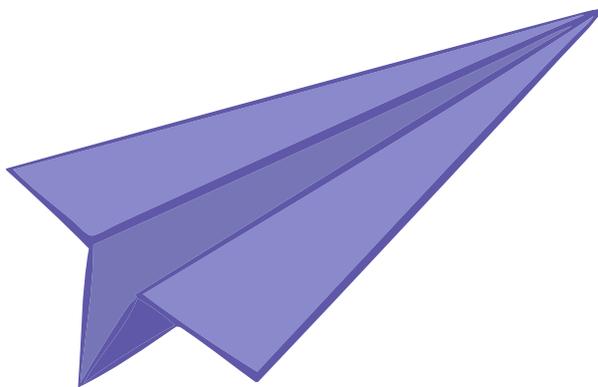


Training Package Vol 4



CREATIVE THINKING IN LITERACY & LANGUAGE SKILLS

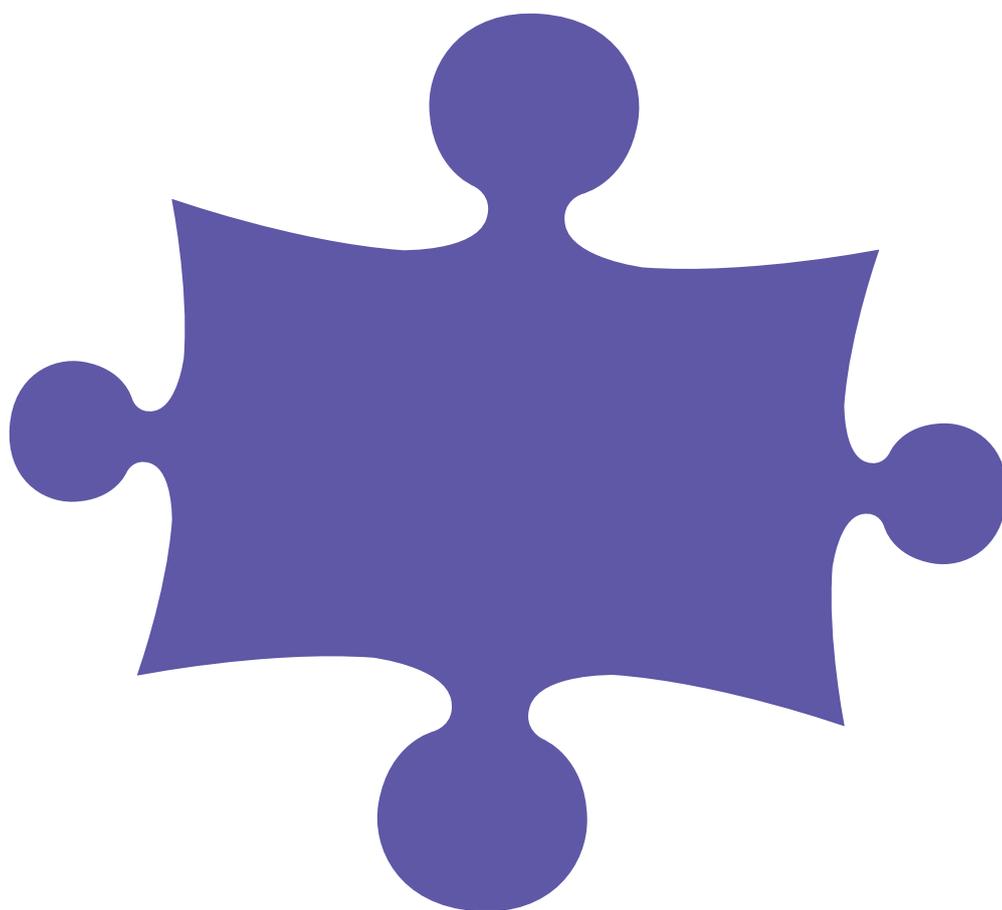
Responsive Learning



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About this Training Package

'Learning by doing' is a principle of effective learning that is as true in the learning of creative thinking as it is in any other subject.

While we may read the innumerable articles and web pages dedicated to the practice of creative thinking, it is not until we have sat down and confronted a problem, equipped with our various creative thinking tools, that we will actually learn how to apply the various techniques to generate creative outputs.

The accompanying Training Guidelines provide step-by-step instructions to enable learners to understand the basics for themselves OR for trainers / teachers to facilitate training sessions with the same objective.

The Training Guidelines are recommended as a starting point, as they provide a high degree of contextual information in support of the various creative thinking methods. However, for those who wish to either extend the teaching of the Training Guidelines through a series of semi-prescriptive activities, or for those who wish to start their creative thinking learning journey at the coal face (where the real work happens), this Training Package provides the support and tools required to do so.

Thematic topics

The training guidelines have been developed within four thematic topic areas.

- **Art & Design (Volume 1)**
- **Media (Volume 2)**
- **Narrative (Volume 3)**
- **Responsive learning (Volume 4)**

These topic areas are deemed to be appropriate to a wide range of foreign language and literacy learning situations, with readily available resources and extensive opportunities for on going development.

Each thematic topic activity set is contained in its own volume.

Activities

The training package contains a total of forty ready-to-use activities; ten activities per topic area.

Each activity has a title and activity number, and includes information relating to the primary creative thinking method exploited by the activity, as well as the various aspects of language and literacy learning that it addresses.

In addition to the main creative thinking inspired activity, there is often guidance on developing extended activities for learners. In most cases these activities demand higher levels of competency / understanding or require greater learner autonomy. They should be considered as starting points from which you are encouraged to develop your own context-relevant activities.

Background information is often included in the form of guidelines, to ensure that all trainers / teachers are able to deliver each activity with confidence.

Creative Thinking methods

The primary creative thinking method employed in each activity is described with sufficient detail to facilitate that activity.

While couched within a specific activity, you should note each underlying methodology for use within your own resources, keeping in mind that the various creative thinking methods are designed to be flexible and interchangeable. Re-combining methods to achieve effective creative thinking 'routines' can be very rewarding, as it demonstrates a developed working understanding of the field.

For further explanations of any creative thinking method you are advised to make reference to the accompanying Training Guidelines.

