

Creative Writing



Trinity College
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The Legend of The Children of Lir



<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/5th-+-6th-class/english-5th-+-6th-class/teachers-notes/lesson-plan/background-to-the-children/>

Aim of the workshop

- **To enable you to practise writing creatively**



Objectives

- **To write a short piece each using the senses**
- **To write a group wisdom piece**
- **To write a Limerick each**



Workshop - Overview

- **Your unique ‘materials’ for writing**
 - **Exercise 1: ‘I come from...**
- **Irish proverbs**
 - **Exercise 2: Writing a group wisdom piece**
- **Limericks**
 - **Exercise 3: Writing a Limerick each**

Your unique 'materials'

- Your experiences
- Memories and personal history
- Your feelings and desires
- Language
- Imagination
- Dreams
- Culture
- Observations
- Ideas
- Your senses



Exercise 1: 'I come from...

We Are Poets – Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwjMRcae4Ps>

Write where you are from. Focus on sights, sounds, touch and smells.

'I come from...

- I come from blood fruit mango...Cashew nuts...Frozen fish fingers, dirty dishes and council gas heaters.
- I come from concrete and coal, spaghetti Bolognese and shiny new BMXs... From tea-tree oil, marijuana vapours, the damp heat of laundrettes...Holey jeans and moulded Mary bottles of 'made in china' holy water.
- I come from a world of miniature...Of powerlessness, of over-sized furniture and scruffy trainers. Three steps to mummy's one plastic dinosaur and power rangers.
- I come from the motorways my friend...From the same journey three times a month...Like some weary old heart that takes a week to beat, to beat out our old battered blood cell red Fiat...Compelling it to crawl over the spinal cord of these British Isles just one more time.
- I come from heartbreak. Or, more formally viewed underneath the withering eye of the divorce courts...Bisection of these bicuspid valves, the crack in my heart widens into a crevasse.
- I come from rainbows and thunderclouds, from ladybirds and dragonflies. From fighting with fireworks on streets... Hop, skip, hope to miss the syringes.
- I come from steel and sandstone...Asphalt and coniferous forest.
- I come from sweat, smell and the invisible whirl of chromosomes.
- I come from the warm pouch with umbilical cord.
- I come from that first prehistoric spark of enlightened consciousness on an East African plain. I come from the dense nuclei flung from the wombs of stars.
- But in the end I concede and say the least needed of me.

I Am From

- I am from orchards and soccer balls, windmills and beaches where it is too dangerous to swim;
- I am from hillsides of waving white and pink blossoms and truckloads of dark-faced strangers to reap their fruit;
- I am from secret hideaways earned by battle-scarred arms and legs and hair torn out by the roots yet filled with sweetness and laughter;
- I am from the pine trees are a home run and the power pole marks home plate;
- I am from woodsmoke-scented nights huddled on the hill beneath a blanket, cradling a thermos filled with stew, the imprint of a soccer ball still stinging on my frozen thigh;
- I am from snow forts that last all winter and “better use the garage door, it’s the only one not blocked”;

I Am From

- I am from shoveling the farm pond and begging Santa for ice skates, toboggans and runner sleds, hot chocolate and cookies, and hand-knit hats, scarves, and mittens;
- I am from hot afternoons playing kick the can and late nights playing flashlight tag, “don’t swim there because of the undertow” and “didn’t you hear a kid drowned there,” and bet you can’t swim out to the raft without drowning;
- I am from popup trailers, mountain pies, campfires, and climbing a new mountain every year;
- I am from chocolate molds and elaborate easter bunnies, cherry cokes, and french-fries paid for with berry picking money;
- I am from the War of 1812 and the Underground Railroad, lake freighters, and Great Lakes captains.
- *“Where I’m From” poem modeled on George Ella Lyon’s famous work*

Irish Proverbs

Explain each of the following

- **Praise the young and they will blossom.**
- **It is sweet to drink but bitter to pay for.**
- **A friend's eye is a good mirror.**
- **There is no fireside like your own fireside.**

Irish Proverbs

- **A light heart lives long.**
- **A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures.**
- **Better good manners than good looks.**
- **Work without end is housewife's work.**

Proverbs

A proverb is a wise saying that is true.

