English *Writing*

with Creative and Critical Thinking

For Selective School and
Scholarship Preparation

SAMPLE

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A
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Creativity

Getting Started with Creativity: Common Plots

Australian Curriculum
- Year 5: ACELT 1612 create literary texts using realistic and fantasy settings and characters.
- Year 6: ACELT create literary texts in innovative ways.



Here is a list of **common plots** for writing a narrative:

A Escape from bad guys

B Searching for something

C Getting lost and finding a way

D Trying to achieve something

Let's practise these common plots. Complete the exercise below.

1 **Escape from bad guys** – *what?*

a) Write the names of three animals that could be dangerous.

Example: *wasps* _____ _____ _____

b) Think of some threats from space

Example: *aliens* _____ _____

c) Imagine a dangerous situation on your train. What?

Example: *the brakes fail* _____ _____

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2 Searching for something – *what?*

Example: *your lost homework*

a) _____

b) _____

3 Getting lost and finding a way – *where?*

Example: *getting lost in a large supermarket*

a) _____

b) _____

4 Trying to achieve something – *what?*

Example: *winning the cross-country run*

a) _____

_____

_____

b) _____

_____

_____



c) Below is a list of narrative titles. Which of the common plots on page 2 (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) would you use as bases for your narratives?

1 The title of the narrative is *The Menace*. _____

2 In your narrative you have to include the line *It was now or never.* _____

3 The first line of the narrative is *My little sister had completely disappeared. Gone.* _____

4 The last line of this narrative is *Yes, it was the sound of a helicopter.* _____

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Creative Techniques for Your Writing

Australian Curriculum
- Year 5: ACELT 1611 understand, interpret and experiment with sound devices and imagery including simile, metaphor and personification. ACELT 1798 create literary texts that experiment with structures, ideas, stylistic features. ACELY 1704 publish imaginative texts with appropriate language features.
- Year 6: ACELT 1618 create literary texts in innovative ways. ACELT 1800 experiment with language features. ACELY 1714 publish imaginative texts, choosing text structures, language features and images.

1 Show not tell

Show not tell is when you describe or show someone's behaviour instead of telling how the person feels.

Examples:

a) Max has been invited to a birthday party. You could write *Max smiled and held the invitation tightly.* This would give the reader a clue how Max is feeling.

b) As the teacher talked on and on about Iceland, *Cici imagined painting her nails different colours.*

c) *Chris kept jumping up and running to the door.* Uncle should be here soon!

What emotions are being shown in the passages below?

1 *The other girls clustered together, chattering and smiling. Jane sat by herself and began to eat a sandwich. She stared at a blade of grass near the bench. She swallowed and took another bite, and stared at the blade of grass again. When the bell rang she would go to the library and read a book.*

Jane's emotion: _____

2 *The doctor said, "You will have to rest quietly for at least three days."*
"But what about my birthday party?" asked Emily.
"Sorry," said the doctor.
Emily and her mother walked home quietly.

Emily's emotion: _____

Write your own *show not tell*. The first two have been done for you.

1 Emily felt afraid. *Emily's face was pale.*

2 Nathan was ready to fight the bully. *Nathan clenched his fists.*

3 Emily felt happy. _____

4 Nathan felt worried/puzzled/confused. _____

5 Nathan was hungry. _____

6 Emily was disappointed. _____

7 Nathan's lesson was boring. _____

8 Emily was thirsty. _____

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10 Writing the climax to your narrative

The **climax** is the most exciting part of your narrative. It is the part where the main character is facing the most difficult obstacle in the plot. Here are some writing techniques to make your climax exciting.

Use three short sentences to create tension.
Add a rhetorical question to show what your character is thinking.
Include a simile to help the reader imagine what is happening.
Use show not tell to express your character's feelings.

The example below is about a boy who is trapped by the incoming tide at the base of a cliff.

Climax: The wind howled. The waves pounded. The sun disappeared. Could Mahmoud climb the cliff? The sea was growling like a wild animal trying to rip him to shreds. Mahmoud gritted his teeth and reached up to the jagged cliff.

