

Pie Corbett: Sentence games

Many schools have found that quick-fire daily sentence starters can have an impact on children's writing. I think that the ability to rapidly construct and vary sentences - almost without thinking about it - is one of the basic skills of writing. If children are labouring over sentence construction this must interfere with the flow of imaginative composition.

The difference between a Level 3 and a Level 4 writer is the ability to construct and vary sentences.

Many children benefit from daily sentence practice. When introducing new sentence patterns remember to start orally - so they hear the pattern and then say it. This can be followed by using cards or a washing line so that they see and move the words around and physically manipulating the sentences - good for all children but especially the kinaesthetic learners. Finally, they can begin to move into writing on mini white boards.

Keep the session speedy - the idea is to become automatic at writing, not something laboured. Push the more able to develop sentences. Be ruthless on full stops! One handy tip is to say to children, 'Don't show me until you have checked'. The idea is for the children to think, write and then re-read, checking for quality and accuracy.

Link the sentence types to a text type and to what will help children make progress. Immature writers should conquer the simple sentence, after this; ensure that the compound sentence has been accomplished. Then begin moving into the complex sentence.

Practise sentence games and use the same sorts of sentences in modelled and shared writing. Make sure children use the sentence types in their own writing. This is vital - try working on a sentence (or paragraph) that then has to be 'dropped' into a longer piece of writing. Store good sentences in writing journals for future use. Here are some games to get you going:

Random words

Choose a book. Ask for a number - this gives you a page to turn to. Now ask for a number - this gives you the line. Then ask for a small number - this will select a word. The children then have 15 seconds to write a sentence using the selected word. Then use the same sort of process to randomly select two or three words - can they make a sentence using the words... Be ruthless on capital letter, sense and full stop.

Noun and verb game

Ask for a list of nouns (engine, ruler, pencil, tree). Then make a list of verbs (sipped, stole, rushed, wished). The game is to invent sentences that include a noun and a verb from the lists. This can be fun if the nouns and verbs do not match in any sensible way - you will get some quite creative solutions!

The engine sipped...

The ruler stole...

The pencil rushed...

The tree wished...

Now complete the sentences preferably choosing unusual ideas, e.g.

The engine sipped from a cup of silences.

The ruler stole a tongue of ideas. The pencil rushed down the stairs and into the garden. The tree wished it could turn over a new leaf.

Join

Provide two short, simple sentences. The aim of the game is for the children to join them to make one sentence. They will need to use some form of connective and it can be useful to suggest a way of joining them. For instance:

The camel ate the cake
The cake was full of dates.

You could ask the children to join the two sentences above using the word 'which':

The camel ate the cake, which was full of dates.

This game is vital for children who are Level 3 writers and need to begin using a variety of ways (beyond 'and then') to link sentences, gaining flow in their writing. So, play this often!

Animal game

Make a list of animals. The children have to write a sentence about each one - as playful as possible. Put in certain criteria, e.g. use a simile, use two adjectives, use an adverb, use 'after', use 'when', etc.

Alliterate

Use the animal list to create alliterative sentences - one per animal, e.g. the tiny tiger tickled the terrified terrapin's two toes with torn tinsel.

Improve

Provide a list of dull sentences that have to be made more detailed or interesting or powerful, e.g.

- The worm went.
- The man got the drink.
- The dog came along the road.
- The woman ate the stuff.
- The man looked at the stuff in the shop.

Check it

Write up some sentences or a paragraph with errors for the children to check. Build in the sorts of mistakes that the children often make so they get used to identifying and correcting their own errors. These might include - spellings, punctuation mistakes, changes in tense, slang, etc.

- He runned down the lain.
- She was dead frightened.
- I just jumpt over the wall.
- I ran home, Lucy just walked.

Shorten

If children overwrite or write poorly formed, clumsily sentences, write these up and ask them to shorten the sentences or clarify them.

The robbers who were being chased ran down the road till they could run no more and then they decided that they would go into the cave and then they would hide in there and wait.