News article

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Changing perspective
Primary skills addressed	Reading, speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

News articles offer a great way to engage both literacy and language learners with the issues and stories of their immediate or future environment. News articles also offer the very convenient feature of being continually updated, and providing authentic and up-to-date language use. As there is an abundance of continually replenished resources in this area, ranging from global, national, regional and local news, articles can be selected to suit the interests and relevance of most classes.

As most people are aware, news articles can display a level of bias, depending on the position of the author (journalist) or the news publication organisation, which could be a TV channel news programme or a newspaper. In such cases the reporting of the news will generally support the position of the author or organisation, often at the expense of the views of others.

Background information: Writing news articles

The following points can serve as a starting point for constructing a news article, whether your final output is written or spoken:

- News is normally about people: Try to communicate how the story impacts on people. As humans, we are interested in the feelings and thoughts of others, whether we agree with them or not.

- Having an angle: 'Having an angle' means to look at the story from a particular position or to emphasise a particular point, which is effectively what this activity asks for. Creating a headline for an article can make the 'angle' explicit, such as 'Business suffering for nature ... again', or 'Reward working people with better homes'.
- Include quotes: Quoting people that your audience will trust and/or identify with can help in supporting a point of view. In the activity you can obtain genuine quotes from people or create your own 'imagined' quotes. This could add another small task to the activity.
- Include data: As with the example article, factual data is included as a persuasive device, though of course it is not all of the relevant data. When writing an article, source and use the data to support the perspective being presented.
- Keep the language simple: News articles need to get to the point quickly, while ensuring that a wide audience can understand the message. Therefore it is a good idea to use simple and direct language.

If your learners respond well to this type of exercise you may want to offer more comprehensive guides to writing successful news articles, as the list above only covers a small number of basic elements.

Activity:

This activity asks the learner(s) to re-consider the position presented in a news article from the perspective of a member (or members) of a particular group or profession, leading to a different emphasis on the story. Having been assigned a 'character' and working in small groups, learners are asked to re-frame the news article to better represent the position of their character.

The primary modes of enquiry and development are speaking and listening, as the activity requires that learners discuss the task in their groups, presenting their alternative articles to the class verbally. If additional outcomes are required, each group or individual could recreate the entire news article from the new perspective, or as a simpler exercise, each group or individual could construct a meaningful headline for the article.

Example: A pro-business publication published an article that made a case for relaxing restrictions on the building of 'greenfield' sites. Greenfield sites are areas of land that have not previously been built on and as the name suggests, they are often as nature has left them and green in colour, containing grassed areas along with trees and woodland.

The following text contains some points from the article:

The UK is shamefully short of suitable houses for its inhabitants. Conservative estimations suggest that approximately 3 million new homes are needed by 2030. The population of the UK is increasing due to people living longer and an influx of migrant workers that are supporting an economy that has the potential to expand in Europe and further afield. However, working people deserve suitable and affordable housing, which is not currently available in our overcrowded towns and cities. The lack of suitable houses for working families to live, has resulted in inflated, over-priced rents being charged by private landlords. All of this is at a time when many construction workers cannot find work due to the stranglehold being placed on the building of new homes by environmental groups.

One option is to allow more building on greenfield sites, allowing construction companies to procure land at reasonable rates as the supply of land, which is currently restricted, is increased. Despite concerns from environmental groups, the amount of 'non-developed' land in England alone is estimated to be 90%, with higher percentages in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The UK has the potential to be a prosperous nation again, giving those that choose to capitalise on business opportunities, equality with their European neighbours. However, if we continue to overlook our land resource and squeeze our citizens to pay extortionate housing costs for what are often unsuitable properties, we risk falling behind our neighbours yet again.

While the article makes some valid points, it fails to take into account the position or feelings on other groups in society, presenting a rather restricted view of this national housing crisis.

To deliver the activity based on this particular article, it is suggested that groups are assigned a character from the following options, to represent in their re-framing exercise:

- Environmental (green) group
- Families currently living in rural (non-city) areas
- Families currently living in urban / city areas
- Farmers / agriculturalists
- Naturalist (nature lover)
- Town planner
- Cyclist or walker

Alternatively, you may want to provide an alternative list of characters OR ask your learners to nominate characters that they feel will enable them to offer a different perspective on the issues.

When selecting other news articles, which is highly recommended, consider those that are relevant to your learners while also allowing for alternative perspectives to be proposed. Decide whether it is best for you to determine the available characters or whether your learners should do this, with or without your assistance.

Extended activities:

For more advanced learners, ask learners to create their own news articles, based on real or imagined events, while maintaining the presentation of a single and biased perspective. Once this has been done, ask learners to exchange their own article with a partner or other group member, with the task of determining a character that would likely have an alternative perspective. Continue with the re-writing of the article to reflect this alternative and/or opposing position.



Story from the past

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	What if?
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Reading, writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

This activity allows learners from any background to introduce aspects of their personal life and experiences into the lesson. Through reflection learners are invited to contribute their own information to that of the larger group, creating a sense of inclusion and active participation.

Creative thinking offers us a questioning technique that is designed to generate possible solutions or alternatives when faced with a creative situation. The technique is called 'what-iffing', and it takes the form of posing the question of 'what if...?' In relation to different topics or scenarios.

While it is used as a tool for professional think tanks or other problem solving groups to generate original thinking around a topic, it can be used by language and literacy learners to develop a range of skills. Such exercises can then be developed into written accounts of scenarios. There is never a shortage of issues to ask 'what if' about, though the focus that each subject provides makes the subsequent 'free writing' a little easier.

Activity:

Begin the lesson by asking your learners to engage in a brainstorming session. This should be a formal exercise with a time limit and a set quota (a set number of responses that are required from each group or each learner). A suitable quota for this activity would be somewhere between ten and fifteen responses per learner. The theme for the brainstorming session is 'My past'. Learners should be encouraged to think laterally in undertaking this task and to note down their ideas in a list format, rather than in long sentences. Some flexibility should be afforded on this point, but having learners only write sentences will slow the activity down and any spontaneity will be lost. Keep things lively.

It is advisable that learners work in groups of between four and five members, though each group member should generate their own list of ideas based on their personal 'past'.

Once each member of each group has reached their quota of responses, the brainstorming (idea generation) should cease and the generated ideas should be processed. The first stage is for learners to compare their responses, looking for similarities in instances where someone has offered a unique theme. The shared responses should be categorised into thematic groups such as family, friends, school, work, leisure etc. The thematic headings should emerge from the learners' responses. This is primarily a discussion-based process.

