

SUMMERTIME STORIES

Creative writing competition for children

With Charles Lea from Read Now Write Now.



Train Trip to West Kirby



This story has an environmental theme. Although set in West Kirby you can change the setting to somewhere else you know.

As we all know plastic is a major problem. A lot of plastic is still used everyday and some of it ends up in the sea. This can harm sea animals.

Off Hilbre Island is a shoal of sand called West Hoyle Bank. It only appears when the tide is low and it is a favourite place for seals to have a rest. If you walk out to Hilbre Island (*) you can see these seals.

Our story is all about a day trip over to Hilbre Island, finding lots of litter on the beach and a poor seal who is trapped by too much plastic. What will you do in your story?

Plan your story

I always advise writers to plan their story before they write it. Knowing how the story will end before you write it is a really good way of helping you finish it. Too many times have I seen writers, even myself, get stuck because we have not planned our stories.

There are five basic parts to a short story. Have a read, a think and make some notes in the boxes to help you think of your story. Have a look at the top tips page too.

Set the scene:

You have arrived in West Kirby via Merseyrail and you are now on the beach.

In your story, tell me that you have arrived by train and where you have come from.

In the box below tell me what the weather is like and what you can see, hear, smell and taste. If it helps why not draw what you can see on the beach. Over in the distance you can see Wales and, in the middle of the estuary, the small islands called Little Eye, Middle Eye and Hilbre Island.

For example:

- the burning hot sun sat up on high, bathing in the cloudless blue sky.
- The sun bathers desperately tried to eat their fish and salty chips as the seagulls desperately tried to eat their food too
- The sun glistened onto the tide, far out towards Wales, making me want to run all the way out there and jump in.
- Children cried with laughter as they played games on the sandy beach.

Build Up

This is where you introduce yourself and perhaps any friends and family you would like to be in your story. Tell us a bit about yourself, what do you look like, where have you come from today and what have you brought for a picnic.

You are going to go on a walk to Hilbre Island as the tide is out. As you walk out you notice that there is lots of rubbish left on the beach. What sort of rubbish will you find?

Dilemma

Now you are walking out towards Hilbre. As you walk past Middle Eye there are lots of rock pools covered in green seaweed. Be careful! They can be really slippery. You don't want to hurt yourself.

As you continue, you hear a noise and then see something large wriggling around, as if in pain. It is a seal and it is stuck. Something plastic has trapped the seal. What could it be? How do you feel seeing the seal like this?

Solution

Are you going to walk past the seal and ignore it? No, of course you are not. But what are you going to do? I am not going to tell you what to do in this section. It is up to you. Remember you may have family and friends that can help too. What use would a mobile phone be to a trapped seal?

The Ending

Well I hope the seal has been saved but what have you learned from your trip to the beach? I imagine that you would not want to see another seal trapped by plastic. What can you do to stop all the rubbish on the beach and in the water?

And there you have the plan to your story. Now it is time to write it. Type your story up, get an adult to read the rules and then submit either by dropping it off at any underground station, Blundellsands and Crosby or West Kirby Stations or submit it online by going to www.merseyrail.org/summertimestories. Don't forget to read our top tips page for help too. **Best of luck.**

(*) Do be careful when on the beach. If you are going to walk to Hilbre Island do so safely and follow the advised route. Always check the Tide Table either online or speak to one of Coastguards/Lifeguards. Make sure you are wearing sensible clothing and, on hot summer days, wear enough sunscreen.