

Scribble Society



Welcome to the Scribble Society!

The Scribble Society is a creative writing club at Henry Bigg Academy, the secondary school at the heart of my new series, *Bigg School*.

Each book follows the life of a different kid in Year Seven. From friendship feuds to secret crushes, the up and downs of secondary school are explored, with brilliant illustrations from Jess Bradley. It's perfect for readers in Key Stage 2 and 3, beginning with Lola's story in *Best Friends Forever*.

The Scribble Society is at the heart of the school - it's a place where children can have fun and experiment with stories; for those who are confident and experienced writers to those who simply want to have fun. A Scribble Society club can be held anywhere, at any time. All the participants will need is a pen or pencil, some paper and their imaginations!

I have created a pack so you can set up your very own Scribble Society and spark a love of creative writing. These all are tried and tested creative writing exercises I've done with children in schools up and down the UK.

The pack contains activities for six creative writing sessions. Worksheets and teachers' notes are included for each session. (Each could be between 30 and 60 minutes long depending on the age of your students.)

Have fun and let your imaginations run wild!

Lisa Williamson

BIGG SCHOOL

The Bigg School series, written by Lisa Williamson and illustrated by Jess Bradley
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Scribble Society Creative Writing Club – session 1

SCRIBBLE YOURSELF

Welcome to the Scribble Society! In today's session, you'll be doing the first creative writing exercise that Lola and Astrid do in *Best Friends Forever!*

To get started, here are some 'getting to know you' questions to get everyone warmed up. Jot down your answers then share them with a friend.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?
2. What is your favourite time of year?
3. What is your favourite film?
4. What is your favourite sport to play?
5. Name your three favourite smells
6. Describe the best dessert you've ever eaten
7. What is your favourite word?
8. Do you have any hidden talents?
9. If you were a superhero, what would your super power be?
10. If it were raining meatballs, would you eat one?

Take your favourite question and turn it into a longer piece of writing. E.g., you might choose to write about why you love Christmas (question 2) or describe a day in the life of your superhero alter-ego (question 9)!

Try to write for as long as you can without pausing. Just write whatever comes into your head.

Sentence starter ideas:

My preferred ...

It may sound strange but I ...

Nobody knows that I ...

The feeling I get when I ...

My ideal day would include...

I always enjoy ...

It would be wonderful if ...

Now read your writing aloud to another Scribble Society club member.
What have you learnt about each other?

Lisa's Top 5 Writing Tips:

1. Write the kind of story you would really enjoy reading. Do you like stories about dragons? Write a story about dragons! Love to laugh? Write something funny! If you create the sort of story you'd enjoy reading, chances are someone else will too.
2. Make life difficult for your main character. No one wants to read a story about someone who is perfect and never makes mistakes or gets in trouble. Put obstacles in front of your characters and see how they react. These obstacles might be big (their house being swept away in a storm), or small (losing their pencil case) – the interesting bit is working out how your character deals with those setbacks. Do they get cross? More determined? Do they panic? It's up to you!
3. If you're feeling stuck for ideas, ask yourself some 'what if?' questions. What if my character found a treasure map? What if their dog suddenly started talking? What if they saw a ghost? Start writing and see what happens!
4. Write as often as you can, even if it's just a few lines. Writing is like a muscle and it needs regular exercise to stay nice and strong. The more you write, the better and more confident you will become!
5. Don't put pressure on yourself for the first draft of your story to be perfect. I have to rework my books over and over again until they're ready. It's all part of the process. The most important thing is to have fun with it!



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Scribble Society



Scribble Society Creative Writing Club - session 2

SCRIBBLE YOUR SENSES

Today we're going to think about our five senses and how we can use them to make our writing come alive. This is the second activity that Lola and Astrid do at the Scribble Society in *Best Friends Forever!*

For each of these words, jot down what you think they might look/smell/taste/feel/sound like:

	Look	Smell	Taste	Feel	Sound
Chocolate					
Happiness					
Shadow					
Desert					
Anger					
Moonlight					
Clouds					
Boredom					

Share your descriptive words with the group and see if they can guess which word you are describing.

In *Best Friends Forever* Lola decides to write about the smell of her dad's shower gel:

For as long as I can remember, my dad has always used the same shower gel. It comes in a green bottle and smells of mint and tea tree. When I was little, I didn't like it because it tickled my nostrils and reminded me of the stuff my mum put on my cuts and insect bites, but as I got older, I started to like it. Sometimes, I used it when I had a shower. I liked the way it made my skin smell – all fresh and clean. When Dad moved out, mum stopped buying it. Once we went to the supermarket and I slipped a bottle of it in the trolley, but mum must have noticed because by the time we got to the checkouts, it was gone. I miss the smell, but I miss Dad more.