OR

A short saying that gives useful advice.

Desiderata extracts

**Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace there may be in silence.**

**As far as possible without surrender
be on good terms with all persons.**

**Speak your truth quietly and clearly;
and listen to others,
even the dull and the ignorant;
they too have their story.**

**Avoid loud and aggressive persons,
they are vexations to the spirit.
If you compare yourself with others,
you may become vain and bitter;
for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.
Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans.**

Everybody's Free (To Wear Sunscreen) - extracts

- **Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth,**
- **Don't worry about the future**
- **Do one thing every day that scares you**
- **Don't be reckless with other people's hearts**
- **Don't waste your time on jealousy**
- **Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life.**
- **Get to know your parents, you never know when they'll be gone for good**

Exercise 2: Wisdom piece

In pairs, write your advice/wisdom in two sentences based on what you've learned in your life.

Limericks

What is a limerick?

**A five line witty poem with the
rhyme scheme AABBA.**

Limericks

Where does the name 'limerick' come from?

It comes from an old drinking song that required everyone taking part to make up their own verse, one person after another. Each verse was five lines with an AABBA rhyme scheme. In between the verses, the entire group would sing the chorus, "Will you come up to Limerick?"

Limericks by Edward Lear

**There was an Old Man who said, 'Hush!
I perceive a young bird in this bush!'
When they said, 'Is it small?'
He replied, 'Not at all!
It is four times as big as the bush!'**

**There once lived a boy called Joe
Who developed an enormous big toe,
On it there sat
A contented cat,
A granny, a toad and a crow.**

Limericks

- **Limericks are short, funny poems made up of five lines. They have a regular rhythm or beat.**
- **Limericks always have the rhyme scheme: AABBA.**
- **The first, second and fifth lines must have seven to ten syllables.**
- **The third and fourth lines have five to seven syllables.**

Limericks by Edward Lear

**A gambler from old Alberqueque
Won millions consulting a turkey,
'I've won every bet
With this mysterious pet
Which I admit does make me sound quirky.'**

**There was an Old Person of Dover,
Who rushed through a field of blue Clover;
But some very large bees,
Stung his nose and his knees,
So he very soon went back to Dover.**

<http://www.nonsenselit.org/Lear/BoN/bon010.html>

Complete this Limerick

There was a young lady from Leeds,

Who swallowed a packet of seeds.

This sorry young lass,

Is now covered in _____ ,

But has all the carrots she _____ .

A Limerick a Day by John Moynes

A statue called Molly Malone,
On Facebook just cannot be show
They reckon her chest,
Which ranks with the best,
Is something they will not condone

*condone = tolerate or ignore



<http://www.broadsheet.ie/tag/a-limerick-a-day-john-moynes/>

Exercise 3: Limericks

Write your own Limerick. It can be about a current issue. Include a character and a place name from the following lists:

Names: Paddy, Joe, Mick, Tom, Maggie, Mary, Anne or Annie

Irish place names: Schull, Muff, Nobber, Kill, Trim, Birr, Moneygold, Termonfeckin, Hospital, Knock, Stoneybatter, Cong

Use www.oxfordreference.com (New Oxford Rhyming Dictionary) OR www.rhymezone.com

More ideas for Creative Writing exercises

1. Descriptive writing in response to a photo you have taken in Dublin

Describe what you can see in your photo.

Identify the main subject of the image. Focus then on the foreground, centre, background, left and right.

Refer to the following:

- **People, creatures, body language, facial expressions**
- **Setting and objects**
- **Colour**

More ideas for Creative Writing exercises

2. Writing about place

Think of a place from your past e.g. a room, a street, a garden. Spend ten minutes listing things about the place.

Now write a paragraph or a short poem about this place.

More ideas for Creative Writing exercises

3. Story Cubes

- Choose nine cubes. Create a story that links together all nine face-up images (individual, pair or group work).
- Use three cubes for the beginning, three for the middle and three for the end of the story.



