

33 Ideas for Inspiring Writing!



1. Use Myst...

Explore the landscapes...

- * What can you see / hear / smell / feel?
- * Give running commentaries as you explore.



Think about the characters...

- * Who are these characters? What kind of people are they?
- * What hopes and secrets might they have?



Watch the Youtube video to see Tim Rylands exploring Myst with a class.

For further information, visit:

- www.mrwarner.com/?s=myst
- www.timrylands.com
- www.kented.org.uk/myst

2. Make your own Superhero!



Write a description of your hero:

- What super-powers do they have?
- What adventures do they have?
- What is their alter-ego like?
- Do they have a side-kick?
- Write an incredible adventure for your super-hero.
- Who is their arch enemy?

Thanks to
[@porchester](#) and
[@mbarrow](#) for
inspiring this idea.

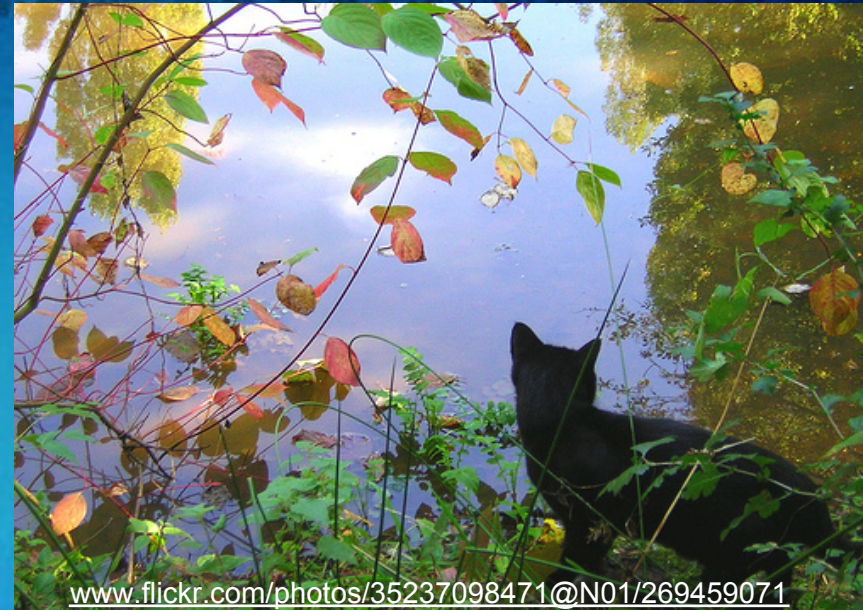
Make your own hero [here](#)!

3. Use online images...



www.flickr.com/photos/19069098@N00/2477655692

Find interesting
images at Flickr
or Crooked
Brains to inspire
discussion and
written work.



www.flickr.com/photos/35237098471@N01/269459071



www.flickr.com/photos/28574571@N00/205700574



www.flickr.com/photos/36521968006@N01/183927



www.flickr.com

CrookedBrains

www.crookedbrains.net

4. The Piano



- * Identify the different characters.
- * Who are they? How are they connected?
- * Describe their emotions at different points in the film.
- * Think of words / phrases to describe their expressions / emotions.

5. Build your wild self



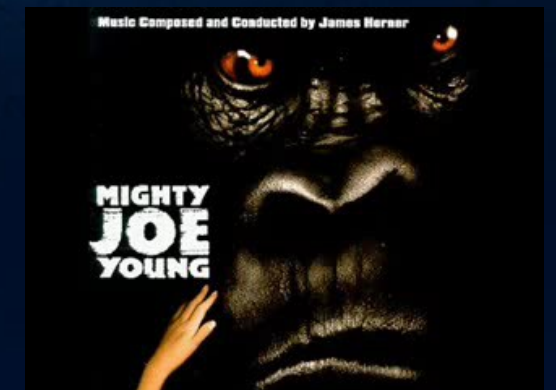
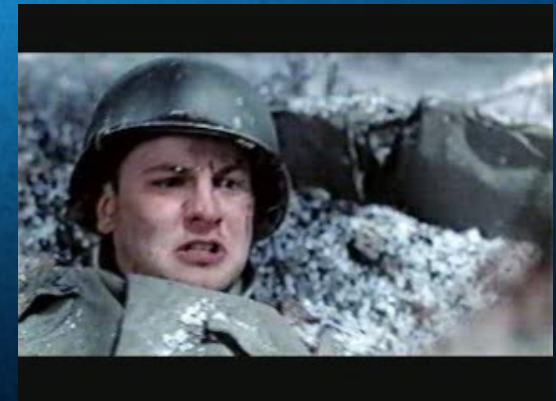
www.buildyourwildself.com

- * Make your own 'wild self' and think of vocabulary / similes / metaphors to describe the creation.
- * Think about the special abilities your character might have.
- * Share ideas about the different adventures they may have.

6. Listen to music...

Thanks to Joy Simpson for suggesting this idea.

- * Find appropriate music to listen to with your class, but don't tell them what it is, or where it comes from.
- * This page has some examples, but any music could be used!
- * Explore the emotions that the music evokes whilst listening.
- * Make a storyboard to show what might be happening, if that music were to be used as a story / film soundtrack.



7. Explore words with Wordle

- * Copy the text of a story / poem into Wordle.net. This could be a text you're studying, or a copy of a child's work.
- * Look at the results to analyse the vocabulary used.
- * Try using these words as inspiration for a new text, or for editing and improving the original one.