The second stage of the activity is to prepare for a story that is initially based on one or more of the associations that each learner has made about their past. However, it is not as simple as just recounting the original story.

Each learner should select one or more (connected) elements from their list, that they could reasonably construct a story from. For example a 'trip to a theme park' may be connected to 'my best friend Michael'. Ask each learner to verbally share a very brief summary of their story with the other members of their group.

Once each member has verbally shared their story summary, the other members of the group should select a 'what if?' question to be applied to a re-telling of the story, based on this alternative approach.

There are a number of stock 'what if?' questions listed below and it is reasonable for learners to only select from this list, especially if this is the first time that the learners have used this technique. However, there may be situations in which learners want to introduce a different 'what if?' question, one that is better suited to a learner's particular story.

Remember that as a teacher, you can add to, adapt or change any of the 'what if?' questions before you begin the task.

Sample generic 'what if?' questions:

- What if this was to happen with current technology, how would it be different?
- What if you weren't involved at all?
- What if you did this with all of the knowledge and experience that you have today?
- What if you had been extremely rich?
- What if you had a super power (you can decide which one)?

Once each learner has been assigned a 'what if?' question, they should then write their story within this alternative situation. Learners should be advised to apply the 'what if?' question in a way that the new story is very different from the original story. Keep in mind that in fiction writing authors may be encouraged to ignore the truth and even to stretch reality (if necessary).



Extended activities:

The extended activity is to ask your learners to construct five 'what if?' questions that could work in a generic situation (similar to those above). The trick to doing this is to offer a lot of scope for interpretation. As an example, it is likely that a someone having a 'super power' is likely to change many things in that person's life, so it can be applied to many situations. Asking someone a question such as 'what if you didn't like strawberries?', could be relevant for a story / situation relating to strawberries, but perhaps not relevant to most situations. Therefore it is specific, not generic.

Ask your learners to construct an additional five 'what if?' questions that are specifically related to the story that they chose to re-tell. In this case the 'what if?' question should be specific.

Having constructed ten 'what if?' questions, your learners should be well equipped to use this technique in a wide variety of situations. Ask them to think about creative situations in which 'what if?' questions could promote creative thinking. Make this topic a discussion in the class.

School in nature

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Random input
Primary skills addressed	Writing, speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Listening, reading
Resources required	Worksheet

Overview:

While creativity (creative thinking) is something that can be learnt, it will only happen if it is approached deliberately, and with a willingness to commit to the goal of being more creative.

Within most creative thinking models there is some kind of agent / element that is deliberately included to force the practitioner into a situation or different thinking pattern, which is generally accepted to yield more creative ideas than conventional thinking would.

The term 'problem' is often used in creative thinking to represent a situation in which there exists creative opportunities, providing that an appropriate and deliberate method is employed. Devising suitable problems to test creative processing can be a challenge in itself, and this activity is designed to support you and your learners in developing suitable and productive 'problems'.

The setting for this activity is deliberately different too, as altering habitual behaviours (such as learning in a classroom) can promote a different way of thinking in itself. Therefore this activity should be planned to take place in a natural outdoor setting, such as a nature park or area, water park, rural or agricultural area, coastal location etc. The key is to find somewhere that presents an unfamiliar environment with unfamiliar inhabitants.

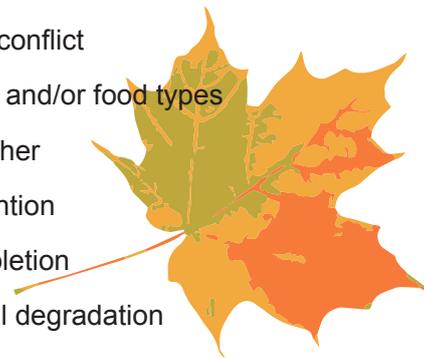
The activity will have the added benefit of introducing vocabulary that is not typically covered in conventional text books for language and literacy.

Activity

Pre-visit activities: The activity should be introduced to learners in the classroom and prior to the visit taking place. Depending on your location and the site that you plan to visit, you and your learners will be able to identify a number of pressing environmental and natural environment issues that could impact on the long-term future of the site and/or the area in general.

The following list provides some environmental and natural issues of concern in recent years. Feel free to use these as a starting point or ask your learners to undertake some internet research to identify more specific concerns. The issues are deliberately generic at this stage:

- Pollution – air, light, noise, soil, water, other
- Overpopulation
- Inter-species conflict
- Food sources and/or food types
- Extreme weather
- Man's intervention
- Resource depletion
- Environmental degradation
- Environmental health
- Energy



It is suggested that the subjects of environmentalism and conservation are discussed with your learners in class, without necessarily relating it to the upcoming visit.

Visit activities: Learners should be given time to explore the environment in pairs or in small groups. Avoid learners undertaking this exploration alone, as it is important for learners to respond verbally to what they experience, sharing their thoughts with others.

During this period the learners should complete a simple worksheet, ensuring that they become familiar with the specific issues and environment, and also to promote a deeper scholarly engagement with the environment, rather than just a 'nice day out'.

In preparing the worksheet, something you can do yourself or with your learners as an additional pre-visit activity, consider setting a series of small tasks / questions that explore the particular environment. A set of sample tasks and questions are included below, though feel free to add to adapt, add to or replace with your own tasks, relevant to the site that you plan to visit.

Sample tasks / questions for visit worksheet:

- What wildlife inhabits this environment, from the very small to the very large?
- What type of dwellings exist for the various wildlife?
- What wildlife have you encountered during your visit?
- Describe the commonly found elements within the environment (types of trees and plants, water sources, different types of terrain, man-made elements etc.)
- What things grow naturally in this environment?
- What things (good and bad) have been introduced to this environment by humans?
- Who or what else (besides wildlife) visits or lives in this environment?
- What impact do 'non-native' visitors have on this environment?
- Describe anything else that you found interesting about this environment, particularly in terms of environmentalism or conservation

Post-visit activities: Whether the following is carried out at the visit site or back in the classroom, it is important that learners have their completed worksheets with them to undertake this activity.

