

## - Extension Activities: Ideas from the author to go with 3 Ten Word Tales

Here is a rather random collection of ideas. I have attempted to organize them and to offer a few thoughts about why they might have a purpose in the curriculum. They are not startling but we thought, as you are bound to be busy, a few ideas might be helpful to go with the tales and might be useful for another time, if not 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Please let us know if you have not already received our email with the stories, questions and recordings sent last week.

WHICH STORY? Although broadly for use with primary-aged children, these stories are probably most suited to Years 3 and 4, though I have tried some activities with Years 5 and 6 and they have listened to the stories without objection. I would say *Ninth Ninja* is the only one that could be done at some level with Year 2 while also having some appeal in terms of theme for older years. I think *Where's The Wandle Worm* is most 'booky' for book week and the ten words chosen for *Panama Frog* are the most challenging (and certainly stretchy enough for Year 6).

READING: I am not sure how well these stories would work without the written word to support the spoken word. They are meant to be read aloud but would be best read with the words as well, I think. You have already received a link to a version with my voice but I think you reading would be best. This is not just because my voice is low with a tendency to monotone (!), but because you know best how to engage with your children and when you bump into vocabulary which needs explaining, it is easier for you to stop and move on smoothly rather than to pause a recording.

TRIED AND TESTED? Not all of these ideas have been tried and tested alongside these stories, and the ideas may be ones you have used yourselves many times before, but I have tried a number of them with Year 5 and Year 6 students, to see if they are accessible. I was quite convinced for instance that reading the stories and getting them to guess which 10 words inspired them would be a lovely detective-ish game, keeping attention on the tale. In fact, it proved almost impossible, though it may be that I tried it before explaining fully what they 10 words were and how the stories worked. I think with other groups it might have worked better. You will know best.

There are 5 ideas which could be used with any of the three stories and then 5 ideas for each individual tale. There are some explanations and variations. Forgive any rambling.

*What has definitely been true since the Ten Word Tales began is that the children who chose the words have enjoyed the stories that their ideas created. They felt rightly proud. Also, I have always enjoyed doing them. If any school wants to send me ten words, I'd be happy to write a ten-word tale from your words.*

Here we go ....

### Any Story

what	explanation	why
1. Read in 5 different places	Use 5 different locations in which to read the 5 parts of the story. Although this could just be going for a wander rather than sitting in class (or might particularly suit a small group that prefers to keep moving), this would be best if there was a reason to move. The stories themselves are hardly cliff-hangers but they were written to be read in 5 parts and <i>The Wandle Worm</i> specifically has a location per part. In the 5 locations there could be the key words for that section hidden (in a hide and seek way) or up somewhere in the room. This could be something you draw attention to as soon as they sit down, so they are on the	Probably seems a bit fanciful and might not be practically possible. Younger children might lose attention while moving but by tying parts of the story to different environment a sense of a story's progression should be

