

## Worksheet 3

### Writing to Explore, Imagine and Entertain

#### Planning your story

I bet you've had the experience of having a really brilliant idea for a story, then made a start and not got round to finishing it. Am I right? I'm guessing I am because we all do this – start things we don't get round to finishing. It's part of being human. But if you have ever finished writing a story you'll know what a really satisfying experience that can be. You get a lovely warm, fuzzy feeling inside. There's nothing quite like it.

Another reason to get good at finishing things is that if you choose to do a piece of imaginative writing for the exam you'll have to ... well... finish it. The examiner will want to see that you can plan and write a story in about 45 minutes. Yes, I know it's not very long, but if you practise you'll be able to do it. In worksheet 4 we'll practise writing things quickly, but here I want to practise PLANNING things quickly.

It's good to get into the habit of spending about 5 – 7 minutes planning what you are going to write and 35 minutes writing your answer. In the next worksheet we'll do some practise writing and in this worksheet we'll do some practise planning.

First of all, what does a plan involve? Well, first of all you need your idea for the story. Then, for an imaginative or entertaining story it involves giving your story a shape, so it has a beginning, a middle and an end. It then involves making some notes about what would be included in your story.

I'll do one with you, then you can have a go.

Let's imagine I was asked this question:

*Write about an occasion when you felt very excited, exploring your thoughts and feelings at the time.*

First of all, you have to highlight the most important things you are being asked to do. Let's look at it again.

*Write about an **occasion** when you felt **very excited**, **exploring your thoughts and feelings** at the time.*

OK. So first of all we need the idea. What are you going to write about? Spend a minute or so writing about times when you felt very excited:

How did you get on? Here's my box.

When I went on Oblivion for the first time.

When I went to see my brother's new baby.

When I went to see the Lion King.

OK. So you can't write about them all, so which one do you choose? To do this you have to look at the rest of the question and decide which of the ideas is going to give you the most potential for doing the rest of the task. Well, the task asks me to EXPLORE my thoughts and feelings, which means going into quite a bit of depth. With this in mind, I decided that going on Oblivion was probably going to be the best one for me, because it was such an extreme experience it would give me more potential for writing about it. It was also quite a short experience – again, something I needed to take into account.

So which one are you going to decide on? Write your choice in this box...

Once you've got your story idea, try to stick with it. 45 minutes doesn't allow much time for changing your mind!

OK The next job is to make some notes about your THOUGHTS and FEELINGS. Try to remember vivid details about the experience – but don't go into too much detail. Try to remember sensory experience. Here are my notes. Read them and then you write yours.

### Thoughts

Sheer terror. Going to the front of the queue because we had brought fasttrack tickets. The clunk of the carriage as it went up the conveyor belt. The shiny metal structure of the waiting area. How different it was from Squirrel NUtkin! NOtcing that even my brother was scared, and he's been bungee-jumping. My thoughts that I wanted to get off. I tried to block it out. I remembered that no one had died on Oblivion – yet. Being strapped in. Feeling I couldn't escape. Seeing the red button at the start of the ride. Wondering if they pressed it if they got really panicky people on – like me. The jerk as the ride started and the fact that I couldn't turn back or get off.

If you spend a few minutes making notes like this, you will have the bones of an essay. Then write a little sequence. What are you going to begin with how are you going to end?

Then you need your opening sentence. This should be not problem as you could have a stock of them. Can you think of any which would do? I can. How about.

I had often thought of that day and wondered if it would have been different if I'd made different choices.....

You should be off now....

I knew how big oblivion was. I'd read all the statistics. Besides you could see it from where we were standing. 'Want to get it over with,' said my brother. NO I didn't actually. I didn't want to go anywhere near it. My plms were sweating at the thought of it....

But this worksheet is just about planning. So here are a few more titles for you to plan.

Imagine you could be prime minister for the day. What changes would you make and why?