Learners should share their worksheet data with others, working in small groups of between two and four members. The objective is to look for similarly observed situations and/or things, creating a consensual list of overview of the visited environment. This is likely to consider more things than is contained on any single worksheet. If this is following the visit (back in the classroom) it will serve as a good process to re-focus the information in the learners' minds.

The next task is to identify particular problems that exist within the visited environment, particularly those that may have a negative impact on the natural environment and the wildlife that inhabits it. This can even be extended to having a negative impact on the experience of others that visit the environment, such as walkers, naturalists, leisure visitors etc.

To get things started you should discuss initial problems that your learners can identify, taking one of two examples with all members of the class, just to ensure that the task is properly understood.

As an example, you may consider that human visitors with dogs have a detrimental effect on the environment as 1) dogs soil on footpaths, 2) disturb natural habitat when they run off the footpaths and 3) frighten animals with their presence. Another example may be that as humans have developed surrounding land, more predators (such as foxes) are forced into the natural environment, posing a threat for a greater number of small mammals.

Learners should initially identify a series of problems per group. After discussion each group should choose the three problems that they feel present the greatest or highest frequency danger to the preservation of the visited environment.

From these three selections, each group should phrase each problem as a question that can be used as a starting point for a creative thinking activity.

If you consider the example problems listed above, we may phrase the respective questions as follows:

- How do we ensure that dog mess is not left littering the footpaths?
- How can we prevent dogs disturbing the natural environment?
- How can we protect natural wildlife from the threat of dogs?
- How can we protect wildlife from 'imposed' predation, meaning the predation that only exists as a result of a non-natural intervention?

OR

- How can we prevent additional foxes encroaching on natural wildlife sites?

Video game design

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Random input
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Secondary skills addressed	Reading, writing
Resources required	Worksheet

Overview:

As is the case with many responsive learning scenarios, this activity is most effective when linked to a visit or specific study topic, such as a play, book, film or other character-based text.

This activity offers good potential for advancing language skills for both literacy and foreign language learners. The vehicle for the activity, video games, offers an alternative approach to narrative development for your learners. Some learners may be very familiar with the form, while others are less so, the basic concepts are easy enough for most learners to grasp.

In order to initiate the activity, you will need to generate a set of 'components' that will be utilised during the game design activity. These components will contain the random elements for later use.

If your learners are taking part in an organised visit, create a simple worksheet that will generate the required components. Typically, the components will include information such as characters and their names, information about the characters in terms of their social standing or occupation (age may be an important factor too). It is important to make references to the period and location of the visit or the studied text, however it may be more useful to identify other location descriptions within the environment, such as someone's house, a local bar, a beach, the interior of an aeroplane etc. all of which will be dependent on your particular context.

Example: The following information was gathered by learners visiting a Victorian museum in the English town of Ironbridge, significant for the role it played in the European industrial revolution.

A worksheet was provided to the learners and the learners were asked to undertake a number of tasks to help them develop their literacy and language skills through prescribed reading, writing and speaking activities. During the visit each learner was required to collect the following information:

3 historical facts relating to the theme and location of the visit

3 'new' words learnt during the visit, to include a definition in each case

3 industries or professions represented at the Victorian museum

3 shop or business names represented at the Victorian museum

Draw / sketch 3 objects that are new to the learner (never seen before), including the name of the object and a description of what its use is or was

These 15 pieces of information, unique to each learner, became the 'components' for the following random input exercise.

Activity:

Once you have generated similar components from your own learner visit or other studied topic, you should decide on a number of categories that will support the conception of a video game.

Without going into unnecessary detail about the theory of video game design, it is important to be aware of commonly considered elements that feature in a large number of current video games.

- **Character or protagonist:** The description that you generate for your character should influence his/her actions or methods within the game that you design. For example a snail is unlikely to move quickly, though it may have other useful attributes.



- Environment / World: Equally the location or 'world' that the game takes place in, should also be influential in the game. If the game 'world' is a library, it is likely to present different scenarios than if the game 'world' is a pirate ship.

- Motivation / Objective: Once you have a character and a world, you should think about the motivation that drives the character and what the ultimate objective of the game could be.

In Nintendo's original Mario game, Mario (the plumber) inhabited a surreal world of pipes and ducts (common to a plumber) with the overall objective of rescuing the abducted princess. Mario wanted to become a hero (and maybe find love). The task however, was made more difficult by the creatures that were determined to hinder and defeat Mario.

- Narrative: Not all games have a formal narrative, though it has become more common in recent years. This is an aspect of game design that you can choose to emphasise or deemphasise with your own learners.

Other elements could be included, such as the dominant characteristic of your protagonist. Suggestions could be taken from characters in your text, or from characters that featured in the visit. If not, a list of characteristics could be generated by your learners. Characteristics such as: honest, evil, earnest, intelligent, loving, gullible etc. You may choose to not limit your games to one character.

Another element that can be added for this exercise is a theme, something perhaps more common to a formal narrative situation, but still relevant to the video game activity. You may make a list of themes with your learners such as: love/romance, endeavour, redemption, shame, hope etc.

Once you have decided on your various components you should create a situation in which they can be selected randomly. This may be achieved with a digital randomising tool or using more traditional means, such as writing the various components on individual cards.

In the case of the Victorian museum the protagonist's name options were taken from the names of businesses or shops, the occupation of the protagonist was taken from the professions and industries listed by the learners, the protagonist (in this case) had a special object, derived from the drawn / sketched objects. The location was derived from places mentioned in the historical facts task, which often included places outside of the town of Ironbridge, within and beyond the UK.

With your component cards (or similar) prepared, ask your learners (working in pairs or small groups) to select one card from each set (names, occupations, locations etc.).

With this information, ask your learners to initially discuss and then to 'design' a video game that not only includes, but interrelates the various random elements. Introduce the 'video game elements' (above) to your learners to enable them to better understand the task.

While your learners may wish to make drawings, this should not be a requirement. However, you should ask each pair or group to present their video game idea verbally to the rest of the class on completion. Generally this is at the end of the session. At this stage it is important to allow questioning of each 'team' by the audience, encouraging the audience in each case to make suggestions for improvements or alternative versions.

Extended activities:

If you feel that the video game project is successful with your group, you could ask each team to create either a poster, advertisement or even a video game box design, incorporating written elements, and of course in relation to the game that has been designed.