	<p>look out for when the word appears in the story. (Perhaps for younger ones, they could spring up (jump words!) when they hear it, or put up their hands). The hidden element could be stretched. Changing location would be an excuse to pull the story together before you read the next part and perhaps focusing on words to come might encourage guesses about what might happen next. You could tell them the words in the next section and see what they think <i>might</i> happen in the story. With older children, you could discuss the words, their meanings and the 'weight' they might have, e.g. a word like <i>weapon</i> or <i>ninja</i> is likely to have more impact when it appears than, for example, <i>good</i> or <i>tree</i>.</p>	<p>conveyed. Stories may move from place to place in terms of ideas or moods, even when strictly speaking they stay still. This could be explored/discussed.</p>
2. Design a Cover	<p>Could give them a blank book-cover, with room for blurb if they are older children. For younger children it would be more about a moment in the story that they think should be on the cover, what cover might make them want to read the story, perhaps just what they can draw. Older children could analyse and review. They could think of a better/different title. Younger children choosing a moment would be focusing on a significant moment for them in a story, through choosing the moment for a picture.</p>	<p>Pictures may seem easier than words but are also a good way of selecting material, highlighting specific moments; they are a medium through which someone can respond. Older children would be practising skills of analysis and making judgements.</p>
3. Missing Pictures	<p>I am very aware that for younger children especially there are not enough pictures. This was to do with how we were presenting the story online during lockdown (and my limited artistic skills!). I believe younger children would need more pictures to hold their attention during stories that are fairly long and complicated, if these were books. It might seem an easy task but could ask older children: <i>What pictures are missing? What do you think younger readers especially might want to see? Or What 5 pictures would you choose?</i> (BEFORE showing the 5 there are). All could be good discussion points. They could 'make' them (one each).</p>	<p>Choosing/ recognizing significant moments in a story or any passage of writing is important in comprehending and analysing any story. It is essentially part of judging <i>What is Important?</i></p>
4. Write a Ten Word Tale	<p>My experience would suggest that getting children to write based on ten words is not as simple as it sounds. You know your classes best so you know if yours would leap on this with joy ... or not ... and how best to begin:</p> <p>Give the whole class the <b>same 10 words</b> and see what differences and similarities in stories emerge</p> <p><b>OR</b> Get class to each <b>write 10 words</b> and then you choose one person's choice for the class</p> <p><b>OR</b> Get class to each <b>write 5 words</b> (or could be done as group) and you decide from their choices (this gives them input but you some control)</p> <p><b>OR</b> Get each member of the class to write down <b>10 words</b>. Take them in (and if time type them up) and then <b>distribute them</b> (probably best done in named envelopes so you can have some control over who gets what). They would then be writing stories inspired by their classmates. Any discussion of words which were easy to write from or hard would need to be sensitively handled.</p> <p><b>OR</b> You write 10 words for each child. It would take a while but I think many would be much more motivated by thinking YOU had chosen the words <b>ESPECIALLY</b>. (This has been true for me too. I want to 'honour' the choices)</p> <p><b>OR</b> You could ask for specific parts of speech e.g. Give 2 adverbs, 3 verbs, 3 nouns and 2 adjectives.</p> <p>When I have tried this task with Year 5 and Year 6, I have suggested that the story was aimed at Year 2-4. This encourages writing for a specific audience.</p>	<p>Of course, 10 words is a fairly random concept but I have found that it is very revealing the way the words chosen frame a story. Some words give you loads of choice (<i>yucky, good, life, box</i>). Others are very specific (<i>ninja, centurion, garbage-truck</i>). Discussion of individual words (and their impact) should be useful when reading any book or studying a passage with questions.</p> <p>Could practise parts of speech.</p> <p>Encourage a more developed understanding of what a writer is doing when they 'craft' a story</p>

	<p><b>Write stories on ten words</b> (chosen by one of the above methods).</p> <p>If you have smaller groups or plenty of time to discuss, you can cope with the inevitable oddities (recently with year 5 I received <i>poo</i>, <i>emo</i>, <i>churros</i> and <i>mochi</i>, amongst others. I did not know what a <i>mochi</i> was and was interested to learn. We ‘decided’ together, after discussion, that Year 2 or 3 might just find <i>poo</i> funny and be silly, <i>emo</i> was not a suitable concept for the young and maybe one specific food word was enough. I think there would be some danger in asking them to write 10 words and pass them on without you seeing them. You might want to check suitability. As an exercise the choosing is as important as the writing. When I have done the writing there is a slight tendency for the words to appear at once in a kind of list. You would want to give some specific guidance to get them to explore ideas and give shape and direction as appropriate to their skills.</p> <p><b>OR</b> you could do one together.</p> <p><b>OR</b> decide on 10 words together and then YOU write a story for them or invite anyone interested to write a story in their own time. Could have a mini competition.</p>	
5. Can You Guess the Words?	<p>I thought this would be quite an entertaining option for Years 5 and 6 ... To listen to the story and try to guess the 10 words that made it but (a) it is much harder than you think and (b) I suspect myself of deliberately using the words in a hidden way. I tried this with a small group of Year 5. The first time one person out of 6 guessed one word out of 10. When we had discussed the concept more fully they were much better. I think the <i>Wandle Worm</i> does not work so well for this and <i>the Panama Frog</i> words are quite difficult so if you want to try, <i>Ninth Ninja</i> is the best choice. Also, you need to help them spread choices through the whole story.</p>	<p>See above: increasing an awareness of the ‘weight’ of individual words in a story and the way they may be used. Sounds a very subtle thing but it is also a basic skill that will always be useful.</p>

