

Creative Writing Boost Course Preview

This preview is designed to show you, in some depth, the work we'll go through in the course.

How does the course work?

- This 12 part course is designed to help children improve their story and descriptive writing. It's ideal for tests for selective entry at 11+.
- It goes through a step-by-step process that, if followed, will deliver improved results.
- It is structured so that each part of the course would ideally be completed in a week or more, but it can be done more quickly. There is a danger that if it is rushed children won't have enough time to reflect on their work, which is an important part of their development.

How does this course differ from using books?

- Fully structured and planned so the topic properly covered in the time available.
 - *Books tend not to cover the whole topic, for instance many are just lists of part planned stories with very little instruction.*
- Includes core skills work and details how marks are gained and lost in writing tasks.
 - *Creative writing books tend not to focus much on core skills. Where they cover core skills they tend to touch it and leave it, which doesn't really help children improve.*
- Builds good habits for story writing though revision.
 - *Where books give advice they tend not to emphasise it as this course does.*

Who is this course right for?

- Some Grammar Schools have creative writing in their 11 Plus exam. Parents tend to buy this course either at the beginning of Year 5 or six months before the exam to gently develop creative writing alongside other work.
- Most Independent Schools have a written element to their entry tests. Parents tend to buy this course to help, work from September to January when children sit entry tests.
- SATS tests for KS2 have a written element. Parents buy this course as part of revision and improvement work to help their children write more effectively.

SCROLL DOWN TO SEE COURSE EXAMPLES



Creative Writing Boost

PART 1

- Introduction:

Fully Structured and Organised

Each part of the course has a detailed front sheet detailing what you should do.

- Speech marks revision
- Punctuation revision
- Proof reading for accuracy
- Accurate spelling

- Reading:

Find 20 new words from your reading and add them to your personal words list.

- Personal words list

- First Writing Task:

- Your first visit to the seaside

- Answers:

At the end of the course you'll be aware of how creative writing can be used to develop their core skills. We'll also help children to understand how they may be able to develop their core skills.



The course includes a mix of instructions, core skills development and writing exercises in a step-by-step process.



Full answers are provided including some writing samples.

Introduction – Mark Schemes

- This brief guide to story writing aims to help children prepare for their exam by introducing them to the key areas where they will receive most of their marks. This is the most common cause of confusion when it comes to children's creative writing, as there is uncertainty whilst marking a script, there are certainly full marks for



How to get good marks

We start off with some background information. Crucially this focusses on how writing is marked.

Understanding the marking

their own marking criteria, examiners will be considering.

writing

- In a typical school, a 40 marked out of 35 in total, different areas of story writing.
- The following breakdown of a mark scheme is not definitive, but should help to make it clear what the examiners are looking for:



Spelling, punctuation and grammar

- A maximum of **10 marks** will be awarded here and most scripts will start off as a 10/10, gradually losing marks as mistakes are made.
- This is never a fine science but a lack of attention to detail in this regard will heavily penalise a student. Children who make a small mistake.
- Children who use a range of punctuation will do better in this area.

Once we understand how to get good marks then we can focus on the important areas.

Structure of the story

- Structure will often attract up to 10 marks.
- Examiners are looking for a story with a clear planned structure.
- Too many characters, too much action or direct speech are all indicators of poor planning skills.
- Simple stories tend to be most suited to clear planning and will attract more marks.
- The examiner will consider the overall structure at the end of the story and their general impression will result in a mark.



Speech marks revision

Words that are actually spoken are written **inside** speech marks. For example:



The teacher said, "Have you read any good books

recently?"

Core Skills

It is c

Core skills are very important. Children who can't spell or punctuate well cannot do well.

You separate from follow.

Punctuation, such as full stops, question marks or commas must all come **before** the closing speech marks.

For example:

The teacher asked Harry, "Have you read any good books recently?"

Harry replied, "Yes, I have read a few."

While we include lots of refresher tests we also include instruction sheets like this to ensure knowledge is secure.