Change the ending

Provide a short sentence and ask the children to extend it by adding a chunk on at the end. Provide a list of ways, e.g. use a connective, add on an 'ing' chunk, add on a chunk using 'who, which, that when, while, where, before, after', etc.

Teddy closed the curtains.

This might become:

- Teddy closed the curtains when the fireworks started.
- Teddy closed the curtains while everyone was juggling.
- Teddy closed the curtains before the milkman came.
- Teddy closed the curtains, hoping it would keep out the sunlight.

Change the opening

Provide a simple sentence and ask the children to extend it by adding a chunk on at the beginning. Build up a repertoire of different ways to vary the opening to sentences, e.g. use an adverb (how), a time connective (when), an 'ing' or 'ed' chunk, one word, a simile, a prepositional phrase (at the end of the lane - where), an adjective, etc.

Bertie dug a deep hole

Might become:

After tea, Bertie dug a deep hole.

In the garden, Bertie dug a deep hole.

Carefully, Bertie dug a deep hole.

As fast as a ferret, Bertie dug a deep hole.

Hoping to reach Australia, Bertie dug a deep hole.

Drop in

Provide a simple sentence and ask the children to 'drop in' a something extra, e.g. adjectives, adverb, a phrase or clause. Be wary of children dropping in too much! Of course - you could add to a sentence by attaching a bit either end as well.

Bertie dug a hole.

Might become:

- Bertie dug a deep hole.
- Bertie rapidly dug a hole.
- Bertie, the farmer's dog, dug a hole.
- Bertie, hoping he would soon see a kangaroo, dug a hole.

Copy

This final game is an important one. Look carefully at the text type that you are teaching. Are there any particular sentence types that the children will need to be able to use in their writing? Look at the stage they are at and decide what sorts of sentences they need to be able to write, in order to make progress. Model several of one type on a board - then ask the children to imitate the pattern, substituting different words. For instance, here are several 'adverb' starter sentences:

Carefully, Pie ate the donough.
Angrily, Jerry kicked the football.
Gently, Maisha held the sandwich.

Create several more together and then use a bag of adverbs to help the children begin writing their own similar sentences, using the same underlying structure.

Pie Corbett

Pie Corbett: Games to establish a creative mood

Every teacher wants to have children who are cognitively alert - with lively, enquiring minds that are active and fully engaged. This can be developed through expanding children's experiences so they meet and create new ideas. Provide new experiences and get into the habit of exploring and expanding their capabilities. They need to engage in playful behaviour, actively participating in fresh activities... 'variety is the spice of life'.

Cognitive fitness uses both parts of the brain. The right side flourishes with images; intuitive, holistic and pattern seeking, it explores, plays and dreams new ideas, making imaginative and spontaneous connections. Feed this with playful games, a broad variety of fiction, poetry, dramatic plays, music and nonlinear engagement with ideas. The left side likes to observe, record and enriches what it is doing through puzzles, activating logical, reasoning and verbal thinking. Feed it with regular sudoku type puzzles, quick crosswords, and games like chess that force thinking.

A brain positive classroom is one where everyone is excited about learning - trying for optimal performance, with activities that develop the whole person - where everyone has a passion and commitment to trying hard and getting better at writing. These sorts of quick-fire games are a useful basis for writing and brain development with spin offs across the curriculum.

Creative Connections

Play this game often - just give them a word and ask them to write down as many words as they can think of that are associated with it. Time them - a minute only, and then see who has written the largest number

of words. Play this many times so that they get used to generating words and ideas rapidly. This is a fundamental creative writing skill.

If the children find this difficult, then you need to play it as a whole class. Provide a focus such as a picture, photo or object. Then, as a class, brainstorm as many words and ideas as possible.

Ink Waster

To warm up the brain and get into a creative mood - give the children a topic and ask them to write as much as they can in say, one minute. Time them and ask them to count the number of words then try again with another topic. They should write as rapidly as possible. This limbers up and frees up the mind.