Can you imagine the scent of the shower gel?

Can you see why this particular smell is important to Lola?

Now it's your turn. Think of a smell that connects with a particular memory – it might be the smell of your granny's perfume, or the school canteen. It could even be a smell that's not very nice! Write a short passage about it, using lots of specific details so that your reader can almost smell it too!



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Scribble Society Creative Writing Club - session 3

SCRIBBLE SOME STORY SEEDS

One of the questions I get asked a lot is where my ideas come from. The answer is everywhere! It might be a photograph, an interesting article I read in the newspaper or maybe even a snippet of conversations I overheard on the bus! Other times, ideas just pop into my head when I'm least expecting it. Occasionally though, we all need a bit of help to get started and the following two exercises are designed to do just that.

EXERCISE 1:

This is an exercise you can do together as one big group.

Pick one of these starter sentences and write it at the top of your page:

- *It was 2am and the phone was ringing.*
- *Josh hadn't meant for it to happen.*
- *'Surprise!' they shouted, leaping out from behind the door.*
- *It had been the worst day ever.*
- *I'd never seen a ghost before.*

Set a timer and continue the story. When the time is up, fold your piece of paper in half and swap with a friend. Your job now is to continue the new story in front of you! Really pay attention to what has already been written. If the beginning of the story is scary, your contribution should be scary too!

Set another timer then swap again (with someone different this time). You can do this as many times as you like but 5 or 6 usually feels about right.

At the end, take it turns to read the stories out loud. Hopefully you won't be able to tell when a different writer takes over the story!

EXERCISE 2:

This time, instead of giving you an opening line, I'm going to give you a character, a setting and an object. It is then up to you to incorporate them into your story.

To get warmed up, you can try making up a story as a group or in pairs, before working individually. Your story can be as wacky as you like!

Characters:	Settings:	Objects:
Window Cleaner	Desert Island	Packet of seeds
Father Christmas	Coffee Shop	Violin
Vet	Castle	Umbrella
Musician	Dentist	Coat hanger
Lottery winner	Hotel	Camera
Circus performer	Time machine	Single shoe
Inventor	Igloo	Frisbee
Babysitter	Cleaning Cupboard	Barbie Doll
Mermaid	Gym	Cloak
Identical Twins	Cemetery	Hairbrush
Beekeeper	Haunted House	Chess Board
Astronaut	Beach	Suitcase
Detective	Zoo	False Teeth
Teacher	Lift	Fortune Cookie
Ghost	Space Station	Goldfish in a bag
Spy	Bathroom	Diary
Stunt person	Hospital	Purse full of money
Fortune Teller	Swimming pool	Keys
Photographer	Theme Park	Mirror
Tooth Fairy	Library	Birthday cake



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Scribble Society Creative Writing Club - session 4

SCRIBBLE AN ESCAPE

In my book *Best Friends Forever*, Lola's birthday treat is a visit to an Alice in Wonderland themed escape room.

This got me thinking – wouldn't it fun to come up with our own escape rooms!

What is an escape room?

An escape game is a game in which a team of players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in a locked room or series of rooms. The goal is often to escape from the room within a time limit.

Has anyone ever visited an escape room? What was the theme?

All escape rooms have these vital ingredients:

1. A Strong setting and theme

Examples: Egyptian tomb, bank vault, prison cell, cabin on the Titanic, spooky hotel room, science lab, School for Wizards, submarine etc

2. A time limit

An hour is the norm, but it's up to you if you want to make the game longer or shorter

3. A specific goal (and consequences if your players fail to reach it!)

For example, in an Egyptian tomb escape room the goal might be to lift the deadly curse! In a bank heist game, it might be to get out of there with as much money as possible!

4. Fun and challenging puzzles

These can be both mental and physical. Even better if they relate to your theme! Think secret codes, riddles, jigsaw puzzles, word searches etc.

Now, it's your turn to design your dream escape room. No idea is too wacky so let your imaginations run wild!

All escape rooms need a story! Can you come up with an enticing introduction that will make people want to pick *your* room?

Escape room name:			
Theme:			
How many players:		Age guidance:	
Difficulty level:		Time limit:	
Goal:			
Introduction:			

Once you've come with your story, you can get stuck into the nitty-gritty! Put yourselves in the shoes of a player and try to come up with as fun and exciting an experience as possible.

