

CREATE WEEK

“WHO SAID THAT...” WITH AUTUMN SHARKEY

A creative writing activity to help you develop a new story.

MATERIAL LIST

You will need

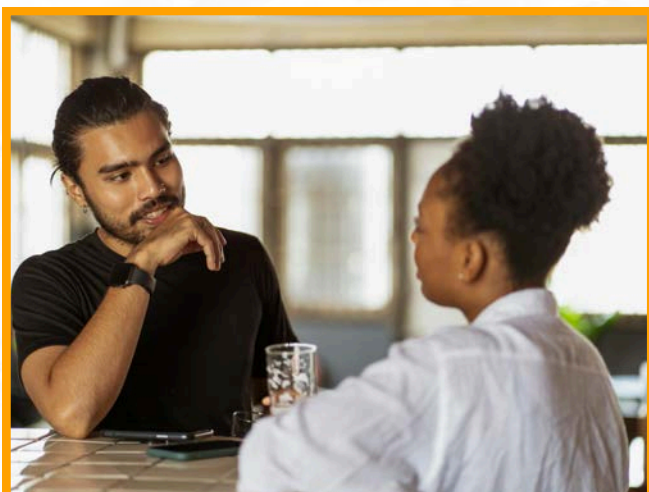
- Something to write with
- Something to write on



STEP 1

Choose a place that you know or can picture well, and that's usually busy. Now imagine it empty. Imagine the size and shape of the space, and any objects or furniture.

You might imagine a cafe, a bus stop you stand at often, or your local library.



STEP 2

Think of a phrase that it would be very normal to hear someone saying in this space.

In the cafe I've chosen, you might hear someone say, "Is this seat taken?"

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STEP 3

Imagine an unexpected response to this, what might you be surprised to hear? Write it down.

"Is this seat taken?"

"What are you doing here?"



STEP 4

Who's speaking? Are they sitting or standing, moving towards each other or away from each other? Are they holding or wearing anything interesting? Add a sentence of description to each line of speech.

"Is this seat taken?" said a young man as he walked in through the doorway, pulling a small red trolley on wheels behind him.

An elderly woman stood up from behind the table looking taken aback, "What are you doing here?"



STEP 5

What do they say next? Do they move to somewhere else in the space, or use any of the objects that you'd expect to find in there?

Harrison stopped at the woman's table, picked up her coffee and took a sip, "You know what I'm doing here," he said.

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STEP 7

Continue responding. Each time someone speaks, describe where they are in the space or an object they're interacting with. Don't worry if you repeat yourself, you can come back and edit it later.



STEP 8

Try and complete five different lines of dialogue.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION

You could use this activity as a quick creative warm-up, or you could carry the conversation on and see where it goes! Challenge yourself to not let the characters leave the space, and see how many objects they can interact with or spaces they can occupy. Perhaps a third or fourth character gets involved in the scene.



WRITING AS A GROUP OR IN PAIRS

This activity could also work well as a pair or a group. Perhaps you could take it in turns adding lines of dialogue – or you could divide the storytelling so that some people are only allowed to write speech, and others are only allowed to write action.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Autumn is a creative facilitator, writer and poet. Autumn uses a multi-art approach to facilitate storytelling – from group songwriting about outer space, through to developing narrative card games, and building immersive experiences to engage families in the climate change conversation. Autumn holds an MA in Education & Creative Writing from Goldsmiths' University and is a Bridport Prize shortlisted writer, with poetry published across independent media.

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