## Where’s the Wandle Worm

what	explanation	why
1. 5 places	<p>This story takes place in 5 different locations. <b>Write</b> a story that takes place in 5 different locations in your school. <i>You could give them the 5 places and then GO to those places and write there. NB this would be trickier but if they ALL had, for example, library, entrance hall, corridor, y5 classroom, staircase and wrote from their imagination rather than in location, you could choose one story that uses the places particularly well and READ the story in the places rather than WRITING there ...</i></p>	<p>As above ... and can be a way to develop understanding of structuring a story</p>
2. Alliteration	<p>The story, including the title, uses alliteration. <b>Write</b> a 5 (or more) word-phrase about you, using the first letter of your name. <i>Check understanding of alliteration (or explain what it is). Doesn’t need to be complicated Juicy Joanna Jumps for Joy sort of thing. Could go with a display of all the names, perhaps with pictures. Need to check all words chosen are appropriate. Could go with work on parts of speech, e.g. say they need to include at least one adjective and one verb.</i></p>	<p>Understanding of term: alliteration</p> <p>Could be used to reinforce understanding of parts of speech</p>
3. Your Book	<p>Decide on the <b>title</b> of a book you would one day like to write and <b>design a cover</b> for it.</p> <p><i>Could reflect a genuine dream of a book they’d love to write, or a subject they know about, or a favourite topic. Could be funny? They only need to think what they would</i></p>	<p>For any would-be writer, a chance to show their hopes. Any child could have ideas reaffirmed by this. Chance for more discussion of books. <i>Who thinks that writing a</i></p>

	<p><i>like it to be about so more of an idea-storming than need for any writing.</i></p> <p><i>Could talk about what books look like, what you might imagine a book might be about from its cover; could be a chance to discuss book covers or talk about brilliant books with rubbish covers ... etc. Perhaps discuss the absence of a cover-always-seen with books online/tablets.</i></p>	<p><i>book is a good thing to do? Do you want to be characters in a favourite book rather than to be a writer of that story?</i></p> <p>Could discuss implications. Could relate to any author they are aware of e.g. a class reader, a writer they have heard speak.</p>
4. The Worm!	<p><b>Write a story</b> (possibly a newspaper article ... but 1737??) about the time when the massive fresh-water eel was caught in the Wandle/the Thames OR Write about a new discovery of something unexpected living in the Thames (either possible e.g. dolphin, seal, big fish ... or fantasy e.g. small dragon, mermaid). Perhaps discuss the way the word 'worm' was used for eels and long wriggly things generally. It might be quite funny to write about an ordinary worm instead ...</p>	<p>Could add in some research on odd things found in the river. It extends understanding of one part of the story. It imagines in context and gives a chance to write about the past.</p>
5. Picture	<p>The attached version of an ancient eel may seem alarming to those of a nervous disposition. I have included the adapted woodcut with added eel. I think any picture of unexpected creatures in either the Wandle or the Thames could both look good and possibly be amusing. Could discuss the Wandle (local and interesting historically) and the Thames before 'making' the pictures ... Could be an emphasis on the river, perhaps collage, mainly waves, so the added unexpected creature stands out.</p>	<p>As previously: a picture may be a way to illustrate understanding of the story or to reflect an imaginative response.</p>