English Textbooks

Junior Cycle English

- Great Expectations 1 (First Year), Great Expectations 2 (Second & Third Year) – educate.ie

Leaving Certificate English

- Aoife's Notes on Excellence in English: Language & Literature (Higher Level/Ordinary Level) – educate.ie

Aim of the workshop

- **To enable you to practise writing creatively**



Objectives

- **To write a Haiku**
- **To write a diamond poem as a group exercise**
- **To write a monologue in the voice of Molly Malone**
- **To write a conversation between two shoppers**



This Moment

A neighbourhood.
At dusk.

Things are getting ready
to happen
Out of sight.

Stars and moths.
And rinds slanting around fruit.

But not yet.

One tree is black.
One window is yellow as butter.

A woman leans down to catch a child
who has run into her arms
this moment.

Stars rise.
Moths flutter.
Apples sweeten in the dark.

Eavan Boland



Activity: Text re-formulation

Re-present the poem as a Haiku.

- A haiku is a traditional Japanese poem.
- It has three lines.
- Lines one and three have five syllables.
- Line two has seven syllables.



5 - 7 - 5 pattern

Haikus

Green and speckled legs,
Hop on logs and lily pads
Splash in cool water.

On a frozen twig,
The little bird dreams of spring
Oh! To see the sun!

An old silent pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.

Your turn...Complete these haikus

Fading light at dusk
Sun illuminates the lawn

Bright yellow windows,
Black trees starkly defined now

Scaffolding the work

Vocabulary

Fading light noise of birdsong long shadows

Loud chirping birdsong, shrill and urgent

Calm and still black silhouettes soft glow

Light tinged clouds half light suffused with light

Golden moment reflection sun illuminates

Activity: Text re-formulation (Part 2)

Re-present the poem as one paragraph of descriptive writing.

Features of descriptive writing

- Senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing)
- Verbs
- Adjectives, adverbs, alliteration
- Colour
- Imagery (simile, metaphor, personification)

Scaffolding the work

Sentence starters

- Dusk, a time of transition and retreat...
- Dusk, a time of anticipation and wonder...
- At dusk I am enthralled by the evening sky...
- Strange how the ordinary becomes extraordinary at dusk...

Vocabulary

Fading light noise of birdsong long shadows

Loud chirping birdsong, shrill and urgent

Calm and still black silhouettes soft glow

Light tinged clouds half light suffused with light

Golden moment reflection sun illuminates

Success Criteria

- I have appealed to the senses (sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing).
- I have used verbs.
- I have used adjectives.
- I have used colour.
- I have written complete, grammatical sentences.
- I have used capitals at the start of sentences.
- I have used full stops to show where a sentence ends.



My Father Perceived as a Vision of St. Francis

1

It was the piebald horse in next door's garden
frightened me out of a dream
with her dawn whinny. I was back
in the boxroom of the house,
my brother's room now,
full of ties and sweaters and secrets.
Bottles chinked on the doorstep,
the first bus pulled up to the stop.
The rest of the house slept

2

except for my father. I heard
him rake the ash from the grate,
plug in the kettle, hum a snatch of a tune.
Then he unlocked the back door
and stepped out into the garden.

3

Autumn was nearly done, the first frost
whitened the slates of the estate.
He was older than I had reckoned,
his hair completely silver,
and for the first time I saw the stoop
of his shoulder, saw that
his leg was stiff. What's he at?
So early and still stars in the west?

4

They came then: birds
of every size, shape, colour; they came
from the hedges and shrubs,
from eaves and garden sheds,
from the industrial estate, outlying fields,
from Dubber Cross they came

5

and the ditches of the North Road.
The garden was a pandemonium
when my father threw up his hands
and tossed the crumbs to the air. The sun

6

cleared O'Reilly's chimney
and he was suddenly radiant
a perfect vision of St Francis,
made whole, made young again,
in a Finglas garden.

