

SUMMERTIME STORIES

Creative writing competition for children

With Charles Lea from Read Now Write Now.



Train Trip to Chester



Chester is an ancient and thriving city, rich in its past and present. It is almost 2000 years old, way older than Liverpool and most of the surrounding area. It was founded by Romans who called it "Deva" and there are many sites within the city walls which show remains of what Chester looked at when they lived there.

In this story we are going to go back in time to when the Romans ruled Chester and most of Britain. Have a tour of the city streets and then walk around the walls of the city. Close by to the walls is the remains of the amphitheatre which is an arena where they would play sports and fight. The basic idea of this story is whilst looking around this amphitheatre you walk into a timeslip (or time rip) and automatically you are taken back to the time when the Romans lived here. What happens then is up to you although I will give you some ideas.

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 at Chester Train Station via Merseyrail and have toured around the city. You have now arrived at the amphitheatre.

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 at the amphitheatre. For example:

- Is it raining or sunny?
- There might be some actors dressed as Roman soldiers taking people of a tour;
- There are stone remains of the amphitheatre.

Write down notes here to help you plan your story.

Some of the things you write down could help with your story.

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 and where have you come from today.

In your story, you have arrived at the amphitheatre after touring around the city. On a hot, sunny day it would be nice to have a picnic close by. Perhaps you go and listen to one of the actors, dressed as a Roman soldier. Perhaps you, and a friend, pretend to be gladiators and play fight in the arena. Write down notes in the box below to help you.

Dilemma



Now, as you are enjoying your day out, something happens. A time slip is a fictional (or not!) idea that you can travel through time. You are going to travel back about 2000 years and end up in exactly the same place as you are. How are you going to do that? Was it by accident? Perhaps there is something in the amphitheatre which you touch and it magically takes you back in time.

When you arrive back in time, are you on your own or with a friend? What does the amphitheatre look like now? Perhaps there are thousands of people watching from the stands?

How does this make you feel? Are you happy, sad, scared? Showing emotion is really important in stories. Your body might be reacting too, for example your heart could be beating faster and sweat pores from your forehead.

As you are in the arena, the spectators will assume that you are going to entertain them. Will you be a proper gladiator and have to fight someone with a real sword? As it is your story, you can be whatever sort of performer you want to be. Write down notes in the box below to help you.

Solution

What are you going to do? The ultimate thing to do is try and get back to 2019 and your family. First things first, if you are a gladiator you might have to fight someone. Will you win? Tell me what happens.

As usual, write down your notes in the box below.

The Ending

Well I hope you made it back to 2019. Were you missed or have you just been missing for a nano-second? Have you learnt anything from today and what are you going to do now? I imagine it could be quite tiring so you will need to get back on the train and have a good nap.

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.