## THE PANAMA FROG

what	explanation	why
1. Holiday	<p><b>Write</b> a postcard home (or to a friend) from your favourite holiday location. Arguably just a slightly different take on: what would BE your favourite holiday... but it would make it short and focused.</p> <p>Older pupils could also write in a way that suggests the character writing (not necessarily themselves) and the character being written to and the relationship they have. Could write to a friend and also to a granny ... and discuss how you might approach the same events differently depending on who you tell them to ...</p>	<p>Writing about location.</p> <p>Tone appropriate to recipient e.g. elderly relative/friend/parent.</p> <p>For comprehension: could discuss how a story and characters are revealed indirectly in some writing.</p>
2. Languages	<p><i>Rana</i> is frog in Spanish. Look up and write down the word for frog in 10 other languages. <i>Discuss the sound of the words. Any onomatopoeia? A hint of something croaky or jumpy? Which is your favourite? (If you think this would interest a younger class, you could bring in the words and see if they could guess what the languages are, e.g. kikker in Dutch; grenouille in French). Could even get a map of the world and put frogs in the right places.</i></p> <p><i>Could do the same with other animals or birds.</i></p> <p>Also, children with other languages could bring in their words for animals. Could lead to a discussion on wildlife in other places ☺</p>	<p>Could be useful!</p> <p>Awareness of other cultures and other languages.</p> <p>Could lead to discussion about sounds: words for animals and birds in other languages are often linked to the sound they make ... so always good for onomatopoeia, if you are ever doing that topic/word/device.</p>
3. Treasure Hunt	<p>It is weirdly easy and cheap to buy treasure (possibly because of an excess of pirate-themed children's parties). A treasure <b>hunt</b> might be riotous but attaching a piece of treasure to one of the words ....? Could illustrate the way you have to HUNT for words sometimes in literacy ... the right word in your own writing, the word with a particular</p>	<p>Linking words and treasure is no bad thing.</p> <p>The sense of a hunt for the right word or a particular word is important. It's an illustration</p>

	effect or conveying particular information in someone else's writing.	of what you mean when you tell them to focus.
4. Stolen Treasure	<p><b>Research</b> EITHER: Go on to the British Museum website (which incidentally has some material on 'treasures from elsewhere' and the issue of ownership) and choose a treasure OR Choose a country; research its treasures ... then <b>prepare a short talk</b> to your class on the treasure lasting one minute.</p> <p><b>OR</b> Search out 3 facts about Panama that you find interesting and <b>tell the class</b> (building up a 'whole' picture)</p> <p><b>OR discuss</b> museums owning items from other countries ... <i>The items might inform visitors about the other country and celebrate that other country (which a visitor might never see) but how were those items acquired? ... and other issues</i></p>	<p>A debatable subject so could focus arguing and reasoning skills.</p> <p>Might relate to a trip.</p> <p>You might not want rampage and rebellion next time you take them on a museum trip, so ponder wisely.</p>
5. Haiku	<p><b>Write a haiku on ...</b> Could talk about haiku structure and ask for a haiku that pulls the whole story together, perhaps writing one together and then getting the children to write their own 5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables ... Or change the shape from haiku but use the compact idea, e.g. 10+10+10 syllables, to fit with the Ten Word Tales (discussing the difference between syllables and words). Here's an example:</p> <p><i>golden frog, stolen, running thief drops and a child finds, rescues, returns.</i></p> <p>OR use other words and themes: frog, treasure, hope, disturbance, rescue, hot chocolate, gold ...</p> <p>Younger children could write 10 words? Perhaps about something in the story or maybe explaining their view of a tricky word, like treasure ...?</p>	<p>Nothing develops an understanding of poetry like writing poems.</p> <p>A haiku on the whole story would practise summary skills as well as understanding and selecting important material.</p> <p>Frog haiku could just be fun!</p> <p>Those nervous of poems sometimes finding something short and with a specific structure less daunting.</p>