Pervasive issues

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	What if?
Primary skills addressed	Writing, speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Listening, reading
Resources required	None

Overview:

It's true to say that news provides us with an unerring supply of stories from politics to sport, offering the language and literacy teacher a vast array of material to work with in the classroom. However, there are other pervasive issues that will feature in news items and articles intermittently. These pervasive issues can be generational and they are not necessarily attached to one specific event.

Current examples of pervasive issues are climate change and global warming, the depletion of natural resources, over population of areas of the planet, persecution of minority groups, and many more.

Creative thinking offers us a questioning technique that is designed to generate possible solutions to some of the problems that we may refer to as pervasive issues, those issues that are around us all of the time. The technique is called 'what-iffing', and it takes the form of posing the question of 'what if...?' In relation to different topics.

While it is used as a tool for professional think tanks or other problem solving groups, to generate original thinking around a topic, it can be used by language and literacy learners to develop their speaking skills. Such exercises can then be developed into written accounts of scenarios. There is never a shortage of issues to ask 'what if' about, though the focus that each subject provides makes the subsequent 'free writing' a little easier.

Activity:

For this activity the pervasive issue to be explored is the depletion of the planet's resources, fuelled by increasing populations and more materialistic desires within many developed societies.

Following a brief introduction of the issue, it is advised that the learner group is invited to nominate 'what if' questions in response to the perceived problem. The 'what if?' questions can be very creative or unusual, even a little crazy. Once posed learners can discuss how even crazy ideas may be adjusted to work as possible solutions.

Within this issue, typical statements may include such things as:

- Fish stocks in the oceans are being depleted
- Gas and oil will run out at some stage
- Agricultural land could be used for housing
- Too many trees are being harvested from rain forests
- Rivers and oceans are becoming dangerously polluted
- Population increase is threatening the available supplies of food

In each case, learners are encouraged to discuss the initial issue and any issues that they think are related. For example, if we take the statement about depleted fish stocks, this may lead to exploratory questions such as:

What if we introduced fishing rotations similar to crop rotation in fields? (How would this help and how would it be organised?)

What if we made fish much cheaper in shops to reduce the profits for fishing companies?

What if we introduced a fish breeding programme, funded by a fishing tax?

What if we banned fishing for 5 years?

In some cases, learners will want or need to undertake some research, though surface level Internet research is normally adequate.

Once a question has been considered by a learner and a series of 'what if?' questions have been explored, a written account of the resulting proposals should be produced. The written accounts can be read out to other learners, which will normally promote more discussion.



Extended activities:

What-iffing is a very versatile interrogative tool and it can be used in many different contexts. As an extension to the previous activity, learners can be invited to present what are issues to them, in their own lives. These may be localised and personal, or more universal.

Ask each learner to nominate at least one of their own issues and allow other members in the group to interrogate the issue using the what-if technique.

Speaking and / or writing tasks can follow as before.

Political rhetoric

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	The power of 'why?'
Primary skills addressed	Listening, speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

Political rhetoric is all around us, providing a wealth of interesting sound bites that are relevant to the period of the day. Like news articles, there is a seemingly unending supply of such useful language examples. However, rhetoric by its very definition, is a deliberately persuasive form of language. On that basis, it is always worth questioning the 'real' meaning behind the rhetoric.

One advantage to engaging with political rhetoric is that learners of literacy and languages will come into contact with authentic and current language use, that can relate directly to the environment that they are living in. Very often this is termed 'current affairs'.

By studying political rhetoric via a questioning and analytical process, learners can develop their skills of presentation and argument.

The 'Power of 'Why?'' is a creative thinking method that employs provocative questioning to force the speaker or statement maker to justify elements of their communication. In this process the questioner may already know the answer to the initial question, but as subsequent questions follow, new insights or ideas may be exposed.

Background information: Rhetorical devices

In the history of rhetoric, a number of linguistic devices have been deployed with surprising regularity, all aimed at persuading the audience to support or accept the point offered by the speaker. Below is a small number of rhetorical devices that you may be able to identify in the examples that you choose to use.

- Alliteration: the recurrence of initial consonant sounds in a sentence (we need to save to survive)
- Amplification: repeat of a word or expression for greater emphasis (it's war, bloody war)
- Analogy: making a comparison between two things that have similar characteristics (He's as useful as a chocolate teapot)
- Hyperbole: a deliberate exaggeration for effect (we have faced this situation a thousand times)
- Litotes: understatement, often using a negative statement to affirm a positive statement (I do not disagree with my opponent)
- Metanoia: correcting a statement by way of an afterthought, to emphasise meaning (we will rise to great heights, no, we will rise to magnificent heights)
- Metaphor: comparing two things by claiming that one is the other (He is the fox of our political generation)
- Simile: comparing one thing to another, often using the preposition 'like' (He debates like a goldfish)
- Understatement: Makes something sound less important than it is (Financially, I think we should get by ok now (speaking after a large lottery win))



Activity:

The following activity requires learners to work in pairs or in groups; the exercise can work as a class exercise. One person reads out a statement of political rhetoric and assumes the role of the author of the words, effectively it becomes 'their statement'. The partner or class members then pursue a line of questioning relating to the statement. Each question begins with the word 'Why?'.

The speaker responds to each question based on his/her knowledge, attempting to justify each point in turn. In each round the speaker should receive between 4 and 6 questions from the partner or audience, providing they can sustain their answers for this many questions.

Note: It is important the speaker answers the question with honesty, even if the answers contradict the initial statement or expose the real meaning.

Example:

'My opponent is taking donations from violent video game makers, reckless bankers and corrupt labour unions.'

Using the example above the speaker could be asked the following types of questions:

Q. Why is your opponent taking donations?

A. Because he needs money to campaign against me

Q. Why is he campaigning against you?

A. Because he doesn't agree with my policies?

Q. Why doesn't he agree with your policies?

A. Because he believes that people should pay less tax

Q. Why shouldn't people pay less tax?

A. Because that will mean less money for people like me

Extended activities:

When your learners have a good understanding of how political rhetoric is used, they can attempt to write their own political rhetoric statements. They should start by determining something they believe in or support. Form this they should present their view through a political statement, perhaps in favour of a new policy.

While the list of rhetorical devices above is not comprehensive, learners should attempt to utilise at least one rhetorical device in each of their statements.