Video Writing

Use the ink waster technique and see how much can be written in a few minutes. Turn down the sound and play a film clip. The children use this as a basis for writing as rapidly as possible - the action - the dialogue - a description - or just anything that the images trigger. It has to be fast with no pauses. If they get stuck - just look up at what is happening and try again. There is no right or wrong. The only wrong thing is if you stop writing. Who can write the most words down?

Pattern Spotting

Looking for patterns is an important brain activity. As human beings, we exist through patterns of behaviour that help us cope with the world. Try any game where children have to find a pattern or spot where it is broken. This might be a list of words that rhyme then spotting the one that doesn't. Put on a timer and try and do it within 10 seconds:

Rough, tough, enough, bluff, cuff

Through, duff, dough, fluff, gruff, stuff

Identifying the underlying patterns in sentences is important and quite demanding. Try listing three examples that follow the same pattern and then ask the children to imitate and come up with the same pattern themselves, e.g.

Before Donni sang, everyone hoped he would keep in tune.

While Donni was singing, everyone put their hands over their ears.

After Donni finished singing, everyone cheered with relief.

As with all things - start simply, e.g.

Angrily, he stormed out of the room.

Happily, she whistled a tune.

Gleefully, he ate the donuts.

Unfortunately, she had one too many!

Then as the children become more proficient, try using just one sentence that children write out and then, directly below, imitate it, e.g.

As they came to the last tree in the row, where the field ended, Mrs Wentleberry halted, wondering whether she should climb all the way to the top.

As they reached the corner shop, where the road curved left, Mr Snaggleteeth stopped, hoping there would be some jelly babies left.

As he ran down the hill, where the stream trickled, Jonson paused, expecting there would be at least one tunnel into the hillside.

New Experiences

The brain is stimulated by new experiences - it makes us curious and generates language. First-hand experience makes brains grow! Each weekend, try looking for something curious that you could take into the classroom - photos, a mirror, a key, a picture of a Salvador Dali, an old watch, a gnarled piece of bark... Use these for rapid drawing and writing. To write, you could just brainstorm words and ideas as a whole class or in pairs. What does it look like, remind you of, what do associate with this? What might it be used for? Invent 5 new things you could use it for? What might a Martian think it was?

Playful Writing

The brain develops when it has to play hard at working. Being playful with ideas and language engages the prefrontal cortex and develops our highest cognitive functions. Novelty and innovation are important for brain growth - whilst routines help to organise, regiment and make sure that children feel safe and confident, they also need new experiences and to develop creative thought. This demands training the brain to think in different ways so that it can generate ideas and possibilities, moving beyond the expected cliché.

The old magic box game is great fun and never ever fails. Use Kit Wright's poem The Magic Box. All you have to do is imagine what might be in there - the poem is a great model for stimulating ideas. It can help to discuss what might be in a box forest. Then make a class list (the quicker and the longer the better) or things that would be impossible to have in a box - sunsets, a universe, a star, a rhino, a playground, a dream, a memory, a lie, a kangaroo, a rainbow, a scream, etc. Now just make an embellished list:

In the box of impossibilities you will find -
A sunset of crimson and gold,
a universe of whirling minds,
a shivering star,
a charging rhino with skin of metal,
a playground rumour
a daydream that comes alive,
a memory of a moment that was cold,
a lie like a nettle sting...

Use poetry anthologies and find poems that have the playful element.

Pie Corbett: Writing games

The Simile Game

Look at the list of common similes below and ask the children to explain to their partner the story behind the simile. Try inventing new similes and listing them. Collect the best from scanning poems and novels. Make class lists. Discuss why a simile works - is it just a visual similarity? Create a simile alphabet in pairs or small groups within a few minutes.

- As brave as a lion
- As busy as a cat on a hot tin roof
- As cunning as a fox
- As deaf as a post
- As dry as dust
- As happy as Larry
- As happy as a rat with a gold tooth
- As hungry as a bear
- As hungry as a wolf
- As innocent as a lamb
- As mad as a hatter
- As patient as Job
- As poor as a church mouse
- As proud as a peacock
- As scarce as hen's teeth
- As silly as a goose
- As slippery as an eel
- As slow as a tortoise
- As sly as a fox
- As stubborn as a mule
- As thin as a toothpick
- As timid as a rabbit
- As tricky as a box of monkeys
- As welcome as a skunk at a lawn party
- As wise as Solomon

Dead Metaphors

Dead metaphors are clichés - they are the ones that everyone knows and have been used so many times that they are just a part of everyday language, e.g.

