

## IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

Your writing improvement focus for this workshop will be:

- Communication: to write imaginatively (writing for impact)
- Organisation: to write at length (maintaining coherence and consistency across a text)
- Model a process which might help you when writing in the GCSE exam.

At the heart of all good novels and short stories are well developed characters. We might be intrigued by them or repelled by them, but for us to want to read on, they must come alive in some way.

### Pre-writing 1:

Choose one of the images to work with. Jot down answers to the list of questions from the point of view of the character in the image you have chosen.



Dorothea Lange's 'Migrant Mother', Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division

Charleston: South Carolina by Robert Frank *from* The Americans

Self Portrait: Frank Auerbach

Sourced at: <http://totallyhistory.com/frank-auerbach/>

The Elvis Festival

Sourced at: <http://www.timcollierphotography.com/articles/elvis-festival-part-1/>

What's your name? How old are you? How are you feeling at the moment? Where would you rather be? What do you dream of doing? What worries you? What would you like others to think of you? What keeps you awake at night? What is the best thing you ever did? What is the worst thing you ever did? How would you like to be remembered? What phrase or saying do you often use?

**Pre-writing 2:** Now choose one of the objects from the list below. You are going to write a first person monologue, in role as your character, telling the reader about a life-changing event which has happened to you. The object you choose must play an important part in the monologue.

A broken video camera	An African mask	A blood-stained shirt	A rusty nail	A highly polished stone
An old wristwatch	A framed photograph of a child on a beach in winter	A cigarette lighter	A badge saying "No more war"	A programme from a football match
A train ticket	A pair of pearl earrings	A half eaten sandwich	A child's toy	An object of your own choice

**Pre-writing 3:** Jot down quickly all the ideas you can think of which might be developed in your final piece of writing. DO NOT think too hard about each idea yet. The point of this activity is to get as much out onto paper as you can. Once you have a lot of ideas to work with, then you can start to shape and develop them.

**Planning:** The next stage is to decide on which are the strongest ideas you have in your jottings. You are going to write about 400 words and probably use 5 or 6

paragraphs. Think about what each paragraph might deal with and briefly write these down in a numbered list.

**Drafting:** Using your plan as a guide, write your monologue in full. At this stage concentrate on developing the narrative as powerfully as you can. As you are writing, remember the three choices which were mentioned right at the beginning of the workshop programme:

CHOICE 1: Vocabulary. What words am I going to use to help my reader see things clearly?

CHOICE 2: Sentence structure. How can I craft my sentences so that they keep my reader interested?

CHOICE 3: Architecture. How can I build my whole piece of writing so that it takes my reader on a logical or exciting journey through what I want to say?

**Editing:** The final stage of the writing process is to go back and look carefully at what you have written.

- Have a look at your first sentence: does it intrigue your reader, drawing them in and make them want to read on?
- Are there any words you could change which would increase the impact of your writing on the reader?
- Is the punctuation not only accurate but really helping to shape the way the piece reads?

**Exam technique:** When it comes to writing in the exam - Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing – you will not have the same amount of time as you have spent on this workshop. But you will probably have the choice of using a picture stimulus if you want to.

You should try to ensure that you follow a similar process to the one we have explored in here. The exam paper will probably tell you to “plan your answer” and also “leave enough time to check your work”. So a sensible use of time might look like this:

Pre-writing: 3-4 minutes

Planning: 3-4minutes

Drafting: 30 minutes

Editing: 8-10 minutes

Good luck!