A **new line** is used every time a different person speaks.

of speech.

Accurate Spelling



- It is important that children develop the ability to spell accurately.
- This is something which can always be improved upon so children should be encouraged to work on it.

Core Skills

Identify We use a large

Each variety of test

mis sheets to keep

and interest levels high.

Tests may contain one, two or three spelling words. Underline or circle where the mistakes are and correct them correctly on the line below.

- 1) During the lesson, I looked across the room and noted Sophie's absence.

- 2) We started our bicycle ride around Britten on a beautiful day.

- 3) I completely understood the beginning of the difficult calculation

- 4) My sister tried to embarrass me by saying I was pink

This is an example of the end of a spelling exercise.



- 5) In all the excitement I had finally forgotten the entry code and so had to ask the guard.

The importance of reviewing your written work

There is nothing we can do other than to ask you to always revisit your written work. It is what we can do.

In 6 weeks you will have a chance to review your work as a reminder to improve the work you have done. For your work is to review the work describing your work to be self-critical.

Why is this important?

- Writing improves most when students learn to be self-critical.
- Each week they'll develop their core skills and will learn lessons that could improve their work.
- As students progress through, making the stories they write 'first time' become better.
- We ask that the review work is done after the work is done. It works much better than doing an immediate review.



The mistake many children make is to write story after story hoping they'll get better.

What should children be looking out for?

- Have they overcomplicated their writing? Would the piece be better if simplified with better details?
- Have they used a range of sentence structures?
- Is the writing clear and easy to read?
- Have they used a range of punctuation marks?
- Have they used a range of adjectives and adverbs?
- Have they used a range of verbs?
- Have they used a range of nouns?
- Have they used a range of pronouns?
- Have they used a range of conjunctions?
- Have they used a range of prepositions?
- Have they used a range of interjections?
- Have they used a range of exclamation marks?
- Have they used a range of question marks?
- Have they used a range of apostrophes?
- Have they used a range of hyphens?
- Have they used a range of dashes?
- Have they used a range of brackets?
- Have they used a range of ellipses?
- Have they used a range of colons?
- Have they used a range of semicolons?
- Have they used a range of slashes?
- Have they used a range of asterisks?
- Have they used a range of at symbols?
- Have they used a range of hash symbols?
- Have they used a range of dollar signs?
- Have they used a range of percent signs?
- Have they used a range of ampersands?
- Have they used a range of tildes?
- Have they used a range of underscores?
- Have they used a range of overlines?
- Have they used a range of strikethroughs?
- Have they used a range of bold text?
- Have they used a range of italic text?
- Have they used a range of underline text?
- Have they used a range of text color?
- Have they used a range of text size?
- Have they used a range of text font?
- Have they used a range of text alignment?
- Have they used a range of text orientation?
- Have they used a range of text background color?
- Have they used a range of text background image?
- Have they used a range of text background opacity?
- Have they used a range of text background size?
- Have they used a range of text background position?
- Have they used a range of text background repeat?
- Have they used a range of text background attachment?
- Have they used a range of text background scroll?
- Have they used a range of text background zoom?
- Have they used a range of text background rotate?
- Have they used a range of text background scale?
- Have they used a range of text background skew?
- Have they used a range of text background stretch?
- Have they used a range of text background fill?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-width?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-color?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-dasharray?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-miterlimit?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-opacity?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-width?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-color?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-dasharray?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-miterlimit?
- Have they used a range of text background stroke-opacity?

Our approach is to emphasise the need, in each part of the course, for children to revisit and rewrite work they have done previously. This process enhances their writing ability.



(We help them to look at their work in these areas and more as the course develops)

NOW PLEASE REVIEW AND HAVE A SECOND GO AT THE PIECE YOU WROTE IN THE PREVIOUS PART OF THE COURSE

Using accurate vocabulary

A BETTER WORD THAN NICE

Your writing will come to life the more you use accurate vocabulary. Using words with a broad meaning like 'nice', instead of a more accurate word changes your writing. Look at the words you could use instead of



Accurate

Vocabulary

Our skills exercises cover the important areas such as spelling, punctuation, proof reading and grammar.