- Stone cold
- A heart of stone
- Apple of my eye
- Boiling mad
- Steer clear
- Bear fruit
- Hatch a plan
- Difficult to swallow

Of course, the first time these were used, they would have been arresting - something new and apt. Now they have become stale - and have little fresh impact. They are part of our clichéd language - they communicate but not as powerfully as something freshly minted. Collect as many as possible from reading and noticing each other's speech. Make a list. Use these for a writing game by taking them literally, e.g.

I felt stone cold -
My arms were rock
And my legs were granite.

She was the apple of my eye -
But someone took a bite
Out of my sight!

My teacher was boiling mad -
Steam came out of her mouth!

I hatched a plan -
It is only just able to walk
And needs bottle-feeding daily.

This sort of language play helps children look anew at language that they may just be using without really thinking about its meaning.

Inventing Metaphors

First of all, identify something that you want to create a metaphor around - for instance - the stars. Now think of something that is like the subject or something to do with the subject - they shine, glitter, are like tin-tacks, like diamonds, like jewels, like fiery eyes. Now use an idea to make a metaphor, remembering not to use the word 'like', e.g.

The stars are shiny glitter.

The stars tin tacked to the night.

The diamond stars shine.

The jeweled stars.

The fiery stars eyed the world

Notice how one simple way is to:

1. Generate a simile - the stars are like diamonds.
2. Omit the word 'like' - the stars are diamonds.
3. Move the noun in front of the image - the diamond stars. Dylan Thomas uses this technique in his writing!

Extending the Metaphor

This is much easier than you may imagine. Take a simple simile, e.g.

My teacher is like an... eagle.

Turn this into a metaphor by removing the word like. Now think about what eagles do and just extend the sentence further, e.g.

My teacher is an eagle swooping around the room, hovering over his students, diving down on innocent prey and demolishing them with the terrible grip of his talons.

The Word Waiter

Brian Moses once wrote a poem along this line that involved a 'word waiter' who could serve up only a certain number of words. This can be used for short burst writing, haiku, letters or news items. The randomness of the selection adds a challenging edge that often forces creativity beyond the predictable. The word waiter might serve up a character, place and dilemma for storytelling. Here are some possible starters - but ask the children and add many more ingredients!

Character	Place	Dilemma
<i>woodcutter</i>	<i>hairdressers</i>	<i>gets lost</i>
<i>farmer</i>	<i>station</i>	<i>is chased</i>
<i>princess</i>	<i>bus stop</i>	<i>steals something</i>
<i>adventurer</i>	<i>cinema</i>	<i>is trapped</i>
<i>heroine</i>	<i>castle kitchen</i>	<i>sees a fight</i>
<i>Billy</i>	<i>old bridge</i>	<i>finds a cave</i>
<i>Jo</i>	<i>chip shop</i>	<i>loses money</i>
<i>teacher</i>	<i>wooden tower</i>	<i>finds an alien</i>

Poetry Doors

The writer Stephanie Strickland says that, 'poems are words that take you through three kinds of doors: closed doors, secret doors, and doors you don't know are there'. Make a list of doors that poetry is.... Just be inventive - have some fun. It doesn't have to make sense. Indeed, logic and sense will probably lead to dull writing.

Poetry is a closed door.

Poetry is a secret door.

Poetry is a door that you did not know was there.

Poetry is a door of foxes, as sly as sunlight.

Poetry is a door of dreams where thoughts hide.

Poetry is a door of disasters, where stories crumble.

Poetry is a door of kittens playing.

In the City of Rome

We used to play this old game in the back of the car on long journeys. It is ideal for building descriptions of settings. Think of a place and identify one thing that you can see (a park bench). Then say, 'in the city of Rome is a park bench'.