More Wordle Ideas:

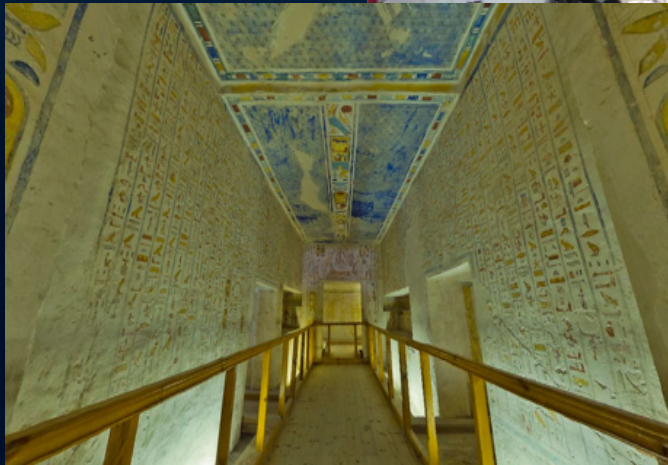
Clever Sheep's Blog

ICT Inspirations blog

The above Wordle shows text from 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes.

8. Travel the world!

- * Use sites like Panoramas.dk, 360cities.net or Gigapan.org to explore different places around the world.
- * Use the tools to pan around and zoom in / out.
- * Zoom in on one particular spot. Use it as a starting point for discussion / writing as you then explore around that place and try to work out where you are, and what is going on.



9. Make your own telescopic text!

- * Use the Telescopic Text site to see how basic sentences can be expanded by adding extra detail / adjectives / adverbs etc.
- * Give children a basic sentence (e.g. I walked home). Can your pupils expand it and add extra detail?
- * Get them to challenge each other... one person writes a basic starting sentence and others have to expand it.

I made tea.



I made a nice cup of tea.



Yawning, I walked into the kitchen and made a nice cup of tea.

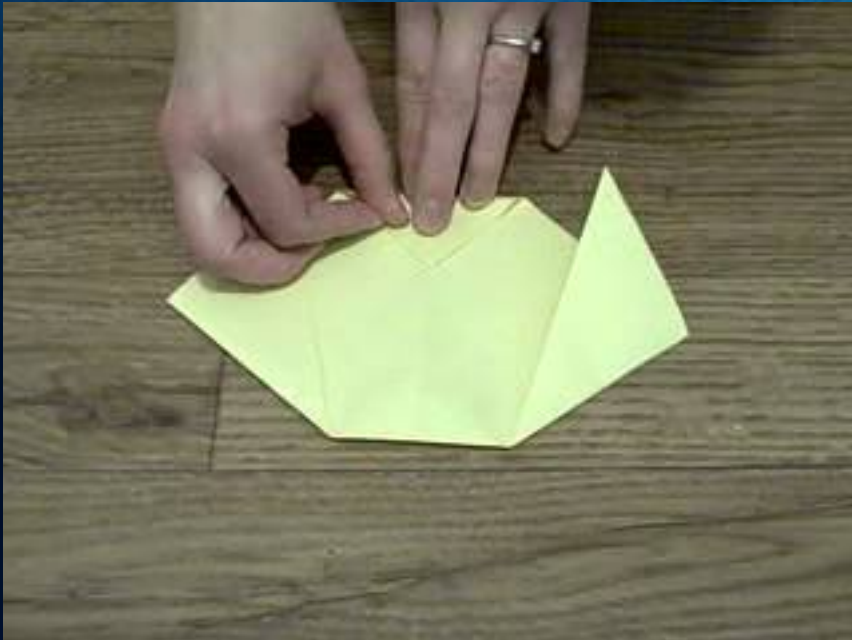


Yawning, I walked bleary eyed into the kitchen and filled the kettle. I got some biscuits. I took the milk out of the fridge and poured some into a mug. The kettle began grumbling fiercely so I poured water on to a teabag and watched it brew. I put the teabag in the bin. I picked up my mug and left the kitchen with a nice, hot cup of strong tea.

* You can create your own customised version of Telescopic Text at basseq.com.

10. Instructional Videos

- * Use a video camera to record something being made (e.g. origami, a sandwich).
- * Ask children to follow the video (without sound), pausing / rewinding as appropriate, and copy what is happening.
- * Can the pupils create written instructions / a voiceover for the video to describe the action?
- * If possible, could your pupils plan and record an instructional video themselves?



Useful instruction sites include:

Instructables

Videojug

(be aware that some instructions on these sites are not appropriate for children!)

11. Film reviews...

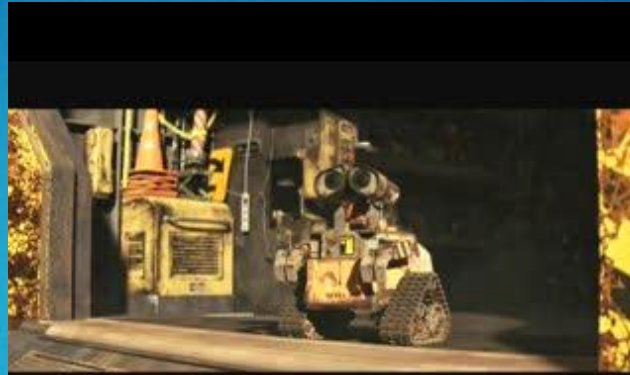
*Thanks to Joy Simpson for
suggesting this idea.*

- * Select an appropriate film trailer... sites like Youtube, Apple or English Trailers have lots of them.

- * Watch the trailer and discuss the plot, setting, characters etc.

- * Explore the children's opinions of the film, based upon the viewing of the trailer. What are the good bits? What might be boring parts of the film?