Paula Meehan

St. Francis of Assisi



Activity: Collaborative poetry writing

- Create a diamond poem of seven lines inspired by the poem *My Father Perceived as a Vision of St. Francis*. Focus on Meehan's father.
- Use the following structure:

noun
adjective adjective
-ing -ing -ing
noun 1 noun 2 noun 3 noun 4
-ing -ing -ing
adjective adjective
noun

Activity: Collaborative Poetry Writing

Diamond Poem Structure

noun
adjective adjective
-ing -ing -ing
noun 1 noun 2 noun3 noun 4
-ing -ing -ing
adjective adjective
noun

Father

Father
ageing hardworking
feeding caring raking
carer pensioner retired provider
humming standing stooping
kind active
Dad (synonym for father)

Collaborative poetry writing

Class poem

Father

old silver

tending raking humming

hero worker timepiece pensioner

stooping rising feeding

gentle radiant

Dad

Collaborative poetry writing

Another example

Father

Quiet Kind

Tidying Bustling Throwing

Dad Pensioner Friend Giver

Walking Living Loving

Mature Whole

Parent

Write a monologue in the voice of Molly Malone

- Your ideas for the monologue...



Task: Talking Statues

- Write the conversation between the two women.
- Give each woman a name.

**‘Meeting Place’
sculpture, Dublin**



Task: Talking Statues

- Your ideas for the conversation...



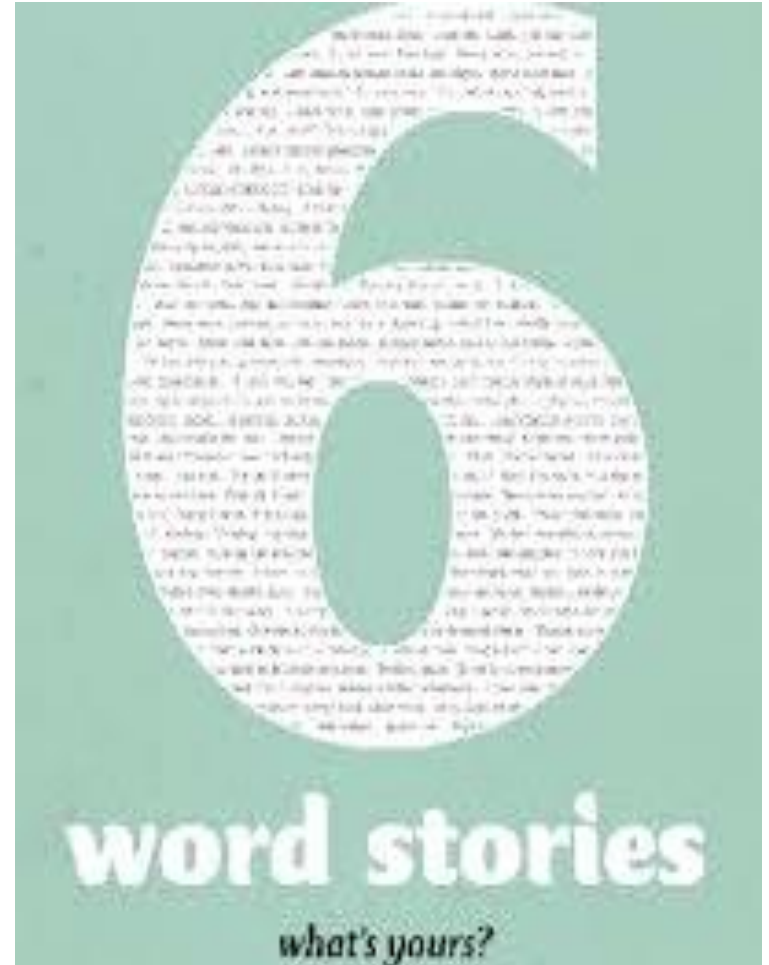
Six-word stories

Use six words to tell a story. No more, no less.

**‘For sale: baby shoes,
never worn.’**

Ernest Hemingway

<http://www.sixwordstories.net/>



Useful web links

<https://www.creative-writing-now.com/story-prompts.html>

<http://writingexercises.co.uk/subjectgenerator.php>