The next person has to repeat what you have said and add in something else, e.g. 'In the city of Rome is a park bench and under the bench is a sleeping dog.' A list of prepositions helps.

Pass the line on, with each child adding something else they can see or hear. Try playing the game in groups and pairs until the children can visualise and describe a scene in their own mind.

Instead of 'in the city of Rome', play the game using the setting in their story, e.g. 'in the haunted house'. Show children how to sketch the scene and annotate, adding in similes. Then practise turning the scenes into mini paragraphs.

Disasters

Children - indeed, most humans, - are fascinated by disasters. But what might be a disaster for superman or an ant?

5 Disasters for Superman.

- His tights are in the wash.
- The colour in his boxer shorts washes out and now they're pink.
- His Mum says to be in by 8.00 and in bed by 9.00.
- His Dad tells him not to start fights.
- His Gran gives him Kryptonite pants for Christmas.

April Fool's Day

- Write a list of April Fool's day tricks and jokes?
- Put plastic bottles outside instead of milk bottles.
- Put onions in Wendy's bed.
- Wrap up a stone to make a big parcel.
- Stick a penny on the path.
- Put salt into a pot instead of sugar.
- Hide John's trousers.
- Stick a cup to a saucer with superglue.

Judy Jane, 7 yrs.

The Writing Box

Keep a 'writing box' in the classroom. Each week put in a new object that the children have to write about. They can take any angle that they wish. Steven, 7 yrs, wrote this short piece about an old watch that I popped in:

The silver watch

The back is smooth and round. It has hinges to open it. It has a gold wheel that spins round. It has springs. The spring beats out and in like a heart. It has a silver plate with patterns. The patterns are curls. The best part I like is the gold colour inside. The time is quarter past six. That is all I know of the silver watch.

Deborah, 8 yrs, wrote about the box itself and the unicorn that it contained.

What has the box ever held? A diamond? A ring? A heart of rubies? Or a unicorn with a sapphire collar? The inside of the box is as black as ebony. The unicorn can never feel happy or sad. The unicorn is trapped between both, never will he move again. The person who owned the box was a merchant who staggered around. The merchant rode a golden camel. The box was his favourite possession. Yet only he knew what it contained. He passed on the secret to me. Inside the box was a key, a key to let the soul of the unicorn out into the world...

Creating Potions

With one class we had been reading Terry Nation's book *Rebecca's World*. We wrote magical potions to cure Grisby's bad feet:

Potion to cure bad feet.

Take three drops of verruca cream, add corn plasters with a pinch of bunion powder and a squirt of foot cream. Mix it together and heat it up in a stained saucepan. It is called 'Footcure'. - **Matthew, 9 yrs**

Later on in the story Rebecca nearly falls prey to 'Bad Habits'.

Potion for curing bad habits.

Take six bitten nails,
Five sucked thumbs,
Ten chewed pens
And a bag of humbugs.
Mix them to make
'Habitcure'.

Julie, 9 yrs

For Sale

With that class we fell into the habit of selling things (see [Creative games from stories](#)). I think the idea came when one day someone put up a 'for sale' notice in the staff room - trying to sell off some disruptive year 6 pupil! In my class we tried writing notices to sell off pesky younger brothers and then we moved on to selling historical artefacts such as 'Pyramid for sale - genuine offer!'

Dream Jars

In Gulliver's Travels there is a good description of what he has in his pockets. This idea led into making lists of the contents of Mrs Thatcher's (the ex-Prime-minister) handbag and I seem to recall that one witty lad wrote a list of what was found in Emu's beak - Michael Parkinson's finger! Other stories often lend themselves to writing ideas. The BFG can be used to create Dream Jars. You could write about the contents or how to use the contents.

In the red nightmare jar
Is a drop of blood from the sword that killed St Thomas,
Is a drop of paint from the letterbox in King's Lane,
Is a traffic light's eye from the High Street,
Is a red card from the referee's collection.