- * Write a film review... could you record your own TV-style film review show?



12. Start a debate...

- * Visit Number 10 Petitions to see the online petitions that people have posted. Some may be inappropriate for pupils, so find one that may be useful. Are there any petitions that address local issues?
- * Look at the details of the chosen petition... how strong is public opinion? How many people have signed the petition?
- * Make a list of 'For' and 'Against' arguments.
- * Hold a class debate to discuss the issue.
- * Can the children think of an issue that could be raised in a petition?
- * Write a persuasive letter to the prime minister to discuss the issue.

Allow the Red Arrows to Fly at the 2012 Olympics (with responses)	Mark Standley	17 September 2008	502613
scrap speed cameras (with response)	Paul Smith	26 June 2007	28092
Build Bike Dirt Jumps in Warrington	Chris Taylor	24 November 2007	1

13. Use digital cameras to storyboard

- * Ask your children to take a series of photos with digital cameras.
- * These might show a short sequence of events, the actions of a character / person, or something that is taking place at school.
- * Use the photos as the 'plan' for a written story.
- * The photos could be imported into 'Photo Story' or '2CreateaStory' with text and audio added to make a multimedia story.



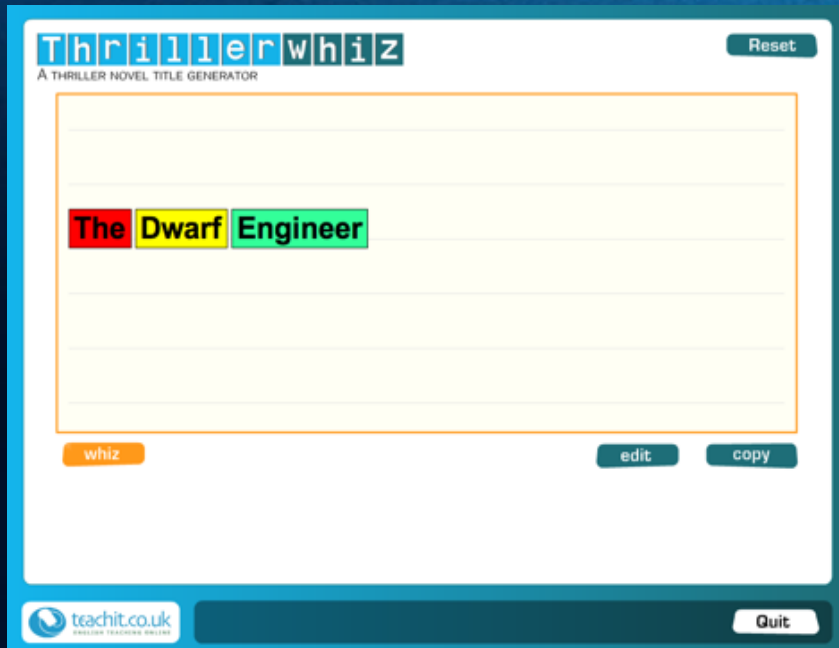
*These images come
from Crooked Brains.*



Thanks
to @mattlovegrove for
suggesting this idea.

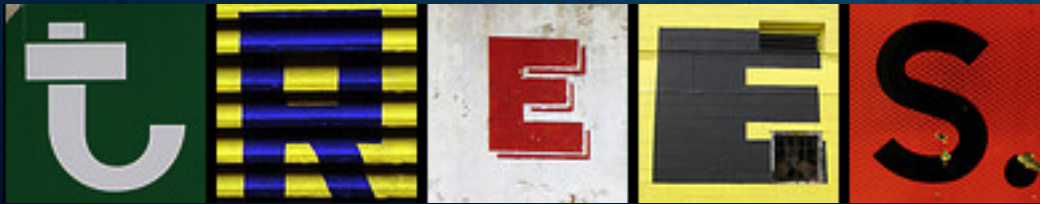
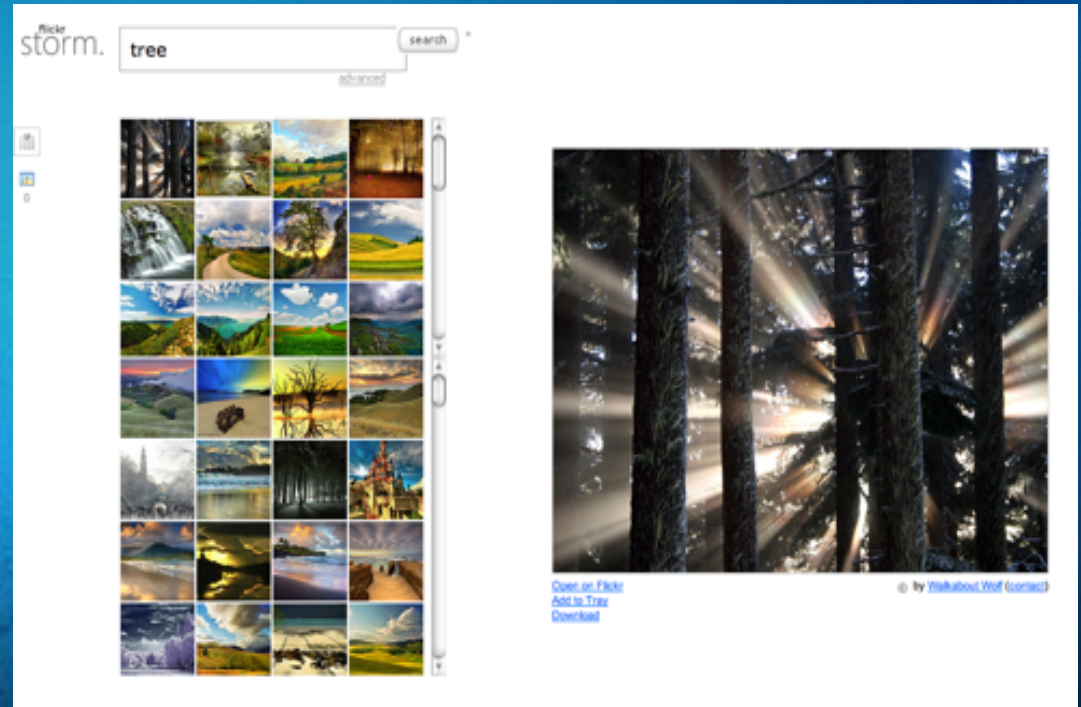
14. Whiz up a title!

