

Welcome to Creative Bursts: short creative activities to do at home with your children.

Creative Bursts are created by Sarah Webb and supported by MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland.

Sarah Webb is an award-winning children's writer and children's book champion. Her children's books include *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy which won the Irish Book Awards Junior Category and *Blazing a Trail: Irish Women Who Changed the World*, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill which won the Irish Book Awards Senior Category. Her latest book is *Dare to Dream: Irish People Who Took On the World (and Won!)*, illustrated by Graham Corcoran.

MoLI is committed to youth creativity and alongside the free primary schools tour and workshops programme, we also run Bright Sparks – a series of art and story workshops facilitated by Irish writers and illustrators where families embrace the opportunity to play and create together.

To get lost in a Creative Burst all you need is a pencil or pen and a notebook or piece of paper.

The writing games and prompts are aimed at around age 9+ but could be done with younger children if you give them a bit of help. Also included are some more challenging story prompts for older or more experienced writers of around 11+ (every young writer is different).

Remember grown-ups – please join in too! It's great for children to see you being creative, making mistakes and having fun on the page!

Today's theme is: Let's Go Wild

Warm Up

To get started let's warm up those writing muscles.

You could start by writing this week's quote into your writing notebook, copy-book or sheet of paper. You could give it a fancy frame or border if you like!

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.” - Roald Dahl

If you've already got that one in your notebook, how about this one:

'If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it.' - Toni Morrison

Creative Burst Challenge Number 1 - Word Game

When I say the word 'dog' what words come into your head?

Write them out as a list or you can do a word 'spider' or a mind map* – you decide.

*Write the word in a circle or 'spider' in the centre of the page and draw lines or 'spider's legs' coming out of it. Write any words you can think of that are associated or linked with the word (dog in this case) at the end of the 'legs'.

Every dog looks different – some are small and yappy, others are big and shaggy. My dog is a black rescue dog with kind brown eyes.

Do you know a dog? Describe her or him. Remember to use lots of details – how they smell, feel, look, sound (are they quiet or loud). We will be looking at writing using all the senses another day in fact.

So now I want you to add details to other words – like you've done above to the word dog.

Try these words below or add some of your own. The idea is to make the person or animal come alive by adding details.

Paint pictures with your words!

Cat
Girl
Boy
Alien

Extra Challenge (age 11+) - Try This Story Prompt

You walk into a rescue centre and spot the funniest looking dog you've ever seen.

Describe the dog.

How do you persuade your family that it's the dog for you?

Creative Burst Challenge Number 2 - Word Game

What comes into your head when I say the word wild?

Write it down or draw it (or spider/mind map it again if you like!).

Now we're going to create a poem (and remember, poems do not need to rhyme) using the words you've written down and any others that you'd like to add.

It's easy - just finish the sentences:

If I was a wild animal I'd be...

If I was a wild colour I'd be..

If I was wild weather I'd be...

But today I am...

(Describe how you feel today - wild or calm? You decide! You can use a simile if you like - as wild as a storm, as calm as a dog curled up in front of the fire.)

Creative Burst Challenge Number 3 - Story Prompt

Write a short acrostic poem - I'm sure you've done them in school.

Write about the word printed below by adding a sentence after the first letter.

Eg for the word dog:

Deeply loyal and kind friend,

Odie, my rescue dog,

Good as gold unless there are sausages around, then he goes wild!

Try your own dog acrostic poem or use any of the other words below.

D

O

G

C

A

T

F

I

S

H

Extra Challenge (11+) Try This Story Prompt

One day you meet a dog on the street and she starts talking to you. What does she say?

Creative Burst Challenge Number 4 – Dialogue (Talking) Game

You will need: toy animals of any sort or Lego animals.

If you don't have any toy animals to hand you could draw two very different toy animals – a dog and a kingfisher for example.

We are going to write a short piece of dialogue – which is when characters in a story talk to each other. Did you know that in novels over 50% of the book can be dialogue, sometimes more! So it's good to practice writing lots of dialogue if you want to write a short story or a book.

So now I want you to write about two toy animals and what they get up to when their owner leaves the room or goes to sleep.

Remember to leave a new line for every character speaking. And use speech marks – either single or double, it doesn't matter which. Some publishers use “ and some use ‘ – it depends on their ‘house style’ or how they like their books to look inside!

Here's an example of a short piece of dialogue – a toy kingfisher is talking to a toy dog.

‘Quick, she's fast asleep, to the fridge.’ Arnold flew off the end of his owner, Suzy's bed and landed on the rug.

Clem looked down at him from the bed and sighed. Arnold was her very best friend but every day he had a new crazy scheme. ‘I don't know, Arnold,’ he said. ‘Suzy's dad spotted your beak marks in the butter last time. He might have set a trap.’

‘Trap schnap.’ Arnold ruffled his feathers. ‘Humans are nothing to be scared of. Follow me. And try not to bark, OK? Even if you smell sausages. Glorious yellow butter awaits. Yum, yum.’

He was a very handsome kingfisher but he was always getting Clem in trouble.

What happens next?

If you like you can finish this piece of dialogue or you can write your own piece, or both!

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Hope you enjoyed today's Creative Bursts!

And remember what Einstein said: 'Creativity is intelligence having fun.'

Keep writing,
Sarah

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