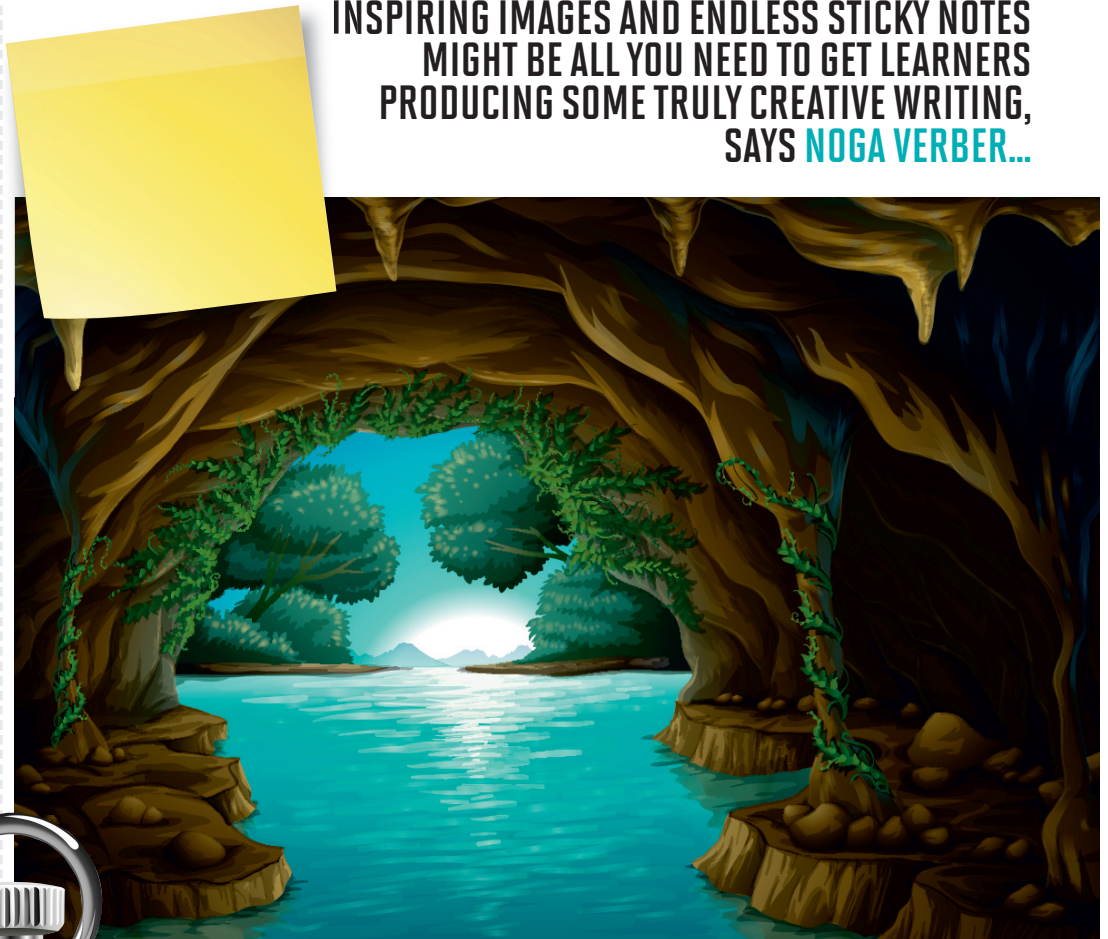


WHY TEACH THIS?

Often students will say 'I don't know what to write'; the format of this lesson has always seemed to eradicate that barrier to learning and creativity. It's **kinesthetic**, as students move around using a range of resources - and **the strict timing element** means it's extremely fast-paced. I particularly love **the discussion and creativity** that can arise from limitations; in this case, the **limitation of time** and of what language techniques students are addressing. This lesson could be adapted to **other subject**, either creatively - perhaps in an art context - or to start thinking about **key words** through images; or even as a revision tool, where the pictures being passed around **represent different topics** students have already studied. I also think it is successful because of the **collaborative nature**; students read what the person before them has written and learn from / inspire each other.

PICTURE PERFECT

INSPIRING IMAGES AND ENDLESS STICKY NOTES MIGHT BE ALL YOU NEED TO GET LEARNERS PRODUCING SOME TRULY CREATIVE WRITING, SAYS **NOGA VERBER...**



The following lesson is one I have used with great success with students of all abilities (including in mixed ability groups) from Y7 to Y9 to teach engaging creative writing. Getting students moving around the classroom (especially in classes where behaviour can be challenging) can be daunting but the speed of the task keeps students focused and can result in some fantastic work being produced without too much teacher talk or instruction needed. This is very much a facilitation of learning and creating for the teacher. You do need a number of resources (and one way to differentiate this lesson thoroughly is to decide exactly which student will have each picture), but for all the

coloured sticky notes required, I think it is well worth the effort.

STARTER ACTIVITY

To get learners thinking about the necessary 'ingredients' for good writing, start with a question on the board such as 'What does a good story/piece of writing need?' or go straight into considering imagery: 'Write down the five senses, choose one and describe what you are hearing/seeing/smelling etc. right now.'

I think giving a choice of starter activity can work well - e.g. 1. Draw a symbol to represent each of the 5 senses OR 2. Pick two of the five senses and describe your favourite sight, sound, smell etc.

INFORMATION CORNER

ABOUT OUR EXPERT



Noga Verber has been teaching English and Drama at Chestnut Grove Academy in South London for three years and is also a Head of House and the director of the school musical.

HOMework

Make this descriptive piece of writing the opening of a story. How could this lead into a more detailed piece of extended writing? Ask students: What would you do if you woke up in this setting having never seen it or been there before? Use your description as the inspiration for more creative writing.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

Task 1

■ On each desk place a picture and three differently coloured or sized sticky notes. On the first note, students write as many adjectives as they can that describe the picture within a set timeframe. Use an online countdown timer to keep it fast paced and to have a clear signal (such as a buzzer) for students that time is up.

Extension: Make more ambitious word choices

■ Students swap their picture with another student – this can be a simple exchange with the person next to them, or time it and make students all move around and be back in seats with a new picture when the buzzer

goes after 10/20 seconds. They then repeat the previous step adding more and more vocabulary therefore having to use a wider variety of adjectives.

■ Following discussion about the five senses you could make each timed round focus on a different sense (although probably not taste) that students need to describe.

Task 2

■ Revisit/introduce a specific language device. I usually get students to write a definition or example of a simile and a metaphor and check they have a good understanding of the differences between them.

■ Students now swap pictures again. On the third (if you are following on from Task 1) sticky note, students write a simile or metaphor to describe the image.

This is another timed activity. As with Task 1, students could also swap again to have to write another simile or metaphor.

Task 3

■ Students look at the picture again (if this follows tasks 1 and 2, students read the vocabulary and imagery created and written by other students, which are on the notes stuck on the pictures).

■ Ask students to close their eyes and imagine themselves in that place. Go through the senses – what can you hear? What can you smell? How does the ground beneath you/the air/the temperature feel? Ask students to imagine why they are there. Spend some time on this.

■ Students then use the vocabulary and phrases/imagery stuck onto the picture, along with their own imagination, to create

a piece of descriptive writing about that setting.

SUMMARY

Students may want to share their creative writing by reading it aloud to a partner or to the whole class.

Alternatively, learners could self or peer assess the pieces of writing basing this on differentiated learning objectives or on success criteria created by them as a class (either before or after they do the writing) or by the teacher.

Or they could check how wide a variety of vocabulary they have used by counting the adjectives, similes and metaphors they have included in their piece of writing.