Draw a map of your escape room for a designer/architect.
Label all the different features, clues and puzzles in as much detail as possible.

Here are some example introductions:

Escape from R.M.S. Titanic:

The Queen of the Ocean is about to experience disaster! On April 10th 1912 the largest ship ever built left Southampton on her maiden voyage. She was called the 'Ship of Dreams', transporting people to New York in the height of luxury. Just 4 days into the journey disaster struck as she collided with an iceberg. On board, as first-class passengers faced with impending doom, what would you do to escape the ill-fated ship?

Witchcraft & Wizardry:

Congratulations! You've graduated from the school of Witchcraft and Wizardry, but you've been brought back to solve one last mystery. Only this time, you sense something sinister at work. The professor has gone mad – mad with power! You realise he's tricked you by trapping you in the room, and within an hour he will extract all magic from you! Stripped of your wand and powers, you must use your wits to retrieve your wand and escape before you lose all magic forever!

Steadfast Spies:

You need to covertly board the hijacked vessel UNS Steadfast to stop her from reaching London and launching her missiles. Can you stop Rogue agent Malice in time? The enemy have seized the battle cruiser UNS steadfast. It's up to you to stop them before it's too late... the clock's ticking!

Covert Chocolate Factory:

The famous Chocolate factory has hidden 5 golden tickets inside chocolate bars around the globe. If you find a ticket, you'll be allowed to enter the factory and see all the magic with your own two eyes! Sadly, you were not one of the lucky five... Fortunately, the mysterious owner of a rival chocolate company has managed to acquire one, but it would be far too suspicious if he went inside. Therefore, he has offered to give the ticket over to you, but only if you agree to steal the secrets held within...



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Scribble Society Creative Writing Club - session 5

SCRIBBLE A SHOE

Today's session is all about objects and how they can often spark amazing stories!

EXERCISE 1:

Let's start by having a think about our favourite objects. Can you think of an object that's really important to you? It might be a childhood teddy, a piece of jewellery, a trophy or medal, maybe even your bed or computer console!

Have a go at writing a letter to this object letting it know just how much it means to you.

Talk about how you came to have this object in your possession and perhaps describe some of the adventures you've been on together. Be as sincere and loving as possible – let your object know how much it means to you!

EXERCISE 2:

Next, we're going to try writing from the point of view of an object. Storytelling is all about putting yourself in someone else's shoes, so I thought it would be fun to write from the perspective of a shoe itself!

What kind of shoe you choose is totally up to you! It could be a wellington boot, a ballet slipper, a football boot, Cinderella's glass slipper, a cowboy boot, a flipper, a clown shoe – whatever you fancy!

Think about what sort of personality your shoe might have and the sorts of struggles and obstacles they might face. What are their likes and dislikes? Where have they travelled in the past? Have they had any previous owners? Do they like the person wearing them now?

Sentence starter ideas:

My big day is finally here!

As I sit by the door, I think about ...

Every scratch and scuff on my sole tells a story ...

My journey began in a factory ...

Each time I am slipped on, I transform into...

Sometimes I wish that ...

I don't like to boast, but I know the other shoes are jealous of me ...

EXERCISE 3:

We're now going to use objects as inspiration for a story. All objects, even ones that seem pretty ordinary like a mug or a pen, will have a story lurking inside them!

- Look at your object. Is it hard or soft? Big or small? Heavy or light? Shiny or dull? What is it made of?
- Pick it up. How does it feel? Does it have a smell?
- What is it used for?
- Think about the history of your object. Who does it belong to? How did they get it? Did they steal it? Was it a gift? Did they find it? Where and how?
- Is your object valuable?
- Is it unique?
- Does it have magical powers?

Now, have a go at writing a scene or an opening to a story featuring your object. You can write from the point of view of the object, or you could write from the point of view of its owner. Your story can be funny, dramatic, scary, magical – whatever you like! Just make sure to include your object in some way.



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Scribble Society Creative Writing Club - session 6

SCRIBBLE A SCHOOL

I've always loved school stories! From Malory Towers (set at a boarding school by the sea), to The Worst Witch (a school for young witches), I think schools make for really exciting, interesting stories. Indeed, it's a big part of the reason why I created the Bigg School series!

Do you know any other stories set in schools?

Today, we're going to have a go at creating ideas for our very own school stories.

Have a think about what sort of school you might like to write about. It could be a school for junior spies, a stage school, or maybe even a school for tooth fairies in training!