Write the climax for the four plots below. In each one, include three short sentences, a rhetorical question and some show not tell. If possible, include a simile.

Escape from bad guys On her way home, Lily is being chased by a cloud of carnivorous moths.

Trying to achieve something Adam is on a journey in a spaceship. A large meteor is hurtling towards the spaceship and is very close to smashing into it. Adam is trying to steer the spaceship out of the meteor's path.

Searching for something Isabella is looking for her missing cat in thick fog. She can hear the cat but cannot see it.

Getting lost and finding a way Henry is lost in the bush.

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Creativity: Bringing It All Together

What have we learned so far?

• Common plots • Writing techniques • Interesting vocabulary

Read the narratives below and notice the writing techniques.

Creative Writing Topics and Model Answers

The Wall

There was a wall across Olivia's street which made it a no-through road. Olivia often kicked the wall. It was so irritating. It blocked her way and meant she had to go the long way round. The wall was useless! In Olivia's opinion it should be knocked down.

Now, as Olivia hurtled along the street, chased by her neighbour's horrible dog, she reached the wall, the barrier. There was nowhere to go. Nowhere to run. Nowhere to stay alive.

Could Olivia climb the wall? Looking for footholds, she ran alongside it but it all looked smooth. Nowhere to put a foot or hand.

However, there was a small tree next to the wall. Quick as a flash, Olivia climbed up it. She was just out of reach of the dog which began jumping up, bashing and battering at the tree. Olivia had to hold on tight as the tree swayed from side to side. It was only a little tree. The dog was as big as a pony and could probably knock the tree over. And then… Olivia shuddered.

She had to jump up on the wall. But could she do it? She'd never been much good at sport. She'd have to try. Do or die. Now or never. Taking a deep breath, Olivia concentrated on the wall. With all her might she threw herself upwards. Yes! She had one leg over the top of the wall.

'Thank you, wall,' thought Olivia. She would never kick the wall again. Walls were life-savers.

In **The Wall** underline an example of the techniques listed below.
The first one has been done for you.

- **Repetition:** *Nowhere*
- **Simile**
- **Sentence starting with a present participle**



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Critical Thinking for Persuasive and Discussion Texts:

Australian Curriculum
- Year 5: ACELY 1699 connect ideas to students' own experiences and present and justify a point of view.
- Year 6: ACELY 1709 contribute to discussions, clarify ideas, develop arguments, share experiences and opinions.

In critical thinking we consider problems and work out solutions.

Critical Thinking: Your Street

Your writing topic is *How could your street be improved?*

1 Answer the questions below.



a) Your street is very hot in summer. How could it be cooled down?

Ming wrote: *The shops could put up awnings to provide shade.*

Your turn:

_____

b) There is often litter on the footpath. How could the street be kept cleaner?

Hannah wrote: *There could be a campaign to reduce littering.*

Your turn:

_____

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c) People who are carrying shopping often become tired when they are walking from one end of the street to another. How could the street be improved to reduce this problem?

Ryan wrote: *There could be a bus service up and down the street.*

d) As you walk along your street you think it's rather boring, especially some large plain brick walls. You wish your street was more interesting and pleasant.

Cici wrote: *Flowering creepers could be planted to grow up the walls.*

e) You're keen to help the environment. How could the environment of your street be improved?

Adam wrote: *There could be a cycle lane along the street.*

f) Your street isn't much fun. What could create some fun on your street?

Angelina wrote: *Shopkeepers could sometimes provide free samples.*

g) You don't know any of the people who live on your street. How could you get to know some of them? Underline an idea below that you like and explain why.

You say 'Hi' and smile at neighbours.

Your parents could invite neighbours over to your place.

There could be a Trash N Treasure street party once a year where neighbours donate unwanted goods for other neighbours to buy. Proceeds go to a charity.

Explain your choice.

h) Where would your ideal street be?

