

Narrative Writing

In the exam there is a choice of 4 titles and students are given 45 minutes. The exam board suggests they write 450-600 words.

(a) The Interview.

(b) Write about a time when you broke something.

(c) Write a story that begins: I really wish I had not agreed to this, but there was no going back now.

(d) The long walk home.

(a) On the Run.

(b) Write about a time when you felt ashamed of yourself.

(c) Write a story that begins: 'Everyone said you should never go back but I could not resist'

(d) An Unforgettable Moment.

We decided on the following:

- Dialogue should be avoided or used minimally
- Most writing will be in the first person
- There will be at most 2 characters
- The narrative needs to start quickly from the title e.g. do not give lengthy explanations as to why you are walking home etc
- Encourage students to use and adapt personal experience but to exaggerate convincingly and realistically.
- Stories should be set in places they are familiar with not somewhere they have heard of e.g. New York
- The story should be told chronologically and in the past tense.
- Something must be described in detail using sensory imagery - preferably early on e.g. the item that is broken
- Characterisation can come through the narrator's character and is revealed through description of the environment; reactions to events and people.
- Paragraphs should open with sequential phrases and structural connectives to do with time, place and character.
- The ending of the story can end with a reference back to the title or the beginning.
- There can be 4-6/7 paragraphs. 450-600 words
- Vocabulary needs to establish a chatty tone but be challenging and ambitious.
- Sentences needs to open with subordinate clauses and adverbs etc for variation. exclamations and questions can be used judiciously.