Here are some things to think about:

What is the school called?

Where is it? How would you get there?

How do you apply for a place?

Does it cost money to go there?

What does the building look like?

How many students are there? What ages are they?

Who is the headteacher?

Is it strict or more relaxed?

What sort of lessons do the students take?

What is the food like?

If it's a boarding school, what are the bedrooms like?

EXERCISE 1:

Now, put yourselves in the shoes of a new student at the school. Write a diary entry about their first day. Who are they? How do they feel about starting a new school? Are they happy to be there? Think about their journey to the school, the people they meet, the things they see and do. It's a diary so you can be completely honest!

EXERCISE 2:

We're now going to fast-forward to half-term. Write a letter or email to a friend or family member with an update about how your character is getting on at their new school. Have they settled in? Have they been in any trouble? Have they made friends? What do they like/dislike? Are they homesick? Are they top of the class, or are they struggling to keep up?

Unlike diary entries, we don't always say exactly how we're feeling in a letter or an email. Decide who you're writing to. For example, you might be more honest with a close friend than you would be with a grown-up. Think about how much your character is prepared to share.



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TEACHER'S NOTES

Session One – **Scribble Yourself**

- Start the session by sharing the videos from Lisa Williamson introducing the Scribble Society and her top tips for writing.

<https://guppybooks.co.uk/scribblesociety/>

- Emphasise the importance of having fun whilst writing. Explain to scribblers that the Scribble Society is about exploring and experimenting with creative writing. There is no expectation that their writing should be 'perfect' or that it should fit a specific assessment criterion.
- It would be a good idea to model writing a few of your own answers to the questions. Children will enjoy finding things out about you and it will encourage them to write personal and honest answers.
- You may wish to model writing the start of a longer response before scribblers start writing, or you could write your own longer response while the children are working on their own compositions.
- Decide what you would like your scribblers to write on at the Scribble Society. You could print out the sheets for each session or provide scribblers with exercise books, or invite them to use their own special books for writing.
- You could encourage scribblers to sit and write in a location or position that feels comfortable to them. (This may be under a table or outside!)
- While the scribblers are writing you may wish to play some quiet background music. Discuss with students whether they would find this helpful or distracting.
- If scribblers do not feel comfortable reading their work aloud to others do not insist upon this.

Session Two – **Scribble Your Senses**

- Provide some examples for the first activity, focusing particularly on the abstract nouns. For example, you might suggest that for you, happiness smells like a musty old book; romance sounds like rustling leaves; boredom smells like a wet dog and anger feels like walking on hot sand.
- Read the extracts from *Best Friends Forever* aloud to scribblers, slowly and clearly. Ask them to comment on particular words and phrases that they enjoy hearing.
- To inspire scribblers further you could share this video of author Jaclyn Moriarty introducing her novel *The Impossible Secret of Lillian Velvet*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuRLYKgN5hA>

Jaclyn shares three exercises for creating characters and one of her top tips involves thinking about your own favourite smell. (The whole video is well worth watching but Jaclyn talks specifically about her favourite smell from 05:03 to 06:45.)

Session Three – **Scribble Some Story Seeds**

- With younger scribblers, it might be best to just add a single line to each story. When each scribbler has added their line, they should fold their piece of paper in half, ready to swap with a friend.
- You could set the timer for one, two or five minutes each time - maybe even longer if you are not planning to do exercise 2 in this session. But ensure that all scribblers are aware that it does not matter how much they write on each page.
- For exercise 2, you will need to use three bags, hats or cups. Cut out the characters, settings and objects. Place the slips of paper in the bags, using one bag for each category. Invite scribblers to pick one piece of paper from each bag.

Session Four - **Scribble an Escape**

- Scribblers can work alone, in pairs or small groups. Because this is so ideas based, working in groups is nice as they can bounce ideas about.
- The example introductions could be read aloud to the group or you could give pairs of children a copy of the sheet to read. Ask them which one appeals to them the most? Which would be the most challenging? Which would be the most popular for different groups of people?

- Some children may prefer to write out step by step instructions for completing the escape room successfully – rather than drawing the design. (Or this could be an additional activity for another Scribble Society session.)
- If scribblers are lacking inspiration for a theme, ask them to consider their favourite things – books, hobbies, places etc. They could even design a school or library themed escape room, using rooms and people they know as part of the story.

