



# Writing Stories for Malaysian Children

*A Workshop Course by Brighton Training Fellow Ruth Wickham at IPGKDRI, Kuala Terengganu.*

## Participant's Notes for Session 5



## Session 5: A story from your childhood.

Often thinking about our own childhood is the best place to start in creating a story for children. In order to write in a way that appeals to children we need to be able to remember how to think like a child and remember how being a child feels.

### Objectives

Participants will

- Become aware of issues that are relevant to children.
- Decide on one or more incidents from their childhood that are worthy of retelling.
- Consider ways to develop and adapt their childhood story to make it engaging for children.
- Use the Story Plan Form to create a story based on their selected childhood memory.
- Write a story based on a childhood memory.

### Materials

You should have your own laptop with Internet access (dongle), notebook and writing materials. Coloured pencils or markers are needed for illustrating and adding colour.

For this session you will need a hard and/or soft copy of the 'Story Plan Form'.



### 1. Themes that engage children

Look through the selection of commercial children's books again.

**Make a List of:**

What themes or topics are the books about?

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What incidents or happenings are the stories about?

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These are published books, so obviously the publisher felt there was a market for them, but ...

Do you think children will be engaged by these stories?

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Do you think Malaysian children would find these stories engaging?

.....

What sort of stories did you find engaging when you were a child?

.....

Consider some popular and famous writers, even from your childhood ...

Did you read books by Enid Blyton? Enjoy them? Why or why not?

.....

Have you read books by Roald Dahl? Why are these books very popular?

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Have you read books by Paul Jennings? Why do you think his stories are popular?

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What makes J. K. Rowley's 'Harry Potter' books so popular?

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Do you know of any other very popular children's writers?

.....

.....

**If you have Internet access, you might like to find information about some of these authors and their themes.**

**Share and discuss – what sort of things do children like to read about?**





### 3. Adapt your story idea

Not every item and detail in your memory of the incident will be interesting to children or relevant to the telling of your story.

**Which specific parts of the story should be expanded** and maybe even embellished as much as possible?

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.....  
.....

**Which parts may need to be glossed over or omitted altogether?**

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.....  
.....

Consider who your readers might be.

Are they your students?

.....

Do they know you?

.....

Are they Malaysian?

.....

How old are they?

.....

What are their usual interests?

.....

Consider changing names and other details to avoid embarrassment.

Participant's Notes



4. Use the Story Plan Form

Planning a Story

1. Title of Story

..... (Maybe decide later)

2. Setting

Where does your story take place?

**Geographical location** (which country, city, town ...) .....

**Environmental location** (mountains, lake, sea, river, plains, cityscape ...) .....

.....

**Climate / weather** .....

**Social** (family, school, workplace, friends ...) .....

.....

**Other factors** .....

**5 senses** – sights/sounds/smells/tastes/feelings that should or could be mentioned .....

.....

3. Characters

Main Character's Name: .....

Character's Best Friend(s): .....

**Four important character questions:**

1. What does your character want? .....

.....

2. Why does he/she want this? .....

.....

3. What's standing in his/her way? .....

.....

4. What are the consequences of your character getting (or not getting) what he/she wants?

.....

Participant's Notes



**Useful things to know about your character:**

1. What important goal, need, or want does (s)he have at the story's beginning, and why is it so?  
.....
2. What is stopping him/her from reaching his/her goal? .....  
.....
3. What does (s)he long for? .....
4. What does (s)he most regret? What is (s)he most proud of? .....  
.....
5. What is his/her greatest fear? Greatest secret? .....
6. What is his/her most cherished belief? What is his/her value system? .....
7. What is the external conflict (s)he must overcome? .....
8. What is his/her greatest strength? Greatest weakness? .....
9. What is the worst thing that could happen to your character? Why?.....

**4. Catalyst**

**Catalyst** – an event that propels your main character's life from ordinary to extraordinary and shakes up the protagonist's everyday existence.

The Catalyst

- introduces a goal the character will work to achieve
- introduces a problem or conflict the character has to resolve
- introduces an obstacle to your character's goal

What is the catalyst in this story? .....  
.....  
.....



### 5. Story Plot

What steps take the character from the Catalyst to the Resolution?

Catalyst (/Problem) .....

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

Resolution (what you and/or the character wants to happen in the end) .....

.....

For each of these points, think about how they will do each one.

### Add Obstacles

Which of these will you use to add excitement:

- Weather.
- Deadline.
- Your character's worst fear.
- Give your character what he wants, and then take it away again.
- Turn a friend into an enemy or just a nuisance.
- Random incidents that are out of character's control.

### Point of View

✓ Choose one of three points of view from which to tell your story.

First Person – uses the 'I' voice, from the main character's point of view.

Third Person Limited – uses 'he' or 'she' to follow the character through the story, telling only from their point of view.

Omniscient Point of View – allows the author to be in several places at once and know what everyone is thinking.

Participant's Notes

## 5. Write your Childhood Memory Story

Write your story in Microsoft Word on your computer because

- You can edit and change easily.
- 'Word' will do spelling and grammar checks.
- You can see the layout and how the story will appear in print.
- You can easily send your file for sharing.

Make sure that the language setting (on the toolbar at the bottom left of your screen) is to English.



If it is not, then do the following:

Open the 'Home' ribbon, click on 'Select' at the right hand end.



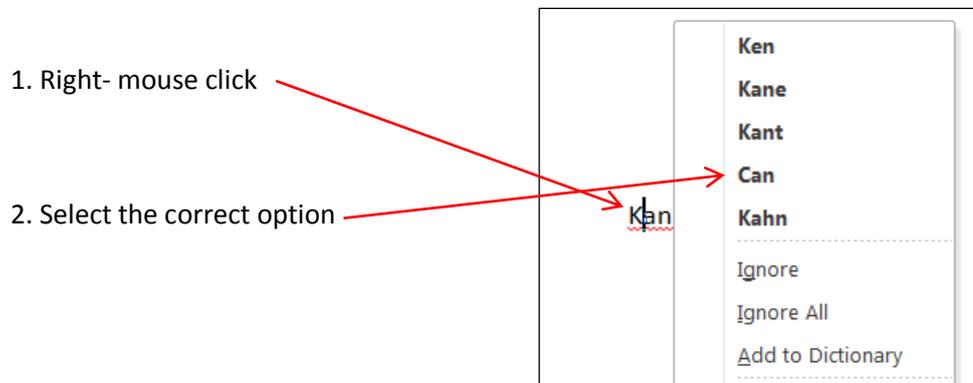
Now click on the language selection button at the bottom left of your screen to open the dialogue box.

Select English.

Click 'OK'.



Now when you type your story, and you notice a red, green or blue wiggly line under a word or phrase, put your mouse over the line and click the right mouse button to discover your mistake and possible correction choices.



### Share and discuss.

Upload your story to the [Stories for Malaysian Kids](http://storiesformalaysiankids.weebly.com) website.

(At <http://storiesformalaysiankids.weebly.com> )