Cheerful

C

Delicious

Entertaining

Well-behaved

Tasty

Interesting

Lovely

Striking

Smart

Satisfying

Restful

Pleasant

Now choose one word from the box above to replace the word nice in each of these sentences. An example has been provided:

The cherry was so ~~nice~~ delicious that I ate the whole bag



- 1) The chair was so nice _____ that I did not want to get up.
- 2) The children had a nice _____ rollercoasters.
- 3) The lady thought it was nice _____ thank you.
- 4) It was nice _____ training.
- 5) The old man was clearly nice _____ smiling.
- 6) The book was so nice _____ put it down.
- 7) The dog must have thought his n _____ as he ate it very quickly.
- 8) Holly thought that the tall cathe _____ building.
- 9) The woman had a nice _____
- 10) The teacher thought that her class was a nice _____ class to teach.

We do aim to develop more specific skills. In this sheet series we are asking children to use specific and accurate vocabulary. Using accurate vocabulary enhances their written work.

Your Second Writing Task

This is your second writing task. To begin with you should have by now not only written your first writing task about a visit to the seaside but you have also re-written it to try to improve it. We'll be using that process of re-writing work to improve them throughout the course as it is a process which has been proven to improve writing.

Now have a go at writing your own story and

Your second writing task

- Focus on the ways you improved your first story with this second writing task.
- Try to use literary devices such as similes.
- Try to use literary devices such as similes.

Our initial writing tasks focus on asking children to write short descriptive pieces.

Remember:

Not.
Literary.



Thoughts to help you:

- It could be winter or summer or perhaps autumn or spring. You choose but **bring out the character of the season you choose.**
- You could be looking at a mountain or walking up it or climbing it, you could be looking up at it from a distance. **Choose any scenario you can read.**
- Think about how you can describe the scene. Use words like wind, rocks, grass, trees, clouds, snow or rain or ice. **How you describe your description to life.**

This process helps them to use many of the core skills they have learnt or refreshed as the course progresses.

Choose

such as the rabbits, help bring

Aim: to write about 120-150 words. This is the same as the first story written by one of our children. It is neither the best nor the worst. It will give you a chance to react to your own child's work.

example
then but
you could



Describe a mountain, if you have not yet visited one then use your imagination.

There needn't be any other characters in the story/description. Try to use a range of different sentence starters.

My Personal Words List

Each week you will find new words or words you haven't quite learnt yet. Familiarisation and a wide vocabulary only develops with frequent exposure. Use this sheet to identify new words, then revise them regularly

New Word (Write the new word here)	Meaning (Write down its meaning in your own words)	New word in sentence (Write a short sentence with your new word in it)
<p>Personal Words List</p> <p>We encourage children to read every day and try to find new words to develop their vocabulary.</p>		
<p>We use this simple sheet to help them learn 20 new words during each part of the course.</p>		
<p>If children have a wider vocabulary they will produce better written work.</p>		

Onomatopoeia and personification exercises

EXERCISE 1

The words on the left include the sound of the words. Write a sentence including the word.

E.g. Buzz The bee buzzed.

1) Beep/beeped

2) Crash/crashed

3) Rumble/rumbled

4) Zip/zipped

5) Drip/dripped

Once we have covered each of the literary devices we then give children exercises to help them get used to using them.

Write a sentence for each word, for each one write a sentence



EXERCISE 2

Describe the following by using personification. An example has been provided:

E.g. Stairs The stairs groaned in protest.

1) A storm

2) Night time

3) A house

4) Flowers

This exercise looks at onomatopoeia and personification.

An example has been



Alliteration



What is it?

- **Alliteration** is the use of the same sound or letter multiple times within a sentence or phrase e.g. A slippery snake
- The sounds or letters in **alliteration** do usually appear at the beginning of words, but they may appear anywhere within a word - so watch out!

