shouted. "Throw it out of the window quick!"

"Hold on a tick," I said. "Don't throw it away."

Thwaites hesitated. They all looked at me.

When writing about oneself, one must strive to be truthful. Truth is more important than modesty. I must tell you, therefore, that it was I and I alone who had the idea for the great and daring Mouse Plot. We all have our moments of brilliance and glory, and this was mine.

"Why don't we," I said, "slip it into one of Mrs Pratchett's jars of sweets? Then when she puts her dirty hand in to grab a handful, she'll grab a stinky mouse instead."

The other four stared at me in wonder. Then, as the sheer genius of the plot began to sink in, they all started grinning. They slapped me on the back. They cheered me and danced around the classroom. "We'll do it today!" they cried. "We'll do it on the way home! You had the idea," they said to me, "so you can be the one to put the mouse in the jar."

NOW WE will take a look at some of the techniques in detail which you can try in your own writing:

- uses a lot of detail
 - 'and when we **prised** it up with the **blade of a pocket-knife**, we discovered a **big hollow space underneath**'
 - powerful verb
 - adjectival phrase
- uses trios
 - **'conkers and monkey nuts and birds' eggs'**
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
- uses sibilance
 - '**prised**', '**discovered**', '**space**', '**secret**', '**sweets**', '**small treasures**' etc
 - repeated 's' sounds
- introduces other characters
 - '**Thwaites** took it out by its tail'
- uses direct speech
 - "**It stinks!**" someone shouted. "**Throw it out of the window quick!**"
- writes in the 1st person ('I' or 'we')
 - 'My four friends and **I** had come across'

2. Plan

PLANNING is really about deciding what you want to do and how you are going to do it. It is not unusual for finished work to be quite different from what was planned, but that is where the fun is. Think of this learning opportunity as a journey. You know roughly where you are starting from, and the places you think you'd like to go, but you might end up somewhere totally different!

ALL STORIES have a beginning, middle and end. Autobiographies are no different. Use worksheet HLP005WS1 to help you plan.

TRY TO include all the details that will bring your story to life. Don't worry if you can't remember everything. Most writers cannot remember all the details either, they make them up. What matters is that the story is true.

DON'T FORGET to use the notes you wrote earlier. If you want to, once you have written your episode, you can fact check it with someone else who was there.

NOW YOU have completed your planning and have all your notes ready, it is time to move to the next stage.

3. Create

BEGIN BY writing your ideas down quite quickly. Stick to your plan because this will help with paragraphing, but don't worry too much about using the best adjectives or worrying where a comma should go. What's important is to get your ideas down on paper in a first draft.

ONCE YOU have written your first draft, you can see which parts work well and which could be improved. This is also the time when you should be checking your use of figurative language techniques and whether your verbs agree and are in the right tense. HLP005WS1 and HLP005 Support will help you to check your writing.

ONCE YOU are happy with your episode, you can copy it up in best. This is the moment when you can really think about presentation, adding an illustration or using a favourite, coloured ink. Why not share your writing with your friends and family? You could read it to them, altering the tone of your voice for the direct speech.

FINALLY, here is a first paragraph based on the planning example in HLP005WS1. See how many of the techniques you can spot.

As my mother parked her Mini Countryman on the cobbles of the town square, I stared past the small ice-cream shop with its yellow cellophane in the window and searched in vain for the huge clock that hung on the wall outside the jewellers. The sky was sullen and rain threatened, but I didn't care. This was my eighth birthday and I was about to get my very own alarm clock. I waited patiently while my mother changed her flat-soled driving shoes for the high-heels that she always wore when we were out. Just in time, I remembered to push down the small chrome button that looked like an elephant's ear on the handle mechanism and shut the door with an authoritative and satisfying 'thunk'. I joined my mother as she was adjusting her skirt and placing her light grey handbag in the crook of her elbow. "Did you remember to lock your door, Darling?" she asked in her absentminded way. I felt an enormous sense of pride as I told her that I had and we set off for the jewellers, hand in hand.

4. Share

NOW ALL you need to do is complete a permission slip and email your work to the magazine! We would love to see how creative you can be and who knows, you might even be published in a future edition of *Checkpoint Kids*!

5. Challenge

YOU MIGHT like the idea of writing a much longer autobiography. Or perhaps you'd like to take a look at other writers in more detail. If so, why not check out our Teacher Learning Pack for this issue. It's called TLP005. In it you will find analysis of other writer's work and more guidance for using techniques and structuring your own writing.