Once statements have been made, the class can return to questioning each speaker on their own statement, using the power of 'Why?'.



Not show & tell

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Associative thinking
Primary skills addressed	Speaking, evaluating
Secondary skills addressed	Listening
Resources required	Cloth bag

Overview:

This activity enables learners to introduce something about themselves, interests lifestyles etc. to their peers, in a format that is similar to a 'show & tell' session. It supports learners in constructing and answering questions and ensures that all learners have an equal opportunity to share their 'thing' with the class.

The technique relies on a type of associative thinking that deliberately avoids stating or presenting the obvious, a type of lateral thinking, which supports the development of a more nuanced and coded language for both foreign language and literacy learners.

Associative thinking is often used in creative thinking processes, particularly when one idea or concept would benefit from being the starting point for additional concepts. In conventional word association processes this happens by first introducing a single concept (normally a word) and then asking participants to think of things that they associate with this concept. In a class or group the next participant makes an association with this subsequent idea, and so on. This results in moving further away from the original concept with every turn. The key difference in creative thinking is that the original concept is continually returned to, ensuring that associated ideas are close to the focal point.

Activity:

Some preparation is required prior to delivering this activity and it is suggested that you allow up to a week for each learner to carry out the preparation task(s).

Depending on your class schedules and number of learners, you may choose to deliver this activity over a number of classes, ensuring that each learner is able to prepare for their own 'Not show and tell'.

The brief for each learner is to consider something about themselves that they think is interesting or unusual. This may be a hobby, an interest, a sport, an achievement, whether it is current, something from their past or even something they are planning (such as a qualification, a driving test, wedding etc.). What they choose should be kept a secret from other members of the class.

Once they have decided on an idea their task is to undertake an associative thinking exercise based on their idea or 'thing', attempting to generate as many associated concepts or objects as possible. A target number of associations should be between twenty and thirty.

As an example that you could share with your learners, in fact you could use this as a demonstration task, let us think about someone who has an interest in playing the guitar. The following associations could be made from this starting point:

- Music
- Practise
- Notation
- Strings
- Pick
- Band or group
- Case
- Tuning fork / pipe / electric
- Neck
- Strap
- Jimi Hendrix
- Wood
- Capo
- Sound hole
- Stand
- Fret

This list will be an important part of the learner's preparation, as it will inform the subsequent stages.

The learner should prepare to bring in one object that is associated with (in this case) a guitar, in the knowledge that it will be presented inside a cloth bag for other learners to feel, but not to see. It is very important that the object is not so obvious that it will make the guessing of the concept an easy task.

The learner should also select one associated word from their list, while again making a selection that does not allow for easy guessing by fellow learners.

Finally the learner should use their mobile phone (or similar) to take a deliberately ambiguous photograph that represents the concept. Quite often this will be taking a photograph of the thing from a very close or very unusual angle OR taking a picture of something that is associated with thing (such as a picture of Jimi Hendrix, rather than a guitar).

With all three things prepared the learner is ready to make their presentation. Initially the object is inserted into the cloth bag and passed around the class for other learners to feel, but not to see. Once this has happened the class are allowed to ask a maximum of three questions that can only be answered with 'yes' or 'no' responses. These may include things like 'Is it made from metal?', 'is it expensive?', 'does it relate to a hobby?' and so on.

After the three questions the classmates may confer and make one collective guess.

If this fails, the presenter may reveal the second clue, the associated word. From this the classmates are allowed another three questions based on the same 'yes' and 'no' rules, followed by one class guess.

If the thing has still not been successfully guessed, the presenter can show the ambiguous image, followed by the same three questions and then a final class guess.

At this stage, whether or not the thing has been guessed, the presenter is obliged to reveal their secret, explaining the associations that they made to produce

The final stage of the presentation is for the presenter to explain what their connection is to the thing and to invite open questions from the classmates. A minimum of five questions should be asked and answered.

Extended activities:

As each learner made a list of things about themselves, the content of these lists should be used to assign a 'thing' from somebody else's list to a learner, meaning that each learner has a 'thing' that they did not choose themselves.

While this activity may take a little bit of research, each learner should construct a new list of associations for this new concept. Once completed it should be shared with the originator of the concept to compare the two approaches.



Families

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Challenge assumptions
Primary skills addressed	Writing, reading
Secondary skills addressed	Speaking, listening
Resources required	Selection of family images

Overview:

This activity centres on the idea of 'family', which can be approached in different ways and at various levels, depending on your learners.

Two activities of the activity are described below, with each one employing a different Creative Thinking technique and aimed at developing different linguistic skills. The first activity is aimed at reading and writing, while the second activity is aimed at speaking and listening. However, both activities of the activity use the same pictures as a visual input for the language task(s).

In the first activity you will use associative thinking and brainstorming, employing quotas in order to activate vocabulary connected with a topic and make a random input for writing assignment.

In the second activity, we use the challenging assumptions technique, which will help learners to prepare better for the discussion element.

Before conducting the activity, you should prepare several pictures that show different types of family life (for example: a single parent, very young parent(s), family with several children, extended family etc....).

In both versions of the activity learners should work in groups of four members.

Background information: Challenging assumptions

The process requires a statement to be deconstructed and at each opportunity a question is posed to determine if what is implied is factual or rather based on what is commonly believed to be true.

For example in the statement 'an experienced teacher is the best person to design the lesson', which on first reading appears to innocuous. However after interrogating the statements we could reasonably list the following as 'assumptions':

- Experience somehow implies that this makes someone better, which may not always be the case, especially the experience has only reinforced 'bad practice'.
- That a teacher needs to design a lesson, it could be someone with a professional or other specialist background.
- That a lesson needs to be designed, while some models allow for a different approach to teaching
- That a lesson is designed by one person, when a small committee may do a better job.
- That a lesson is designed by a person. While this may sound unrealistic, there already exists teaching and learning systems that use computers to monitor evaluate performance and to adjust lesson content. These systems are referred to as 'heuristic' systems.

Activity 1:

Each group is assigned a photo, which shows different aspects of family life. In their group, learners should list at least 15 things that the picture makes them think of...these are the 'associations'. This activity should take between one and two minutes.

