



## PARTICIPATORY STORIES

### The Waltz of Life (the story of Jacques Brel) (9 – 10 age group)

#### Learning objectives

Working in small groups, throughout the 5 sheets the children will work on their writing skills with narrative & writing tools in order for them to be able to write dialogues according to feelings, recognise word order and collocations, record daily activities, describe a foreign country and imagine an ending to the story.

#### Helpful Narrative & Writing Tools

- Cards with different emotions written on them (1<sup>st</sup> sheet)
- A globe or world map (4<sup>th</sup> sheet)
- Paper dice with drawings on each side (5<sup>th</sup> sheet)
- Writing checklist (in general/post-writing exercise)

## 1<sup>st</sup> sheet: WRITING DIALOGUES BASED ON FEELINGS

Set the mood of the beginning of the story by reading aloud the writing prompts:

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Jacques was a boy with a love of poetry and music. His father wanted him to work in his cardboard factory instead of following his passions.

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To immerse your class into Jacques's childhood aspirations and his relationship with his father, **ask the groups to draw two slips of paper containing feeling words – angry, sad, hopeful, embarrassed, delighted, disappointed, surprised**, etc. Have the pupils divide themselves into two roles to think up the dialogues for Jacques and his father.

The pupils that will create the dialogue for the father go first, by thinking up what the father might say to Jacques based on the feeling they have been assigned (such as: angry). When they have written their part of the dialogue (1 -2 sentences), the other group of pupils will follow, completing the dialogue exercise as Jacques reacting to his father's words based on the feeling they have been assigned (such as: disappointed).

After the groups have completed brainstorming and writing, read aloud the first writing prompt again followed by the pupils' modified version. The example below demonstrates dialogue that may follow for the feelings 'angry' (the father) and 'disappointed' (Jacques).

### What may result is something like:

Jacques was a boy with a love of poetry and music. His father wanted him to work in his cardboard factory instead of following his passions. **His father told Jacques, “Stop wasting time with your silly songs! You’ll never find success like that”. Jacques replied to his father, “I wish you believed in me. Maybe I really should give up singing”.**

Then, have each of the groups take turns reading aloud amongst themselves the sentences they came up with.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> sheet: RECOGNISING WORD ORDER AND COLLOCATIONS

Read aloud the writing prompts to the children:

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Despite working in the factory, it didn't take long for Jacques to start writing and singing his first songs.

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To help children describe the content of Jacques's songs, you will play a game of **"One-word Story"**. The description starts with "He sang about", and the first pupil to play the game must say and write a word to add to this base, such as "birds" (ie. "He sang about birds..."). The pupil to his/her left continues by **adding the next word, without repeating what has come beforehand**, and making sure that the word makes logical and grammatical sense, abiding by correct word order and choosing collocations (ie. "He sang about birds that..."). The round continues until a clear sentence has been created.

Once a sentence has been written down, read aloud the first writing prompt again followed by the pupils' modified version.

## What may result is something like:

Despite working in the factory, it didn't take long for Jacques to start writing and singing his first songs. **He sang about birds that can fly into space and wake the biggest giants with their melodies.**

Then, as with the first sheet, have the group take turns reading aloud the prompts and what they came up with.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> sheet: RECORDING DAILY ACTIVITIES

Read aloud the writing prompts to children.

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Jacques soon moved to Paris and found great success with singing, acting and directing. His days became very busy.

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Now pupils must practice an exercise that resembles **recording your day in a diary entry or daily planner**. You can assist them by writing times of the day on the board (8:00AM, 10:00AM, 12:00PM, 2:00PM, 4:00PM, 6:00PM, 8:00PM, 10:00PM, etc.) which they will assign to an activity they imagine Jacques would do in his daily life as a singer, actor and director.

Alternatively, allow groups the freedom to pick their own times and describe Jacques's schedule with however many entries they wish. Choose which verb tense is most appropriate for your class (this may be the present tense, or otherwise).

## What may result is something like:

Jacques soon moved to Paris and found great success with singing, acting and directing. His days became very busy. **At 8:00, he wakes up. He goes to the studio to record a new song at 10:00. Jacques has lunch with a famous director at 12:00 about a role in his movie. At 2:00 he has lunch planned with his brother, but he is late. 4:00 is when he goes home to rest. At 6:00 he feeds his fish. Jacques goes to dinner with his friends at 8:00. Finally, he goes to bed at 10:00PM.**

Then, read aloud the prompts with the children as done in the previous two sheets.

## 4<sup>th</sup> sheet: DESCRIBING A FOREIGN COUNTRY

Read aloud the writing prompts to children.

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After some time, Jacques became tired of the success and fame. He bought a plane and a sailing ship and decided to travel.

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Pupils will now practice describing a place, either real or imaginary, known or unknown. You can ask them to expand on the prompt by either making up **an imaginary foreign country** that Jacques traveled to, asking them to think up a name for that country and what it's like (its climate, people, traditions, language, food, attractions, etc.).

Alternatively, pupils can expand on this prompt by closing their eyes and **choosing a foreign country randomly on a globe or world map**, which they will describe in the same fashion as above, either guessing the answers or responding with their own knowledge about the country.



## What may result is something like:

After some time, Jacques became tired of the success and fame. He bought a plane and a sailing ship and decided to travel. **Jacques goes to Sri Lanka. It is a small country with very hot weather. It has a big population, but Jacques thinks the people are friendly. He really enjoys the food because its spicy and flavourful!**

Then, read aloud the prompts with the children as done in the previous sheets.

## 5<sup>th</sup> sheet: IMAGINING AN ENDING TO THE STORY

Read aloud the writing prompts to children.

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Jacques had an exciting, but short life. When doctors told him he would not live much longer, he saved his best adventure for last.

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In order to help the pupils co-create the final prompt, give each group **a dice** to roll twice. The dice should be constructed from paper and contain drawings with different symbols on each side to show nouns, such as drawings of **stars, money, tree, football, ring**, etc. What you draw is up to you, and **how the groups interpret the symbolism of the drawings is up to them**. Therefore, the dice might roll to the side with the ‘money’ symbol and pupils may enrich the prompt by stating that Jacques won the lottery or he lost all of his money in Las Vegas – encourage the children that there are no wrong associations to inspire their co-creation.

Each group should think of two sentences to describe how Jacques’s final years were lived – 1 sentence for each dice roll.

### What may result is something like:

Jacques had an exciting, but short life. When doctors told him he would not live much longer, he saved his best adventure for last. **He decided to play the lottery and won the biggest prize. Jacques decided to donate the money he won to his favourite football team!**

Then, read aloud the prompts with the children as done in the previous sheets.

\* For a post-writing exercise, if the children have had a larger contribution in the writing tasks, prepare a **Writing Checklist** and have them double-check their work before recording their stories.