

Seasonal Short Story Collection

Combining the CoW elements



In order to map out what lessons encompassing the CoW Framework and its underlying principles might look like when linked into a unit of work, we would like you to: commit 5-6 one hour sessions i.e. one a week before the December break in order to create a CoW Christmas short story collection.

The seasonal collection could be given (or sold!) to each child's parents/carers or siblings, as Christmas presents. It could be shared in the community - placed in an old people's home, the doctors surgery, local/ school library etc (with children visiting to read?). Or it could be for an audience within school - another class or year group. The collection could be printed or you could pop the tales together as an e-publication and place it on the school website - the class could make Christmas cards with a link inside for their audience.

At the start

1. Explain the Christmas Challenge to the class! The opportunity to be authors, to create presents, to follow through to publication. Stress the choices will be theirs as authors, but your role will be to support and stretch them. Explain you (and the TA?) are also going to write one.
2. Invite the class to look back through their Just Write Notebooks and find a germ of an idea, an early draft etc that they'd like to develop into a story and pursue to the publication. Explain they are going to be published authors and will need to make their own choices, select and record their working titles for display on the wall (*Being an author*).
3. Discuss who the class Seasonal Collection might be for – the chosen audience. It's likely they will all have younger siblings and it might be easier if the whole anthology is focused on one such group (Year 4?) or other children aged around 9-10 like them (another Year 5 class?). Or it could be for parents/carers and/or community members. Agree this and discuss how they will need to help their particular audience understand and be engaged (*Reader-writer relationship*).
4. Set homework before the first session. This might involve: researching a focus; reading other 'scary'/'adventure'/'traditional' short stories (*Writing process: preparing to write*); or re-reading their chosen notebook writing and exploring and playing with possibilities so they come to session with ideas ready to draft (*Writing process: creative experiment*).

During each of the 5-6 sessions

Offer free writing time

Approx. 10 -15 minutes. During this time write alongside the children. Make it clear this space and time is intended to be used to support their ongoing writing for publication. You might ask them to think about a character (to develop a short back narrative about them), to use photos to writing about a place they know, or bring objects in to help them write. Make it explicit that they can use some of this writing, e.g. the character, object or sense of place, somewhere in their story. So their

free writing is potentially linked to their piece for publication (*Writing process: creative experiment*).

Identify a mini teaching whole class focus

Approx. 10 minutes. Mainly on text level and language choices, but also on the other CoW strands (which would benefit from teaching in other lessons too). For example:

- Text level choices: Focus on a specific text level element, such as narrative structure or characterisation and use one child's piece of work on the board to do so. Involve the author as these are his/ her text level choices.
- Language choices: Focus on one or two language level elements, such as being concise or adding detail in order to achieve a particular effect and use one child's piece of work to do so. Get the class to review and revise their drafts.
- Reader-writer relationship: Remind the class too think about their readers. Use one child's piece of work and discuss how they are going to further engage their reader. Refer back to a taught lesson and /or a display of strategies.
- Being an author: Focus on an element such as drawing on reading - take time to discuss examples from children's work where links to reading are clear and celebrate this - or focus on drawing on experience - discuss how experiences have been fictionalised in your or a child's work.
- Writing process: Share what you are currently engaged in e.g. reviewing and revising. Has one part been well drafted whilst another still needs work? Refer to the writing process and discuss how members of the class are handling the process.

Offer drafting and reviewing time with feedback

Approx. 25-40 minutes. During this time follow through by working with groups in tutorials. Invite children to read aloud a section, remind you of their intentions and then feedback to them. Or you could move around to respond to individuals who request help. Keep focused on reviewing - evaluating the text together and the different elements of text and language level choices - then set them the revision challenge to improve their text.

Plenary

Approx. 5-10 minutes. Hold a feedback session in which the class share what as authors they have achieved today. Invite them to state this in their books.

Ongoing evaluation and additional time

Collect the classes writing in regularly so you know where they are at and can plan mini teach-ins that are responsive to need, or draw children together who have common challenges. Set homework at least twice so they have additional time to continue drafting, reviewing and revising. If possible, grab extra time for writing, during rehearsals and such, and use other literacy time to help underscore teaching points.

At the close

5. Hold final celebration event/s - this is the publication date! It might involve the authors' reading their stories aloud in class, assembly, for another class, parents, visitors, visits etc. Take time to celebrate and review what they have learnt.