- * Use the Thriller Whiz tool to generate a new title for a story.
- * Think about the characters / settings / plot which might appear in that story.
- * Can you write the story with your Thriller Whiz title?



15. Poems with imagery and images!

- * Write poetry using lots of figurative language.
- * Search Flickrstorm to find images that match with the themes in your poem.
- * Use words from your poem at Spell with Flickr to create pictures where each letter is an image...



- * Then produce a Powerpoint / Photostory where you combine the images you have collected, and your poem using text / audio recordings.

Thanks to @twowhizzy for suggesting this idea.

16. Bring photos to life

- * Use Crazytalk to add speech to a photo of a person / character.
- * Choose a character from a story you are reading... use Crazytalk to bring them to life, describing how they are feeling at a particular part in their story... (e.g. Humpty Dumpty after falling off of the wall).
- * Retell a story from a character's point of view (e.g. the Gingerbread man)
- * Take a photo of an everyday object (e.g. Lego character, church gargoyle), and think about what they might want to say.



If you don't have the Crazytalk software, you could use the Voki or Blabberize sites.

Thanks to @mbarrow for suggesting this idea.



Here's an example of what Crazytalk can do...

17. Presenting the Weather

- * Watch some examples of weather forecasts on Youtube.
- * Find up-to-date weather data at the BBC or Wunderground sites.
- * Write a script for a TV-style weather report, using this information, and in a similar style to the forecasts viewed earlier.
- * Stand the 'presenter' in front of a whiteboard, and project maps of the relevant locations onto it.
- * Paste the script into Cueprompter and record the weather forecast!



Good evening, and welcome to the weather forecast. Today has been quite a chilly day, with a few gentle breezes around the

18. Pick a setting... pick an emotion...

- * Choose a location for a piece of descriptive writing. It might be somewhere around school... digital photos might help to support your writing.

- * Choose an emotion.

- * Explore how that place makes you feel when

you are there, using lots of descriptive language.

This library was the one that most cool school kids flee from. There were horribly dusty shelves. When people sneezed, dust exploded into people's faces. Everything was old, especially the librarian. She was wrinkled like a tortoise and had warts like a witch. Her hair was as white as mist. Specks of dandruff fell from her hair and mingled with the dust. The books on the shelves looked like they came from the Roman Empire because if you touched the pages they disintegrated at the edges. They were also just for adults. The writing was microscopic and seemed to be in ancient gibberish. It looked as if the books hadn't been checked out for ages because no-one could understand them. The only sound was the silence pulsing through the bookshelves. Strangely, everywhere there was a carpet of torn pages lying everywhere, like wounded people in a hospital during a war. There were spider webs on the pages on the floor. Some of the pages looked as if they had been eaten by termites and vomited back out. The library looked like a gigantic toilet for mice.



Idea and example contributed by Leigh Newton and class P8N.

19. Make a Museum Box...

- * If you could put a number of items into a box that described your life, what would you include?
- * The Museum Box lets you make virtual boxes, in which you can store images, video and sound clips related to your own life, or the life of people from the past.
- * Try making a museum box for someone and then write about the items included and why they were picked.
- * Write from the point of view of a famous historical character, who is explaining the contents of their own box.



20. Random Story Starters...

- * Use the Scholastic Story Starter machine to create a random beginning for a story.
- * Use the buttons to change individual parts of the story starter, or pull the spin lever to change everything!
- * If you're not happy with the one you're given, just spin again!

