

STORY CIRCLE: TEACHERS' NOTES

Creative writing can seem like a solitary process, which can be off putting for some learners. This activity is intended to make it more of a collaborative effort. A story circle is where a story is created through the contributions of multiple authors, who take it in turns to write sections of the story. The length of each section can vary from a sentence, to a paragraph, to a whole chapter depending on the age/ability of your learners.

Your learners will be working in groups and each author will have to wait for the previous author to finish their section before they can begin. Consider what will work best for your learners. Some learners might enjoy the challenge of having only a few minutes to write down their ideas before passing the story on, but this might be too stressful for those who don't thrive under pressure or who are not confident in their writing/literary skills.

A lower pressure scenario might be to carry out the activity while the class is undertaking another activity simultaneously, perhaps during reading time or similar. One author out of each group can work on their section of the story for a defined (but generous) amount of time before passing on the story to the next author and returning to reading time with the rest of the class.

As an alternative, it might be well suited as a homework task, or for remote teaching.

Suggested group size is five, with the following sections:

Author one completes the introduction: set the scene, introduce main characters

Author two: exploration: where do the main characters go, what do they do, who do they meet?

Author three: challenges: what goes wrong? Was there a plan that failed? What challenges do the characters face?

Author four: despair: it seems like all hope is lost and there's no chance of a happy ending

Author five: success: how do the characters turn the story around and fix the problem, escape the frightening situation?

Use the story circle grid shown (below left) to explain the task to your learners. Show the image of the various stone circles (below right) to help inspire your learners and help them picture the scene in their imaginations. Both are available on the website.

Author 1	Introduction	Set the scene Introduce main characters Introduce elements of the plot.
Author 2	Exploration	Where do the main characters go? What do they do? Who do they meet?
Author 3	Challenges	What goes wrong? What challenges do the characters face?
Author 4	Despair	It seems like all hope is lost and there's no chance of a happy ending How do the characters feel? How do they react?
Author 5	Success	How do the characters solve the problem?



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Nine Stones, East Lothian



Nine Stones, East Lothian



Crow Stones, East Lothian



Historic Heart of the Lammermuirs