Invented Insects

As a child I had a much prized copy of the *Observer's Book of Birds*. One year when I was working in a village school, I decided we would invent flies and create the *Observer's Book of Invented Flies*! We looked at several bird entries to get the gist of how to write our fly entries, drew invented flies and then wrote about them:

Red-backed Fly

So named because of the red stripes on its back. Flies between April and June. Eggs are seven and found underneath cars. Young found in sewers. It has scent glands on its head that give a pungent smell when alarmed.

Nancy, 9 yrs

The large-winged bird-eating fly.

This fly is the largest specimen of the bird-eating flies. The male has a small sting at the bottom of his abdomen which enables him to poison the bird. They lay over a thousand young but only about five survive. The female grows so heavy when she is pregnant that she can't fly and that is why the male makes the nest. Their legs are so powerful that they can carry a fully-grown eagle. They live in small areas of the mountains.

William, 9 yrs

Dragon's menu

Dragons are always popular with primary age children. The book *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini is a cracking good read. Each child could make their own dragon passport. An alphabet for a dragon's menu might also be fun:

A is for an angler's boot.

B is for a bull's horns.

C is for a car's back seat.

D is for dirty dish cloths...

Excuses

Excuses are always needed. When I was a child I was endlessly late and homework was a mystery to me! Make a list of excuses - the more exaggerated the better. Here are some year 4s in full flight...

This morning I was late for school because there was a knock on my door and I opened it to find that the local farmer had just dumped a lorry load of horse manure on my doorstep. I had to dig myself a route to the front gate.

This morning my head teacher was late for school because his Lotus Elan was jammed at the lights when star performers from Sir Serendipity's Travelling Flea Circus had escaped. They had to be hunted down and recaptured before the traffic could move...

The Trout Fishing Game

This game came from an idea in a Richard Brautigan poem that I have adapted. Richard Brautigan wrote Trout Fishing In America - hence the title of the game. To play the game, make a long list of possible subjects for writing, e.g. worries, bicycles, recipes, trout, clouds, bees. Choose one or two to work on as a class. Decide whether the subject is beautiful or ugly and write your opening line using this pattern:

A bee is not a beautiful thing.

Now make a list of contrasting subjects, using the following pattern:

A bee is not a beautiful thing;
It's not like a kingfisher
hurrying in its flashy coat of blues and scarlet.
It's not like a dandelion
Shaking its golden mane.
It's not like a Siamese cat's eyes
Of Egyptian sapphire.

A Nuisance of Nouns

Ask the children to explain the collective nouns in the alphabet below and then create their own alphabet - this might best be done in small teams, dividing the alphabet up between them.

An abandonment of orphans
A ballet dance of swans
A crush of rhinoceroses
A dose of doctors
An elephant of enormities
A fidget of school children
A glacier of fridges
A hover of hawks
An inquisition of judges
A Jonah of shipwrecks
A knuckle of robbers
A lottery of dice
A misery of bullets
A number of mathematicians
An outrage of stars

A prayer of nuns
A quake of cowards
A roundabout of arguments
A swelter of duvets
A tangle of tricksters
An upset of horoscopes
A vein of goldfinch
A wonder of stars
An xray of soothsayers
A zeal of enthusiasts

The Room of Stars

This game follows on from the invention of collective nouns. There are many possibilities. Split the class in two. One half has to rapidly make a list of places, e.g. room, town, city, village, mountain, river, star, sun, kitchen, alleyway, lawn, garden, castle, etc. The other half has to make a list of nouns and abstract nouns, e.g. memories, love, doom, sparklers, curtains, sunsets, wisdom, jealousy, disasters, grass, hedgerows, teapots, certainty, etc. Then put children into pairs and they match the words listed exactly in the order they write them down, e.g.

The room of memories.
The town or love.
The city of doom.
The village of sparklers.
The mountain of curtains.
The river of sunsets.
The star of wisdom.
The sun of jealousy.
The kitchen of disasters.
The alleyway of grass.
The lawn of hedgerows.
The garden of teapots.
The castle of certainty.