Why do we use it?

- **Alliteration** gives a piece of writing character and makes it more exciting and fun.
- You can use **alliteration** just two or three words, to inject some extra life.

Other examples:

- A furious farmer.
- Mr Womble wobbled.

Literary Devices

We cover all the main literary devices.

We then encourage children to build them into their written work.



What is it?

- **Exaggeration** is a dramatic statement. You have made a mountain out of a molehill.
- Often in writing similes and metaphors are used as the method of **exaggeration**.
- The proper word for **exaggeration** is hyperbole, though you should not need to use that word in an exam.

Why do we use it?

- **Exaggeration** emphasises someone's emotions or actions.
- **Exaggeration** is used to make a situation seem more severe than it actually is.
- The phrase 'Don't make a mountain out of a molehill' actually means 'Don't **exaggerate**'.

Other examples:

- 'I've told you a million times!'
- 'I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!'



Proof reading for accuracy

- Being able to read through your work and find mistakes is an essential skill to help you improve your writing.
- Some children are good at this, whilst others still need to spend more time on it.



- Read your grammar mistakes and pretend spelling or where you think a

Continued Cores Skills Work

George While we build up creative skills we continue to focus on core skills throughout the course.

burning fire. He charged threw

the jungle in a rage, knocking down trees. He rampaged through the villige and trampled over the vegeteble garden until, finally, he reached the lake. He through himself into the cold water and laye still. This maniged to cool him down and he began to feel better.

When the villigers saw the damit very angry.

"Its a trajedy," they cried.

This series of sheets helps children to work accurately by asking them to spot the mistakes in a piece of work.

Did you find all 20 mistakes?



Building a descriptions bank

- To make story writing easier, it is helpful to have already had a brainstorming session with interesting descriptions for characters of your story.

- By having a bank of descriptions you will be able to choose the best ones for your story. Children who enter a writing competition will struggle to produce a good story in the limited time available.



Descriptions Bank

We spend time asking children to develop, improve and learn a series of descriptions covering characters, feelings, objects, the natural world and other areas.



Writing sentence:

1. He walked to the shops every day to buy the newspaper.

Now see how we can build up the description of this story to make it more interesting...

Mr Peterson was so old that most people would say he had a large bald head, apart from three fine hairs on the sides as lined as a piece of old leather and his face wrinkled dramatically. When he walked he moved slowly and bent over he always looked like he was trying to fight against a gale. Every movement involved considerable effort. He stubbornly each morning to buy the newspaper. He was a customer of for fifty years.

When children walk into an exam room with lots of interesting descriptions in their bank then the work they produce naturally attracts high marks.

He was so old that his teeth had been out for years.

This demonstrates how you should not be afraid to use a large number of descriptive words.

Even the most basic pieces of action can score high marks if the events are described in-depth with interesting vocabulary and creative devices built in.

Writing It's impossible to think of lots of interesting descriptions in the short time allowed for an exam.

from?

vocabulary

Simile - simile which paints a picture of the old man

any

descriptive expression

Now

sentences

Preparing beforehand gives children a head start.

Have a go yourself at making this

It went over the fence.



Descriptions Bank Form

This form should be used to detail the individual elements of your descriptions bank. As descriptions are revised and improved, we add them so you can recall them with ease.



As part of the descriptions bank development process we issue these blank forms. We encourage children to use new forms and continually work to improve their descriptions.

What are you describing?	Describe it

If in the exam they need to describe how an old man walks, the noise a baby makes when it cries or what it feels like to walk in a gale they'll have an interesting description ready to use or one they can adapt.

Planning a good story

Planning your story before you start writing helps you to set out your ideas clearly. Only spend around **three to five minutes** doing this. It is easier if you divide the story into **three sections** first:



1. INTRODUCTION

- Your introduction should **set the scene** of your story, think about the sights, smells and sounds of the setting.
- You might stick to your story, remember effective.
- The main action happens.
- Perhaps needs **fixing**.
- Remember he would be: A man has lost his find them.
- Your conclusion in your story to an end, perhaps **resolving** a problem or escaping a situation.