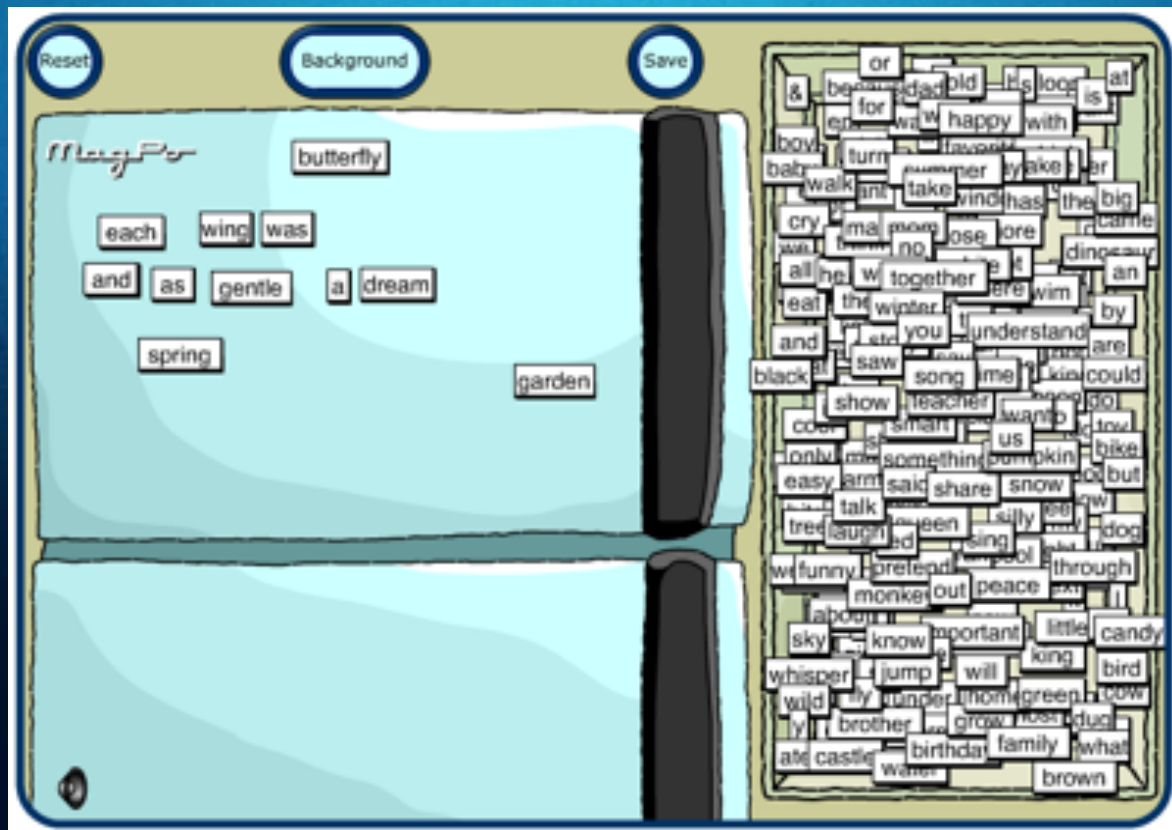


21. Animoto

- Use Animoto to create a slideshow of images that graphically represent the topic and then they use that to move to writing.
- Students take the pictures, upload, and choose music that relates to the mood of the images/topic.
- Can be related to a variety of topics:
 - Landscapes/cityscapes
 - A character in novel
 - A setting in a novel
 - The plot of a novel
- Can write about their own slideshows or share with others or do both and compare the end literary results.

22. Fridge Magnet Poetry

- Use the Fridge Magnet Poetry tool to generate a poem using the given selection of words.
- Ideas and resources for teachers can be found here.

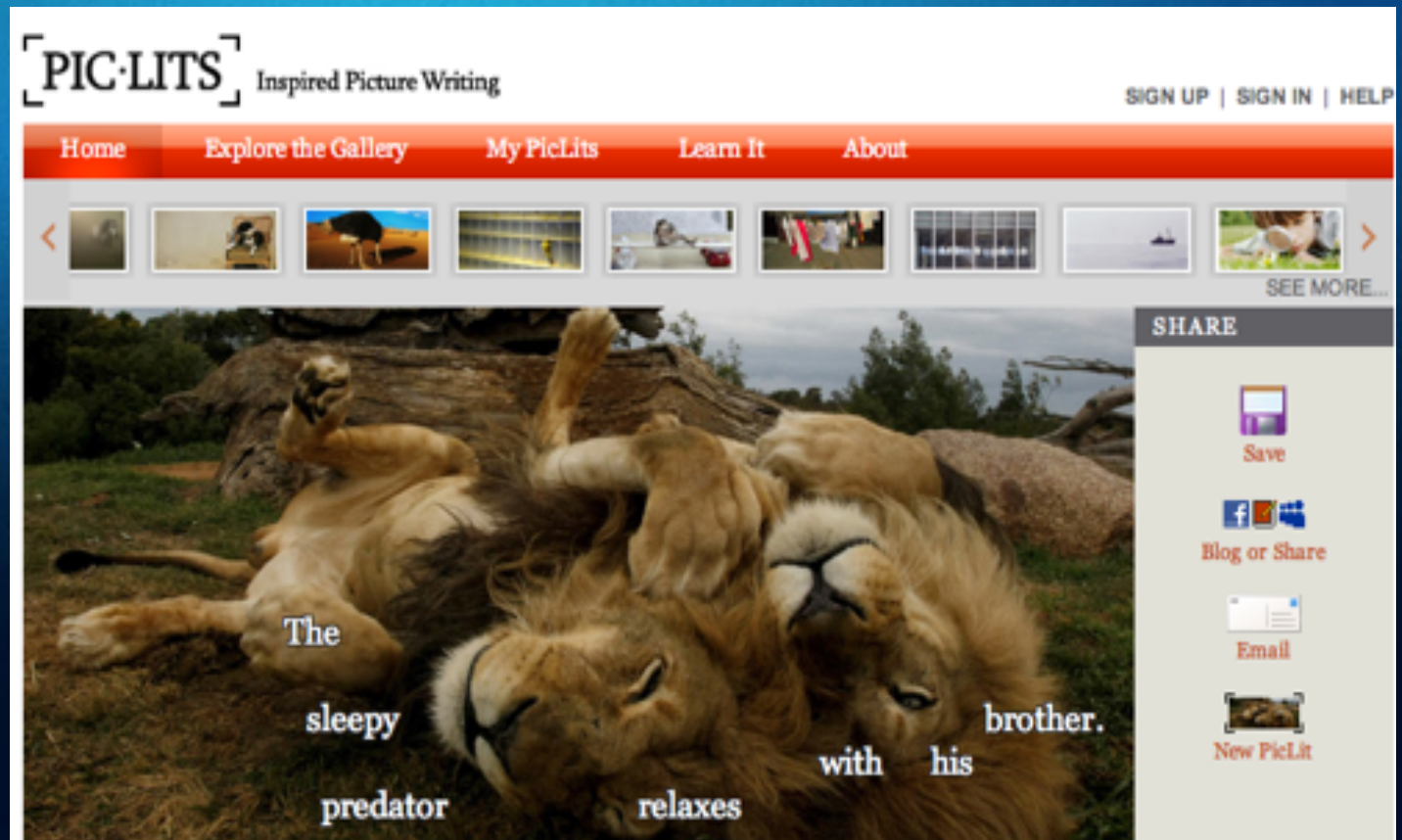


Thanks to Danny Nicholson who suggested this idea.

