

## Process Writing Project Scheme Summary Sheet

Name of teacher Keeley Banton	School or college St Gabriel's RC High School
Class/Year Year 8 Set 1	Topic or title Nature Writing

### Prewriting activities

Pupils had spent a few lessons experimenting with sentence variation and language choices before starting this unit and were keen to produce a piece of original writing. I asked pupils to bring in any item which they associated with the idea of 'nature' but left their final choice to them. A wide array of objects appeared in class including the usual flowers, branches and leaves but some pupils were more adventurous and inspiring items such as seeds, shells and even a snow globe were brought to lesson.

The first response from pupils was an initial reaction to their item; they were encouraged to be open and honest about these. Lots of pupils spoke about connotations attached to their object as well as thinking about their own emotional response; this was particularly effective as most pupils linked their items with childhood memories and shared these during a whole class discussion.

Pupils were then given a set of four images to choose from and asked to select the one where they could imagine their writing being set. Some pupils chose to use a setting which was not within these images whilst others appreciated the context in which to base their writing. Again, pupils were encouraged to make their own decisions in order to promote their role as 'author'.

The final prewriting activity was the completion of a sensory language grid created by the class as a part of their criteria for success. Pupils had decided that their writing should include some descriptive elements but placed sensory language at the top of the list in order to fully engage their reader and create a 'real experience' for them. Pupils also chose to focus closely on the emotions of their chosen subject, be that human or not.

### Comments on students' first drafts and revisions

Students had been given the general title of 'Nature Writing' and were made aware that they could choose any form of writing in response to this. Pupils responded wonderfully to this idea and seemed to enjoy the freedom which this allowed them. Some produced poetry whilst others chose to write a narrative piece from the viewpoint of a person or their item, including a beautiful description of a leaf's changing emotions as Autumn approaches.

The first draft of this writing was done on individual whiteboards which allowed some to revise their language choices as they completed their response. All

pupils said that they liked the fact that this first piece of writing was not 'permanent' and they felt more able to write freely using the boards,

Using our criteria for success, pupils were paired up and encouraged to assess their partner's work using the 'www' and 'ebi'; they were aware that they had to find two positive comments to write on the draft. At this stage some pupils shared their first draft as well as their partner's comments and considered how they were going to improve their work.

### Criteria for success and any other assessment issues

At all points, pupils were confident in working towards the criteria for success but were not limited by it. A huge number of pupils were able to work beyond our initial list and produced wonderfully inventive pieces.

Pupils had referred to AF1 and AF7 in the lessons before this task and had created a criteria for success based on these. Ideas and focus areas included:

- Use your imagination – be unique
- Include vivid descriptions
- Choose the most interesting language
- Create a real voice which is maintained through the whole piece

Before producing their final piece of work, pupils came up with three further ideas to focus on to guarantee that they would create an engaging piece of writing:

1. To start with a powerful description
2. To include at least three techniques such as metaphors, similes and personification
3. To include a variety of sentences in order to lead the reader.

The final focus was put forward by a pupil and despite our initial focus on imaginative texts and effective vocabulary; all pupils felt that they had improved their response by experimenting with sentence types.

### Celebration of students' writing

As well as creating a display of the final pieces of writing (which had been rewritten and decorated as a homework task), we dedicated one lesson to a 'Nature Reading' and pupils performed or read their pieces in our HENE centre. As this area is outdoors in a lovely setting, the pupils relished the opportunity to be outside of the classroom and it was a particularly fitting end to the unit with pupils standing by the sundial in a raised area to take centre-stage. Most pupils took an active role in this lesson and enjoyed doing so, those who did not read made up an appreciative audience. This session was also filmed which allowed pupils to watch their performances back both at the time and later in the year.

### Students' contributions

The following are the final responses from three pupils.

The snow fell lightly, dusting the driveway of my neighbour before drifting on to my hair and eyelashes. My family and I were carolling as we did every year. Their voices started to rise but my attention had been stolen by our neighbours' garden. I gazed upon their towering trees dotted around. Each played host to families of small, crimson berries. There was an abundance of them; they looked as bright as the lights on a Christmas tree.

How very appropriate for the time of year! I fondled them between my fingers and felt their smooth round skin. The wondrous sight made me feel a warmth inside that conflicted with the cold winter whilst the scent that belonged to the berries was sweet but earthy and natural. My legs had taken me so far into the garden without my awareness that I could only just hear my family coming to the end of their melody.

I tore my eyes away and left.

I was trapped. A bird in a cage. A spider in a jar.

I should explain how I got here. Well, I've always been here. Since the start of the Earth I have been here, lonely. The violent sun beats down on me, unforgiving. Occasional mood swings caused me to crash down and take out all of my suppressed rage on the beach below. But then, I began to get visitors.

They were calm and fun and innocent.

At first I had protectors, they kept the restless visitors at bay. My friend –the beach- was overjoyed! He had anticipated the company and revelled in it. The years dragged on and I carried on wandering up and down, in and out, day after day. The beach bustled and younger visitors came to play with me too.

Then they changed.

As years dragged on, the protectors left; people on the beach stopped caring. The bins overflowed and litter was thrown on the floor. But me? I didn't change. I carried on, wandering up and down. I still am ...even now. No one visits. The beach is empty apart from the layer of dust and litter. And here I am. Trapped. Forever sentenced to wander. Alone.

The leaves on the trees danced in the breeze as the brook babbled as if it was telling secrets. I was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable, what if it was telling secrets about me? Did it think I was intruding?

Heart beating rapidly inside my head, my face began to burn bright red at the startling thought of something inhuman doing impossible things.

Shush!

I was trembling by now with beads of perspiration desperately trickling down my forehead. Why? How can my fate lie in the hands of a brook?

I turned around and was confronted by an army of flowers rhythmically swaying in perfect unison. The sweet scent of flowers was suddenly unbearable.