Once the list of associations is complete, the group should consider the words on the list and from this formulate a title for the picture, writing the title on a sheet of paper. On a separate piece of paper, ask the group to assign names to the characters in the picture and on a third piece of paper, write down a place where this situation could have taken place, such as 'Paris', along with a more local description such as 'in a small house'.

You should collect the pieces of paper from each group, one with titles, one with character names and one with place descriptions. Each group should then be randomly assigned a title, a place description, and two names from the name lists.

With this new information learners should be asked to write a short story using the title, name of the characters and place. The content and the type of story should be specified according to the language and/or literacy level. For example, at the beginners' level the learners could write a short description of the family (names, place where they live, their occupations etc.), while at the higher level, the learners can add more details to the description, from describing people's character and appearance to describing a typical day in that family.

Activity 2:

Using the same or similar family imagery, you should provide a set of statements to the learners, at least one for image. The examples below can be adapted, added to or changed, though in each case try and offer some form of provocation or opportunity for discussion:

- An image of a working woman – statement: Women today live in modern slavery
- An image of the extended family - statement: Today is not possible to live in an extended family
- Young couple at home - statement: Living together before marriage is bad for future marriages

Each group of learners receives one photo and one, non-matching statement. The first step is to talk to other groups. Each group should describe the picture they have (without showing it) to the other groups, in order to find out which group has a statement that matches their picture. Matching titles and pictures can happen in a number of different ways, according to the learners language level and to add some variation to the process. Below are some suggestions of how this element of the activity may be approached:

- Learners can ask only 'yes / no' questions
- Learners should add at least 2 adjectives in front of each noun when answering
- Learners should avoid certain words (women, men, mother, father etc.)

For lower level learners this 'finding' task could be the extent of the activity, providing an opportunity to interrogate and to provide responses, albeit in a prescribed or limited format.

For learners at a more advanced level this initial task can be extended as follows. Once all pictures and statements are matched correctly, learners should be invited to discuss the validity of the statements.

In order to focus the debate on contentious or spurious content, learners should challenge any assumptions that may have been made in the statement. This can be achieved by following the challenging assumptions process, which should lead to subsequent questions to aid resolution and/or agreement between those in discussion.



Extended activities:

For continued work on this topic you can ask learners to reflect on their own family model, or another that they are familiar with.

Within this 'known' situation ask them to consider certain roles or relationships that are common, but may be contentious in some way. From this point ask your learners to make deliberately contentious or exaggerated statements about a family model or relationship that they are familiar with. Once completed, these statements should be shared (perhaps anonymously) with the group to repeat the challenging assumptions activity.

Alternative synopsis

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	What if?
Primary skills addressed	Speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	None

Overview:

Story writing is a very productive method for developing linguistic and communicative skills in both a foreign language and literacy learning context. From short stories to complete novels, neither would function properly without significant planning.

In reality the number of people that actually write a complete novel is relatively small (compared to those that do not) despite this being the dominant form for commercially published stories. A novel provides a platform for intricate plots and sub plots, and a large cast of characters, some of whom are portrayed in incredible detail. However, writing a novel can be a very onerous challenge for some, particularly those grappling with written language.

The book synopsis on the other hand, is a short form of writing that allows any would-be writer to plan with the same flexibility that someone writing a novel has. In this activity, the freedom that a book synopsis offers, along with its relatively short form, will be exploited to explore story development based on the creative thinking technique of 'what if?'.

The 'what if?' technique is often applied when a different perspective or pathway is required to generate a more creative or alternative outcome. The technique for this activity is described below, along with some guidelines on writing a book synopsis.

Background information: Writing a synopsis

A synopsis is simply a clear, factual summary of a novel's storyline. It is typically 500-800 words in length and rarely more than 1000 words. While it may fit on a single page, this is not an essential criterion. It is also important to remember that a synopsis is NOT the 'blurb' that appears on the back of a book, which is typically more about grabbing attention for the purpose of sales.

The following guidelines should be referenced before undertaking the main writing activity:

- The purpose of a synopsis is to summarise the plot, including the ending.
- The language used should be direct and cover the essential points and summarise the main characters.
- Where character names are included, differentiate them by making the text bold or underlined.
- It is acceptable to offer a very short description of the book in the first line such as 'a story about a wizard that becomes magically impotent in middle age, requiring some form of alternative career re-training'.
- Don't forget to tell the story – though you don't have to give away significant plot twists



Activity:

Ask your learners to create a short list of books (novels) that they have read, starting with their favourites. If you have a situation in which only a few or no books have been read by a learner, ask them to do the same thing with fictional films.

For the time being keep these lists at hand to be returned to later.

Using a number of popular stories you should introduce the idea of the 'what if?' question as a way to subvert or alter narrative plots. Start by introducing the story of Snow White and the seven dwarves, known to many from the Disney animated film.

Begin by asking the following questions and allow your learners to respond verbally, encouraging elaboration of original ideas whenever possible.

What if *Snow White fell in love with one of the dwarves?*

What if *Prince Charming was in league with Snow White's step mother?*

What if *Snow White was evil?*

Once you feel your learners are familiar with the 'what if?' format, ask them to contribute other 'what if?' questions related to Snow White.

At this point you may offer other familiar starting points such as 'Red riding hood', 'Sleeping beauty', 'The three little pigs' etc. At this stage familiarity may dictate that you stick with this type of story.

Ask your learners to return to their lists of books and to choose one book that they can generate at least five 'what if?' questions for, deliberately trying to alter the main direction of the story. Allow learners to work in small groups so that they can discuss this part of the activity.

Once all learners have generated at least five 'what if?' questions, ask them to narrow this down to the one that they think would be the most interesting or productive in altering their story. At this point ask each learner to share their 'what if?' question with the class, providing you an opportunity to offer any constructive advice before the main writing activity begins.

Once you are satisfied that all of the learners have generated a suitable 'what if?' question for the task, ask them to write a synopsis for the book that would have been written if the 'what if?' scenario had been the reality.

Extended activities:

While writing is a good exercise for developing language and literacy skills, understanding how to construct and respond to 'what if?' questions is the primary learning objective of this activity.

To ensure a thorough understanding can be applied outside of the classroom, task each learner with generating at least five 'what if?' questions that relate to a TV show that they watch. It could be a soap opera, a situational comedy (sitcom), a drama etc. The objective should be the same, to significantly alter the narrative direction based on an alternative reality offered by the 'what if?' question.