23. Add Poetry to Pictures

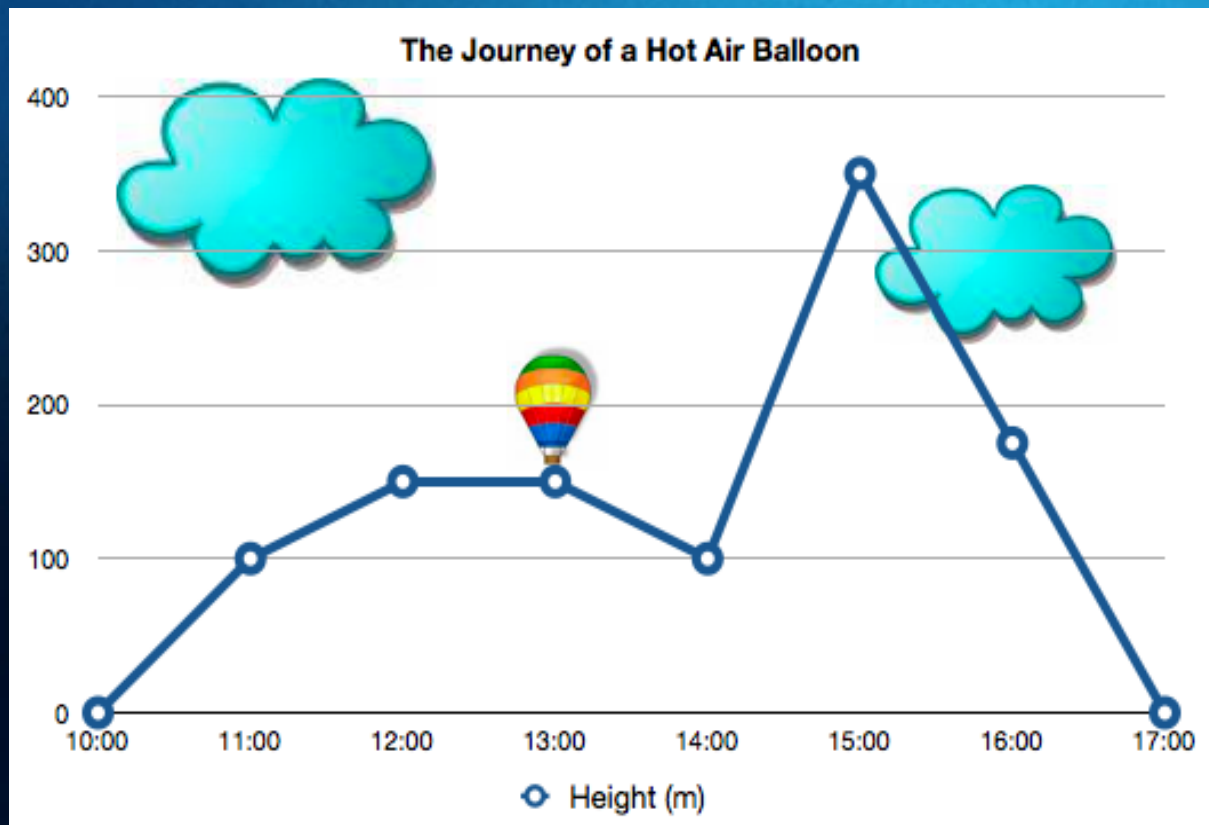
- Have you seen Piclits?
- Put the right words in the right place and the right order to capture the essence, story, and meaning of the picture.
- Use the words provided, or add your own to make the perfect poem or description.