Ji Yu wrote: *Close to my school to save travel time.*

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What to do if your mind goes blank

Persuasive and Discussion Topics

If your writing topic is something you have never thought about before, here are some ways to get you started with ideas.

Method 1 **Think** who where what why when how

For example, suppose your writing topic is *The Best Season of the Year*

Who: Who would you be writing about? *Mainly my friends and I who all like autumn.*

Where: Where is the best place to enjoy the season?

City streets, countryside – everywhere!

Classrooms are a more comfortable temperature in autumn

Autumn is still warm enough to enjoy being outdoors

What: What's so good about autumn?

Beautiful colours of the falling leaves *Perfect temperature*

When: *Autumn is a relief after a hot summer, and enjoyable before a cold winter.*

Why: *Not sure* **How:** *Not sure.*

We can see from the exercise above that we can't always think of answers to **who where what when why how**. That does not matter. The important point is that the method helps you to think of some ideas.

Try the **who where what when why how** method with the topics below. Simply jot down notes. You do not have to write in sentences.

a) Is it important for people who live in units to have balconies?

Who _____

Where _____

What _____

When _____

Why _____

How _____

b) A $250 note is about to be introduced. Whose face should be on it?

Who _____

Where _____

What _____

When _____

Why _____

How _____

c) Write an essay: ***Choose your perfect family holiday***

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Answers

p.2 COMMON PLOTS

Various answers are possible.

Escape from bad guys

a) an emu a snake a jellyfish
b) meteors space debris
c) Your carriage becomes detached from the rest of the train. Wolves board the train.

Searching for something

a) your soccer uniform
b) your lizard that has escaped

Getting lost and finding a way

a) getting lost at a train station
b) getting lost at the beach

Trying to achieve something

a) winning the debate
b) winning the spelling competition

Which plots would you use?

1 Escape from bad guys
2 Trying to achieve something
3 Searching for someone
4 Getting lost and finding a way

p.4 CREATIVITY: YOUR STREET

Various answers are possible.

Escape from bad guys

a) stormwater drain: rats
b) crack in the pavement: shoe-eating worms
c) spider webs: sticky strands of web
d) clouds: slime
e) other bad guys: swooping birds

Searching for something

What could you lose? lunch box
Where could it be? First, birds take it. Then birds drop it and it breaks. Next, birds and ants eat your lunch.

Getting lost and finding a way

Where is your character lost? In the carpark
How does your character try to find the family car?
Looks for a grey car, same colour as family car
Looks for Row T, or was it Row S? Or Row X?
Looks for members of his family

Trying to achieve something

a) What? Trying to meet your friend at the bus stop
b) Obstacles: Flashes of lightning, thick mud oozing from drains, a whirlwind

p.6 CREATIVITY: YOUR LIBRARY

Various answers are possible.

Escape from bad guys

Escape from a book: robots
A force from nature: wasps
Human event: Angry librarians, a gang of bullies, groups of children blocking the way

Searching for something

Searching for a free table and chair
Obstacles: a large mother and her children, a group of teenagers, a librarian with a trolley of books

Getting lost and finding a way

Where are you lost? In a dark corridor
How does your character try to get out? Tries to climb through the Return Books slot
Throws some books to try to break a window
Makes a tower of books to climb to a window

Trying to achieve something

What? To join your friends in the group study room.
Your name should be on the list.
Obstacle: A librarian with the wrong list refuses you entry.
You try to run as fast as you can past the librarian
whisper-shout to your friend in the study room
create a diversion so the librarian doesn't notice you

p.8 CREATIVITY: YOUR PARK

Various answers are possible.

Escape from bad guys

A sign says *Beware giant snails*

Searching for something

You are searching for a goanna so you can take a photo of it for your project

Getting lost and finding a way

Playing hide and seek – gets separated from friends, becomes disorientated

Trying to achieve something

1 Trying to enjoy your birthday party
Obstacles: a loud band, dogs eat your birthday cake, a dirty football lands in your food

2 Trying to walk 5 k around the park
Obstacles: You scratch your leg on some bushes, the sun is in your eyes, the sole comes off your shoe

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