

CREATE WEEK

'VOICE IN SPACE' A WRITING ACTIVITY WITH TIM COWBURY

This activity is called Voice in Space - not because it's about planets or aliens (though it can be!), but because you'll sketch a space, then imagine it filled with a voice. It's a creative way to write a monologue - a short solo speech from a character.

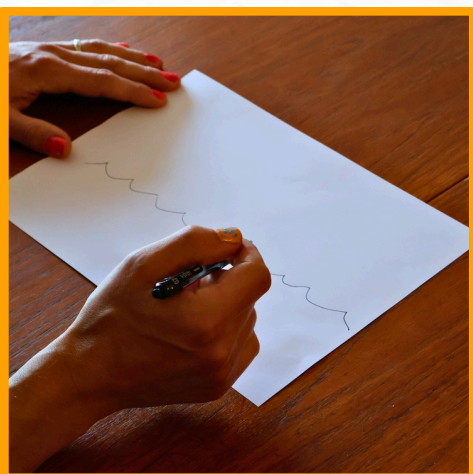
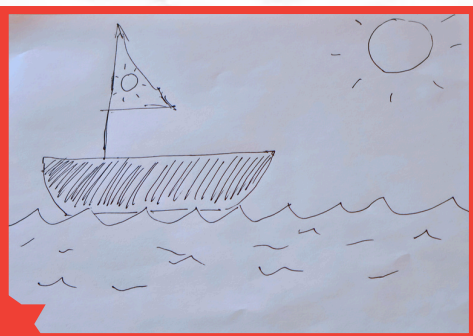
MATERIAL LIST

You will need

- 2 sheets of paper
- A pencil and/or pen

Optional

- A timer



STEP 1

Sketch a space

It could be from your memory, a place you've been or would like to go, or completely made up. It could be outdoors with trees, fields, or waves lapping at a shore, or with streets, buildings, cars or boats. It could be indoors with windows, doors, furniture, food, everyday and treasured belongings.

It could be a scene where something is about to happen, is happening now, or has just happened.

It can just be whatever comes into your head as you pick up your pencil.

No matter how far you've got with your sketch, try and stop after 5 minutes. Set a timer if you can. Don't worry if the picture doesn't feel finished – that can actually make the next bit more interesting!

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STEP 2

Find the voice

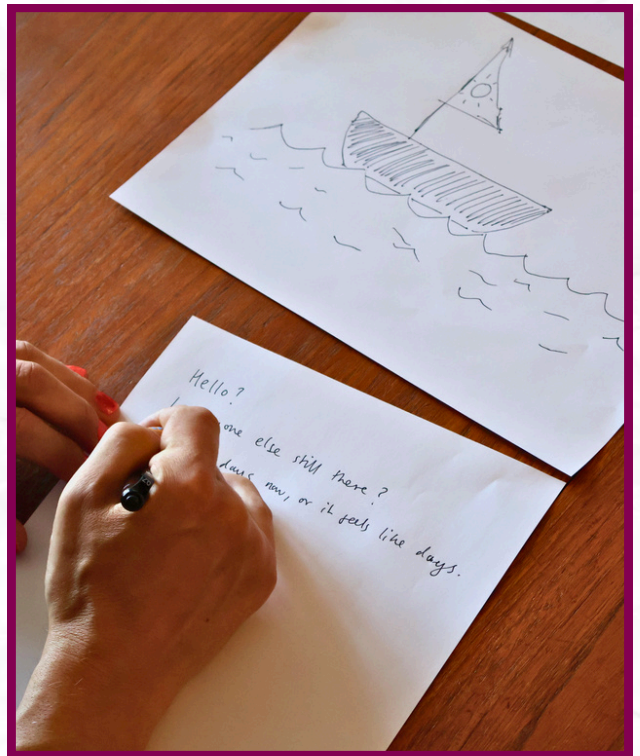
Imagine the voice of someone who appears in your scene. You don't have to have sketched them. They could be about to enter, or they could be hidden behind or inside something!

How does the person feel about this scene? Are they happy, sad, excited, scared, shocked or relieved by what's around them? What do they think will happen next? What do they want to do?

STEP 3

Start writing!

Write some lines in their voice. They might be talking to themselves, or to someone who is listening. Use the way they speak to give clues as to who they are and how they feel. For example, if they're worried, they – they – they – they might stutter...or trail off lots...if they're excited, they might exclaim a lot! If they're desperate, might they ask pleading questions? Any questions at all? In the hope that they'll be saved? If you're stuck, just write whatever comes into your head (a stream of consciousness, a writing style used by many celebrated writers).



STEP 4

Record your monologue

Record yourself reading your writing aloud. You can do it two ways:

- With your sketch filling the screen, as you speak your words off screen
- With yourself on screen, acting the part

Once you've done a) or b), there you go: you've written and performed a dramatic monologue!

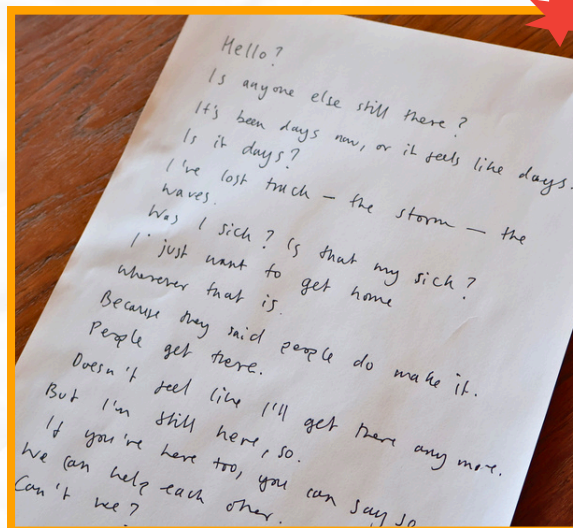
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STEP 5

Developing your scene (Optional)

If you wanted, you could develop it into a bigger scene, with voices talking to each other (dialogue). Then you'd be on your way to writing a play.

Want to level up? Swap sketches with someone else and write a monologue for their picture without knowing the story behind it. That surprise might lead to something even more creative!



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tim Cowbury is a theatre-maker, writer and researcher. As co-founder of 'breathtakingly subversive' theatre company Made In China (Time Out), he has co-created acclaimed performances showing across the UK and internationally, including commissions from National Theatre and Unicorn Theatre. As a playwright, he leads projects with communities and organisations fighting for social justice on issues from refugee asylum to council estate demolition. His 'dazzling' plays (The Stage) have been staged at venues including Young Vic and Crucible Theatre, and are published by Oberon Books/Bloomsbury Methuen. Tim has a PhD in Drama from Royal Holloway, University of London and teaches at a range of universities as well as in communities. His research into performance, politics and precarity has been published by journals including Platform and Performance Research.

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