*Thanks to
Joy Simpson
who suggested
this idea.*



24. The Story of a Line

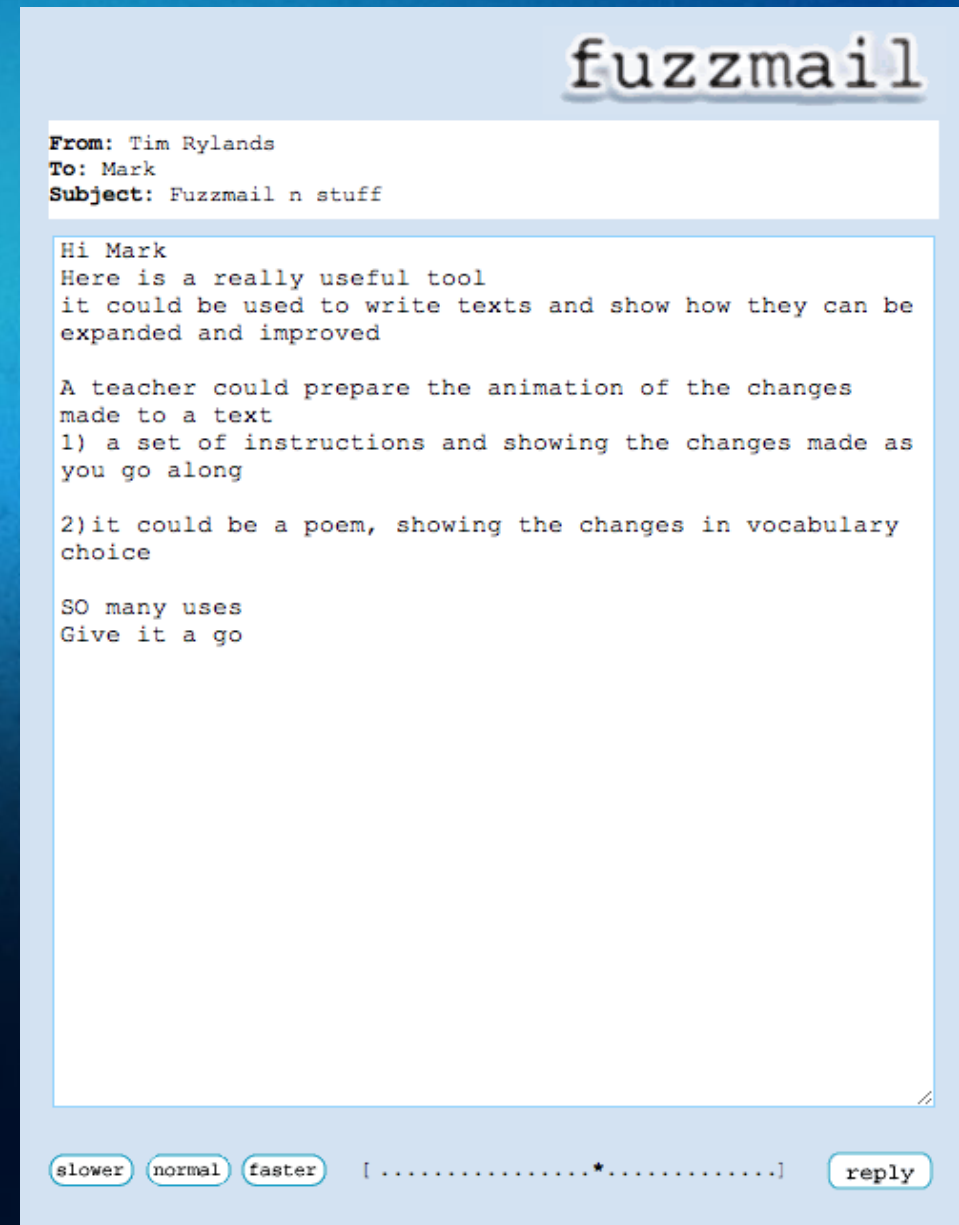
- Produce a line graph... showing the height of a hot air balloon, the amount of water in a bathtub or something similar!
- Ask the pupils to write the story of the line graph, describing what happens at each stage in the graph and why.



- You could also provide a blank line graph (with no labels) and ask them to explain what it might show.
- Great for data handling work, and it might also link with your Science topics.

25. Write a Fuzzmail!

- Fuzzmail lets you send emails, which are displayed as they were typed... showing any additions / changes that were made during the creation of the message.
- This can be used easily in the classroom - just set up a Fuzzmail animation to show how a text might be expanded / improved. Then share and discuss these changes with your class.
- Thanks to Tim Rylands for suggesting this idea.



26. Underwater Adventures

- Explore an underwater landscape using the Papervision site.
- This could be used as the starting point for some descriptive writing, or a story about an underwater adventure.
- Or follow one of the underwater creatures and share vocabulary to describe its appearance and its movements etc.



