



small

small rainbows

exploring tiny stories
for ages 10 +

Worksheet 2

Hello!

My name's Siân and the main thing I think about is very small stories. It's how I think about the world a lot of the time - sometimes I'll write tiny stories to try and work out how I feel about things. There's a link further down if you want to see some of the kind of things I write. There's A LOT of nonsense stories.

This worksheet is about two of the ways I come up with a story: *character* first or *world* first.

World First

This is where you try and put yourself in an imaginary place and then work out what story you'd like to tell about it.

Either ask someone to read the following questions to you, or record them on a phone (if you can) and play it back to yourself. Make yourself comfy, close your eyes, take some deep breaths and try to create an imaginary world as you answer these questions...

- What's around you?
- What kind of colours can you see?
- What does it smell like?
- Are there any buildings?
- Are there any sounds?
- Does it seem like a nice place?

Once you feel like you've got a good idea, grab a piece of paper and write or draw some things about it. What would make a good story about this place? Remember: very short stories don't have to tell you everything. You could try just writing or saying a few sentences about this place and give your audience a glimpse of your imagination.

An Example...

Let's pretend you did the activity above, and when you closed your eyes and imagined yourself into a new place...you feel like you had gone...to another planet! Everything looks dry and dusty and that gives you an idea...

The Job

The first day at my new job, they handed me a tiny brush, a bin bag and a cloth which looked 100 years old. I looked at it, then looked at my new bosses.

"So, you want me to clean this up? The whole thing?" I asked.

They nodded. I sighed and looked around me. Everything for miles was covered in red, dry dust.

I swore to never answer a job advert for 'Mars Cleaner' again.

You can read some of the short stories I've been writing at tinyletter.com/SmallSmallRainbows/archive

Character First

Another way I like to come up with stories is by imagining the character first, and thinking about what they would want a reader to know about them. Or, more often, what they DON'T want a reader to know.

One way to do this is by playing musical statues. By yourself. For real. Get some music on, or just imagine a funky tune and then every 20 seconds stop the music and either pull a different pose or a different facial expression. At the end of the song, think about who would pull a face like that and shout out who they could be. For example:

- hedgehog teacher! - pie taster! - squirrel hunter! - man who does not believe rainbows exist! - tree who hates springtime! - baby who finds everything funny! - bus stop fan!

Make them as silly as you like. Dancing, moving, or just enjoying the music will help free up your brain a bit. Once the song's over, pick the character you liked the best and tell us something about them.

Other ways...

There are a few other ways I come up with stories. I like to try and either pick people who don't normally get their stories told, or try to come up with stories which aren't expected. Clouds need specks of dust to form around, and I think the same is true for stories. Here are some ways to get the tiny specks you need to build up a tiny tale...

- If you can find a newspaper (online or in print), look for the people in the background of photos and see what stories you can come up with about them. Why was that person there at that opening of the supermarket? Are they from a rival shop, and they're just going to walk around loudly complaining that everything smells bad? Or do they just love people cutting ribbons?
- Start with a name. Pick one from your brain, or use a name generator website and then decide what they want most in life: what's their mission? It could be to make the best cake in the world, or to save humanity from the lobster people (or to save lobster people from humanity).
- Just start talking! Set a timer for three minutes and start talking - you can say anything but you have to stick to two rules: pretend you're not yourself, and don't stop until the timer buzzes. Don't worry if the first few times you end up saying 'umm, I don't know, I am talking blah blah' - you'll get the hang of it. Try moving around, or pulling a different face, or pretending you love or hate something in the room and describe it. Three minutes on why you love that chair? GO!

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