As well as places you could try vehicles, or 'the moment of...', or time, e.g. 'the day of...', 'the week of...', 'the month of...', the year of...'. You could leave this just as a list of surprising and interesting combinations. Interestingly, many seem to have a power of their own. Show the children how to take one of the ideas that seems to have promise and extend it. I find this easiest by taking on with an abstract noun. For instance, if you take the 'kitchen of disasters', you could list all sorts of disasters, e.g.

The kitchen of disasters is where -
The kettle's spout melted,
The teapot shattered into splinters,
The fridge shivered all night, The sink sunk!

The city of doom could be a list of things that have happened that are doom-laden. Try a different pattern by using 'in', e.g.

In the city of doom
The streets are awash with dead starfish

And the windows have wept tears of ice,
The shops are empty as silence...

Pie Corbett: Creative games from stories

Imitate

Read a short poem or paragraph to the class. The game is for them to listen carefully and then as soon as you have finished write down as much as they can remember - filling in gaps if they need. In pairs, they can compare results and then listen to the original. This develops memory but is also interesting because different people remember different sections - or everyone remembers the same piece - why?

Interviews

Children work in pairs - one in role as the poet or author and the other is about to interview them. Read a poem or paragraph. The interviewers then ask questions and role-play an interview. Hear some in front of the class. Questions can be about the poem - but also any other aspect that the interviewer deems interesting!

Story Sale

Choose an object from a story and write a For Sale notice, e.g. For Sale - The Minotaur's Horn. Straight from the labyrinth, the genuine article...

Likes, dislikes, puzzles and patterns

Put children into pairs to make a list about a story or poem of likes, dislikes, puzzles and patterns. Or, each pair makes a list of 5 questions they are curious about. Later on, list these as a class and see if other pairs can provide ideas or answers.

Story Poem

Stop at a vivid moment in a story. Use a simple frame (I heard., I saw, I touched., I wondered.) to write a senses poem in role as a character in the story, e.g.

- I heard the distant rumble of the Minotaur's hot breath.
- I heard the dark hooves scraping the sandy floor.
- I heard the heavy beat of my heart as it drew nearer.
- I saw the sudden sharp flash of its red eyes glinting in the darkness.
- I saw the ragged hair and the flared nostrils.
- I touched the cold walls for comfort.
- I touched the thin string of Ariadne's hope.
- I wondered if my fear would turn into dust

Exploring feelings in a poem or story

a. Choose a key object from a story - something which made you feel something (happy? sad? bored?) and explore why:

The ball of string made me feel sad because.

b. Work in role as a selected character, explaining how he/she/it felt at that moment in the story. Present as a monologue:

I am weary because

"What if" re-telling

Think of a "what-if" moment in a story when events could take a different turn. Make a list of these key moments - usually at a crossroads where decisions are made. Make notes or draw events and prepare to tell what happens next in your new version. This works best if you can give examples, e.g. *Theseus drops the ball of string and cannot find it in the darkness.*

Dialogue

Choose a favourite moment in a story and write some dialogue for that moment, either as part of a play, as a duologue for a pair to perform or as a piece of story writing. Discuss with the class possible scenes.

Phone a Friend

a. Choose a specific moment in a story. In role as a character, phone a friend, another character or a member of your family, explaining what has happened, how you feel and what might happen, e.g. imagine you are the Minotaur in the labyrinth. Phone your Mum!

b. Or, phone an agony aunt for advice.

Personal

Does anything in the story remind you of something that happened to you (e.g. a time of surprise, a time of fear, a time of shame, a time of violence, a time of fun)? Tell or write the anecdote.

Miming scenes

Prepare to mime a scene from a story, a poem or extract from non-fiction. Will the rest of the class be able to guess which scene?

Meetings

Prepare to hold a meeting, e.g. to discuss in role as local people what is happening in a story or poem or to debate a piece of information or viewpoint.

Gossip

Between characters or about events. These could be main characters or bystanders.

Thoughts in the head

Work in pairs - choose a place to stop in the story. In role - say aloud what the different characters might be thinking - is it the same as what they are saying? Or draw a cartoon and thought bubble for a character in a story or poem.