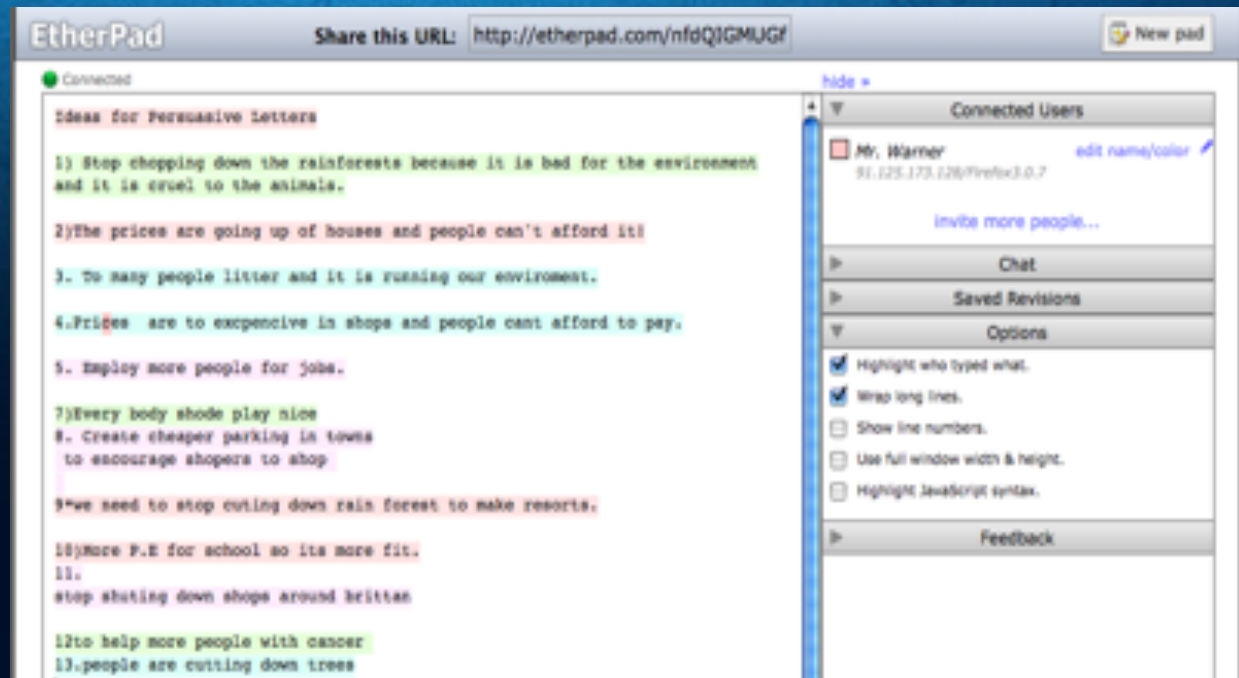
27. Augmented Reality

- Try the [GE Smart Grid](#) 'Augmented Reality' site to demonstrate how a 3D landscape can 'unfold' in front of your eyes.
- Make your own augmented reality marker (a simple black and white image).
- Show the new marker to the pupils and imagine what might unfold from the paper... an amazing landscape? an unusual character? an incredible object?
- Use one of those ideas as the starting point for written / descriptive work.



28. Write collaboratively...

- Etherpad is an amazing site which lets up to 8 people type on the same document at the same time.
- It could be used in many ways in the classroom:
 - Improving a given selection of sentences.
 - Collecting ideas / useful vocabulary.
 - Writing a text collaboratively.
- Look at the 'Using Etherpad in the classroom' presentation for more ideas.



29. Video Story Starts...

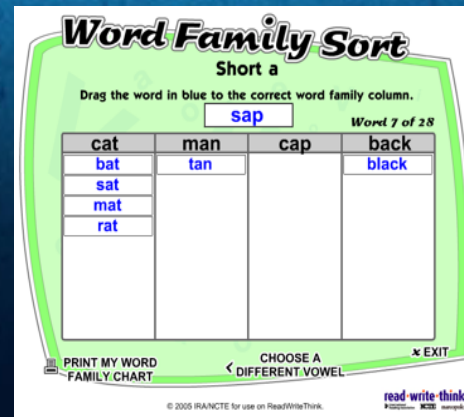
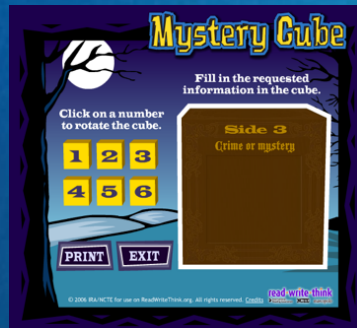
- [Teachers.tv](#) have a collection of 'Story Starts' videos which can be used as a starting point for written work:
 - [Seven Story Starts](#)
 - [Nine More Story Starts](#)



Thanks to the [Kent ICT blog](#) for bringing these to my attention.

30. Read Write Think

- Read Write Think has a huge range of interactive Literacy resources.



Thanks to Paula Naugle for suggesting these resources.

31. Make a Mediascape

- From the [Create-A-Scape](#) site...
- "A mediascape is composed of sounds, images and video placed outside in your local area... To create a mediascape, you start with a digital map of your local area. Using special, free software, you can attach digital sounds, pictures and video to places that you choose on the map (see below)..."
- By going outside into the area the map covers, you can experience the mediascape "



Suggested by
[Aidan McCanny](#)

32. Write Postcards...

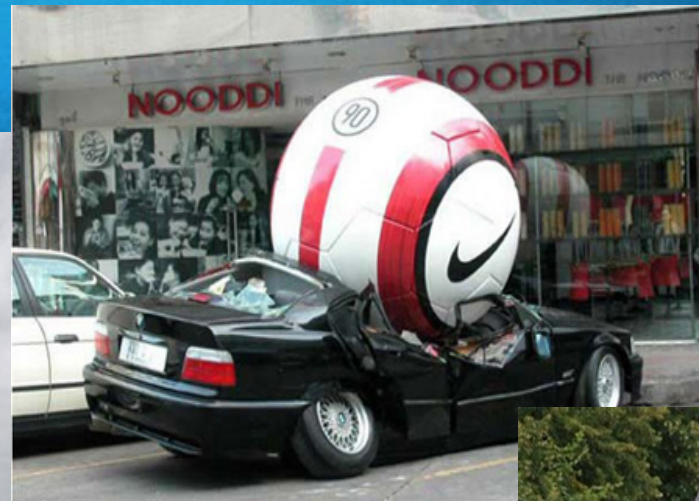
- I have used postcards (picked up in bulk at the local gym) as a stimuli for writing. You could agree on the subject, i.e. chocolate (what the main idea might be on the postcard) or just describe what you see / what you think is happening. I find this is particularly good for building up stamina in Y5/6, especially when given a maximum time to write i.e. 5 mins. etc.
- To send postcards to people around the world try [Postcrossing](#).

Suggested by
David Hodgson



33. Larger than Life...

- [This blog](#) has some amazing images of 'larger than life' objects...
- Write the story of these objects... How did they get there? What are they for? How might other people react to them?
- What would happen if one of these objects appeared on your school grounds / in your home?



This presentation is the result of the collaboration of some fantastic teachers from all around the world.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed.

Do you have an 'Amazing Idea' of your own that could be added?

Send an email to mark@teachingideas.com
or contact me on [Twitter](#).

I can add your idea, or give you
access to add it yourself.

Thank you!

Mark Warner



www.ideastoinspire.co.uk



www.teachingideas.co.uk