

JELLY

Clare Rees

TEN TRIED-AND-TESTED WRITING TASKS

 @ClareRees3



chickenhousebooks.com

The following tasks were all used during the teaching of extended pieces of creative writing (which was how 'Jelly' was developed). They are all focused on improving students' work (AfL).

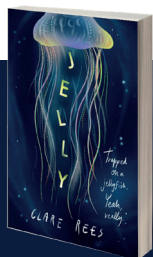
- Try getting students to use a pen name. They write a piece of work which is read out under this false name. The rest of the class (and teacher) guess who wrote it and why. The goal is that nobody should be able to guess, because the student is being truly inventive and not writing in their own voice (this can also just be a fun end-of-term activity rather than for improving writing).

- Try playing a version of Consequences/Exquisite Corpse in groups (the old parlour games). Students take a piece of paper and write a paragraph, before folding over the paper to leave only the last line visible. They then pass the paper on to their neighbour who writes another paragraph inspired by the visible line. In turn they then pass the paper on to their neighbour who writes another paragraph, and so on. Having key headings for each paragraph would be a way of guiding students' writing and can lead to useful discussions on structure e.g. one paragraph on setting the scene; a paragraph introducing a character etc.

- Text transformations are always fun. Try taking an existing piece of writing (either students' own, or a literary extract/poem) and get students to turn it into another genre e.g. a poem into a magazine article. This can lead to interesting discussions on style and voice.

- 'Save' good work. Compile a set of student-nominated examples which can be shared to help others in need of inspiration. These can be photographed and kept on the shared student folder/webpage, or even printed off and pinned to the classroom wall.

- Teach backwards! Give students the final line of a piece of writing. Get them to plan a piece of work explaining how they would get to that point. This can be a good group activity, perhaps for a lesson on planning. It could also work as a shorter activity in which student actually write the piece.



 @ClareRees3

chickenhousebooks.com



The following tasks were all used during the teaching of extended pieces of creative writing (which was how 'Jelly' was developed). They are all focused on improving students' work (AfL).

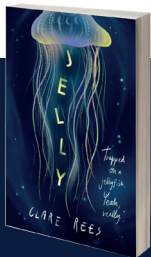
- Characters. If your class likes drama, they may enjoy creating group scenarios in which they act as one of their characters in a banal scenario e.g. how would their character react at the dentist? Or when picking up a few things from the shops? How would they interact with others, and how could this shape the rest of students' writing? If your class don't like drama, students could write these additional scenes instead of acting.

- Create a 'borrowing wall' to encourage editing, for those 'hard to cut beautiful phrases'. During creative writing lessons across the school, get students to write down the good phrases which they haven't used - perhaps because they've edited them out, or perhaps because they've come up with something better. Encourage students to write these on Post-Its or just slips of paper, and pin them to the wall. Then when other students are stuck they can go to the wall and 'borrow' one of the phrases for use in their own work.

- Encourage students to choose a paragraph in their work. Get them to try writing it in a different tense. How does that change the effect? Have their tenses been consistent throughout their writing? If not, why not?

- Highlight the dialogue. Choose a different colour for each character. Get students to describe the idiolect of each character. What is their style of speaking and how is it distinct from the other characters?

- Encourage students to choose a section of their work and try removing as many words as possible while still retaining the meaning. What is the purpose of the words they removed? What effect did they create? Did they (gulp) actually need them?



 @ClareRees3

chickenhousebooks.com

