

| <p>Idea 5.10: Either–Or stories</p> | <p>Suggested age group: 9-year-olds to 11-year-olds</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|--------|--------------------------------|---|------------|---------------------------|---|----------|----------------|---|-------------|----------------------|---|--------|-------------------------------|
| <p>Explanation:</p> <p>There is a tendency for some children to write rather formulaic stories* that lose their appeal once they have been read by others. <i>Either–Or stories</i> work to stimulate complex story writing by getting children who like a challenge to really think about plot development. The Idea of an <i>Either–Or story</i> is that once the author has offered a sentence/paragraph they need to give the reader a choice as to where the story goes – either 'X' or 'Y' happens. Once selected the reader then reads the appropriate sentence/paragraph, selecting <i>another</i> option at the end of this to determine what happens next in the story. Through this kind of story writing <i>readers</i> get the chance to take ownership of the story (like <i>DIY stories</i>, p. 114) in terms of choosing where it goes and how it ends, whilst child <i>authors</i> develop their capabilities in terms of possibility thinking (see Craft et al., 2012).</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>*The 'formulaic' story:</p> <p>Jones (n.d.) proposes the ABCDE formula, which presents the story writing process in five simple steps:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="308 925 1259 1176"> <thead> <tr> <th>Formula</th> <th>... which stands for</th> <th>... which in the context of the rhyme 'Jack and Jill'</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Action</td> <td>Jack and Jill went up the hill</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>Background</td> <td>to fetch a pail of water.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>Conflict</td> <td>Jack fell down</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>Development</td> <td>and broke his crown,</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>Ending</td> <td>and Jill came tumbling after.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Whilst Jones claims that this formula offers writers a 'concrete, practical approach' to help overcome writer's block, she does guard against its fixed application: 'Stick to the plan too rigidly, and your story might turn out . . . well, formulaic. You and your readers will have more fun when you add complications and twists.' This is where <i>Either–Or stories</i> come in! For an example, see Appendix 16 (p. 222).</p> | | Formula | ... which stands for | ... which in the context of the rhyme 'Jack and Jill' | A | Action | Jack and Jill went up the hill | B | Background | to fetch a pail of water. | C | Conflict | Jack fell down | D | Development | and broke his crown, | E | Ending | and Jill came tumbling after. |
| Formula | ... which stands for | ... which in the context of the rhyme 'Jack and Jill' | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | Action | Jack and Jill went up the hill | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | Background | to fetch a pail of water. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| D | Development | and broke his crown, | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E | Ending | and Jill came tumbling after. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>The skills involved in writing <i>Either–Or stories</i>:</p> <p>There are many skills children will need to use during the writing of their <i>Either–Or story</i>. Being able to 'plot plan'[†] is crucial. The ability to sequence a number of different stories is also a necessity. Children also need to be able to regularly review their work to critically check for coherency; as an <i>Either–Or story</i> develops, it becomes more difficult to manage all of the different storylines!</p> <p><i>Note!</i> <i>Either–Or stories</i> are challenging yet satisfying to write, but children will not be able to complete it in one sitting – do allow them to revisit/revise them over a number of writing sessions.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Stimulating <i>Either–Or story</i> titles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day the moon shone too bright! • The disappearance of the DVD player! • Amanda's escape to the ship docks! • The Finchley's family trip to the Arctic! • The Splendid Six and their fight for freedom! • Jim's revenge on the Tooth Fairy! • Sammy, Claire and the talking camera. | <p>†Strategies for <i>Either–Or story</i> plot planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of diagrams. • Use of maps to plot out where characters visit. • Use of checklists. • Use of Post-it[®] notes. • Use of tree diagrams. • Use of strips of paper. • Use of lists. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix 16

Idea: *Either-Or* stories A simple example of an *Either-Or* story