We help children develop their core skills, and their description banks. We then give them a go at writing lots of little stories. Finally we then move onto full length stories.

It might help to imagine your story is like a sandwich. The top of the bread is the **introduction**, the filling is the **main body** and the bottom of the bread is the **conclusion**!



Improving your story

Whilst you are reading through your story, use this checklist to tick if you did the following:



- ☐ varied your sentence starters/sentence length
- ☐ used literary devices in your work
- ☐ used interesting descriptions of characters and setting
- ☐ kept your story line simple so that you had time to complete it
- ☐ used correct punctuation and spelling



- Now that you have finished your story, go back and check your work.
- REPEAT the checklist for the other four stories.
- You should make sure you have used all the ingredients to make your story interesting.

We remind children to use all the skills they have learnt and to work accurately. We also remind them of the benefit they can gain from being self-critical.

- The examples of predictable endings which end in a predictable manner.
- You should try to avoid doing this as an examiner would be far more impressed by an original and exciting ending than something they have read before.
- An example of a predictable ending is: 'Then I woke up and realised it was all a dream'.



Example story plan

Start title: The Day We Got Lost

We start by giving children fully planned stories to write. We do this so they can focus on descriptive writing rather than getting carried away on overly ambitious plot.

ON:

snowy day in December - big snow men, slippery underfoot
am and his younger, excitable



covered their shoe tracks so they

Feelings - panic, scared, confusion, cold, tired. George starts to cry as its getting dark.



CONCLUSION:

- **Resolution** - William luckily spots them and realises that finding their car will get them back home
- **Feelings** - make it home-relief,

We always encourage them to have another go at writing each story after a few days.



Now have a go at writing this story!
Spend no longer on it than 35 minutes

Words you may not know

These words have come up in previous selective school tests so using them will help demonstrate the breadth of your vocabulary.



- Complete the exercise
- Add any words you didn't get to your personal words list
- Use the exercises as stimulation to help you to develop some vocabulary rich descriptions.

Insert the words from the box into the correct sentence:

rowdy	barked	battered	lark	wither
imitated	counter	<i>Continued work</i>		badgered



- Khan's tenth birthday party _____ group was expelled from the restaurant.
- The new boy invited several _____ the hope that it would _____ strong.
- The Major-General _____
- Joe's team _____ ten goals.
- The girls went outside to _____ un.
- My enthusiasm for the task began to _____ after the fifth hour.
- She couldn't _____ the sight of seeing her son struggle and went to help him.
- Peter _____ his mother until she finally relented and allowed him to eat the Jaffa cake.
- My mother uses a night cream to _____ the signs of ageing.
- I _____ my father by standing on a chair and using my deepest voice.

Practice Story Title 1

You have 35 minutes to write this story including planning and checking time.

A Day at the Seaside

Thoughts to help you:

- Describe what the seaside is like-sights/sounds/smells
- Who is there? - two friends, a family, a dog walker
- What happens whilst they are there? - think of an exciting event with feelings
- Come up with a happy ending

We then take a step back from fully planned stories and only give story prompts.

This approach helps children to gradually improve their own planning skills.



Work once

- Wait for a good idea and re-write your story
- Pupils who are self-critical and look for ways to improve their stories make much more progress.



More practice story titles

The Birthday Party

- Whose birthday party is it? How old are they?
- Why is this party so memorable? -a special present?
- What happens at the party? - think of an exciting event which takes place, describe character's feelings/emotions

- Come up with a resolution- Do they fix the machine? If so, how is it fixed?

The final step is to give children story titles to write themselves.

By this stage their writing skills will have improved considerably.

The Broken Time

- Why is it broken? - invent it?
- Why is it broken? - past/future?
- Why is it broken? - the past/future?
- Come up with a resolution- Do they fix the machine? If so, how is it fixed?



You should now have a story that includes all **the main ingredients** to make sure you achieve high marks!