Each learner should verbally present their conclusions when back in class.



Pervasive media

Thematic topic	Responsive learning
Creative thinking method	Associative thinking
Primary skills addressed	Listening, speaking
Secondary skills addressed	Writing
Resources required	Advertising imagery

Overview:

We live in a world that is quite literally littered with media. From television, to mobile phones and tablets, newspapers, magazines and radio, it is difficult (if not impossible) to get through a day without one or more sensory onslaughts from media companies.

One media form that is perhaps more intrusive than others, appearing indiscriminately across a wide range of media channels, is advertising. Walking down a city street we will see billboards, large video screens and posters in windows. Our magazines and newspapers are filled with adverts, even our social media or Internet time is not sacred, when advertising, often targeted to our personal 'needs', appears on our screens. Indeed, advertising revenue has enabled the rapid rise in the quantity of TV channels interrupting, comedies, films, documentaries and the like. Advertising is truly pervasive, it is simply everywhere.

The positive aspect of this wide availability of advertising, is that it is all about communication and language. At its best it employs the copy writing skills of experienced and intelligent professionals, not to mention the skills of some of the most communicative and accomplished photographers. It is also freely available for use as a learning resource.

Activity:

This activity requires your learners to source a number of advertisements, primarily for their 'interesting' image content. The brief to collect advertising should specify that the learners choose advertisements from magazines or newspapers, they may photograph billboards or poster advertising, that they find visually interesting.

Once the advertising images have been submitted, they can be prepared for projecting on to a screen. If you do not have access to a projector, ensure large images are collected or printed.

Arrange the images in a random order and begin the presentation with the first image.

The objective of the activity is to generate one or more collaborative stories from your learners, using associative thinking. Associative thinking is based on our capacity to make connections between disparate concepts, which is something our brain is naturally adept at doing.

Determine an order in your class and invite the first person to begin narrating a completely new story based on what he / she can see on the first image. If the image shows a fashion image with the Eiffel Tower in the background, the story may begin in Paris, by a river or just in a city. Each learner should contribute a sentence before the process moves to the next student.

A new image can be presented for each learner's turn, or an image can be used for multiple turns, if it is felt that it can still be exploited for its visual stimuli.

Characters in the story should be established early as they generally need to be maintained for continuity, though this is not to say that new characters cannot join the story later. The main catalysts for driving the narrative forward will be the objects and / or situations presented through the advertising images.

Each learner needs to listen carefully, as they should attempt to develop the story based on elements that have gone before, while still considering the new information within the images.

Decide how many rounds each story will last, which will depend on the number of learners. This is important as learners should be aware of when they need to start bringing the story to an end.

If possible, use an audio recording device to capture the complete story. With minimal editing to eliminate the pauses and non-story elements, the story can be played back to provide a continuous narrative.

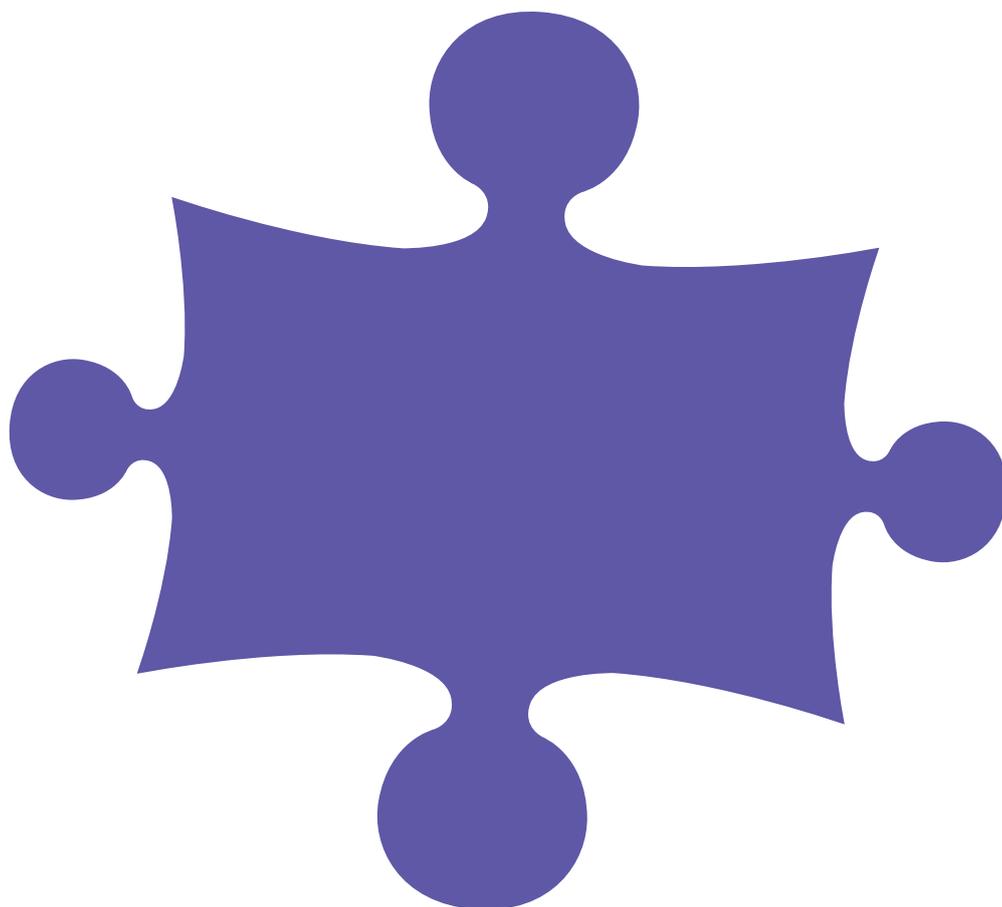
Learners should be asked to discuss which elements of the story could be used in a more formal way, as the initial narrative is really about generating ideas for story tellers, rather than being a piece ready for publication. The process can be challenging but it is also fun.

Extended activities:

The most obvious extension to the activity is to task learners with repeating the exercise themselves, within or away from the class. While the need to make associations with the story elements offered by others is eliminated, individual learners still need to respond sequentially to the visual images within the advertising images.

From this point the learner should determine which were the interesting elements in their narrative, continuing to writing a more formal story based on these elements.





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