## The Ninth Ninja

what	explanation	why
1. What is a ninja?	<p>Not just an artistically-named turtle ...</p> <p>This could be <b>researched</b> and developed into a <b>discussion</b> of warriors in other cultures, perhaps moving towards a discussion of superheroes, the idea of super-powers, and the link to normality. <i>With older pupils you could wander towards broader topics such as what superheroes suggest about what society values ... And whether that is helpful/revealing?</i></p> <p>Of course, this could turn into: <i>If you were a superhero what would your superpower be, etc.?</i></p> <p>Could also go in a direction of discussing where reassurance and affirmation come from and HOW to value yourself ...</p> <p>Could also link to a discussion of what being brave IS: the story mentions the extraordinary and ordinary: could discuss bravery in ordinary life and bravery without weapons.</p>	<p>A discussion on what is valuable to wider society, to your school, your class, is always a good thing.</p> <p>Wider understanding of other cultures through looking at "warriors"... and of historical context and ideas of what power IS!</p>
2. Recycling poster	<p>Design a poster reminding people to recycle correctly, separating the recyclable from the non-recyclables, etc.</p> <p>This could be more to do with language than art: could discuss persuasive language, advertising and information (e.g. Covid signs) and what would help to persuade people to do the right thing.</p> <p>Could be a poster to put up by the bins at home, or for somewhere in school ...</p>	<p>Focus on an important message about the environment and responsibility.</p> <p>Exploration of ways to persuade.</p> <p>Could discuss relationship between pictures and words.</p>

<p>3. Design a Superhero</p>	<p><b>Design a superhero/heroine</b> who is linked to the theme of either recycling or to the climate and the environment. This could be a SUPERGREEN hero or FIRST IN THE FOREST or similar. This could be focused on how the hero would look (younger pupils) or what he/she/they would do to protect the environment and motivate others. Could also devise a villain as a foil to your superhero. Could work in pairs to think of both.</p>	<p>Link to discussion above in point 1: what is admirable or valuable in a person? What do heroes and heroines do?  Consider polarized roles of good and evil in films and literature.</p>
<p>4. Make a Rubbish Monster</p>	<p>Could simply use rubbish as collage material: Attached is a sample! I am sure you don't <i>need</i> me to send you a blurry-person-outline but I thought you might like to see that a monster made of rubbish (perhaps from your classroom bin, once safely sorted) looks weirdly good once cut out and put on black card.  If you want more chaos, you could amass rubbish, including boxes (and all that Amazon packaging) over a week, divide into teams, give roughly equal amounts of rubbish and either one roll of tape or only string (!) to each group and have a monster challenge with someone coming to judge (or could be you 😊) and a fixed time and a display at the end.</p>	<p>Recycling recyclable material; rubbish becomes art ... What's not to love!</p>
<p>Poetry and more</p>	<p><b>Write an acrostic poem</b> on any of the following words: monster, recycling, ninja, nine, weapon, sword, centurion, help, garden. <b>Write your own story</b> about a monster made of rubbish. <b>Write an article</b> about the themes of ordinary and extraordinary, perhaps answering the question WOULD YOU RATHER BE ORDINARY OR EXTRAORDINARY? Or IS THERE SUCH A THING AS A SUPERHERO IN REAL LIFE? Or IS <i>EVERYONE</i> A HERO/HEROINE? I think during Covid the language of heroes (NHS, Captain Tom) has been used more broadly. The children might have something to say on this. Perhaps give a word limit and ideas before they begin. It is not easy to write argumentatively for very long. <b>Write some questions</b> for your class to discuss on this subject or anything else that has occurred to you since reading the story.</p>	<p>Different kinds of writing could be generated.  Issues.</p>

I wish you well with everything. Whatever bookish activities you get up to on World Book Day, have a brilliant time. If you need any help or have any questions, (or have a lovely ten-word collection for my story-spinning attention - but if lots of you are keen, it may take a while!) you are welcome to email me direct: [JulieJSh1@aol.com](mailto:JulieJSh1@aol.com).

Best wishes for what's left of half-term,  
Best wishes for World Book Day,

*Julie S Sharp*

Author of the Ten Word Tales