Session Five - **Scribble a Shoe**

- There are three activities in this session so you can choose to do one, two or all three depending on the time available and the age/interests of your students.
- After scribblers have written their letters to their objects, you could invite them to read their letters aloud and the group could try and guess the objects that have been written about.
- For the final activity, scribblers will need some objects. You could invite children to bring in some objects from home or provide them with a selection of random items collected from your home (e.g., keys, an old coin, a coaster, a piece of ribbon, a birthday candle.) Alternatively, they could find objects in the classroom or library.

Session Six - **Scribble a School**

- Stories set in unusual schools that children may know include: *The School of Good and Evil* by Soman Chainani, *The Stolen Prince of Cloudburst* by Jaclyn Moriarty, *Skander and the Unicorn Thief* by A.F Steadman, *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens, *The Demon Headmaster* by Gillian Cross and *The Children of Castle Rock* by Natasha Farrant.
- The children could draw the school they are imagining if they are an arty bunch. They could also write out timetables for the school day.
- This workshop could easily be extended across several Scribble Society sessions. Children could write their school themed stories in instalments each week. They could think about events that could happen across a school term or year and some kind of transformation that could happen to the main character. School is all about learning, and in school themed stories the protagonists usually learn something about themselves.

Welcome to Guppy School!



At Guppy School we are passionate about promoting reading for pleasure in schools and bringing fun, vibrant and high-quality literature into classrooms. We've created an extensive range of free educational resources to accompany our books. These include detailed lesson plans, cross-curricular resource packs, discussion questions, engaging games, Book Club Cards and author workshops.

Many of our resources align with National Curriculum objectives and they have all been designed by experienced teachers or librarians.

Our Guppy School platform also includes details about how to contact authors and illustrators for school visits, along with our Top Tips for an Awesome Author visit.

We are constantly updating our Guppy School page with new content and resources. Dive into the shoal and sign up for our monthly school newsletter for exclusive early access to materials, as well as regular competitions and giveaways.

<https://guppybooks.co.uk/guppy-school-resources/>

Maggie Blue and the Dark World
by Anna Goodall:
4x Lesson Plans and Ideas - Educational Resource Pack

Suitable for:
Ages 9+

Explore themes of:

- The power of friendship and trust
- Mental health and its unique perspective on the story
- The value of being yourself and embracing individuality
- The nature of happiness and its significance
- The importance of standing up against darkness and evil
- The courage to embark on a dangerous journey
- The exploration of parallel worlds
- The impact of loneliness
- Animal perspectives

Subject checklist:

- Literacy ● Drama ● Art and Design ● PSHE

The Cats We Meet Along the Way

Author: Nadia Mikail

Age: 12+ Genre: Fiction - family and friendships

This is the book for you if you like ...

- Adventurous road trips.
- Rich details about life in Malaysia.
- Finding the light in dark times.
- Real and honest family dynamics.
- Dystopian yet hopeful stories.
- *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin.

Summary: Seventeen-year-old Aisha hasn't seen her sister for two years. And now that a calamity is about to end the world in nine months' time, she and her mother decide that it's time to track her down and mend the hurts of the past. Along with Aisha's boyfriend, his parents (and Fleabag the stray cat), the group take a roadtrip through Malaysia in a wildly decorated campervan - to put the past to rest, to come to terms with the present, and to hope for the future.

Winner of the Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2023.

Extract: The world found out it was ending on just another Tuesday. IN A YEAR, the headlines screamed. Back when there still had been headlines. An asteroid heading straight for collision. Hollywood perfect for the end of the world. It really was like something out of a movie. Sometimes it still felt like a cruel, extended prank. (Page 15)

Fleabag meowed and meowed all the damn time and if the world cracked apart, who was going to feed him then? That stupid cat was curly-coloured and not even the good kind of curly, he was like curly which had gone off... (Page 215)

HOPEFUL - EMOTIONAL - VIVID

Descriptive writing
Creates a clear picture in the reader's mind

The crocodile twisted and turned, snapping at me as I clung desperately on. At one point I thought it was all over as the beast whipped round and slammed its mighty jaws shut. A powerful tug at my back nearly plucked me from my perch on its tail, and one for one horrible moment I expected its row of splintered teeth to slice into me. But then I realised the beast had bitten into the rucksack on my back! The enraged crocodile let go but continued to spin and spiral, leaping from the river, and then diving into its musky depths. Somehow I managed to hold on and crawl up its gnarled back, gripping its scaly body with my hands and knees like a bucking bronco rider.

Pick out some of the words and phrases used to describe the crocodile and what it is doing:

Write your own descriptive sentence about the crocodile: