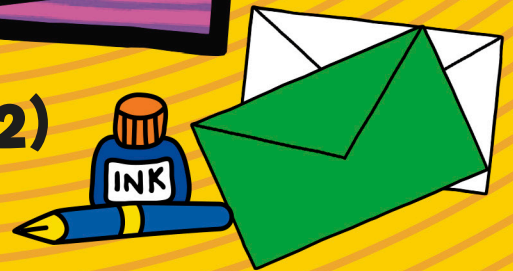


Jacqueline's
TOP TIPS
For Creative Writing

A yellow banner with a blue border and blue stars. A yellow pencil is positioned above the banner.

Ages 7-12 (KS2)



RESOURCE PACK FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS





Jacqueline Wilson

Top Tips for Creative Writing



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Lesson 1: Big Ideas



1 How to come up with ideas

It's the most frequently asked question: Where do you get your ideas from? Sometimes it can be something you see by chance. I saw a heavily tattooed woman with two small daughters in Central Park, and my own daughter Emma whispered that they looked like the sort of family I'd write about. That's how I wrote *The Illustrated Mum*.

Another gift was seeing photographs of children in my local newspaper, all needing foster parents – this gave me the idea for *The Story of Tracy Beaker*.

Everyone gets their ideas in different ways.

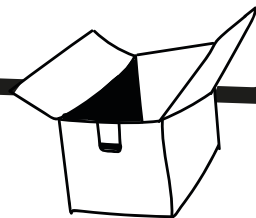


INDIVIDUAL WARM-UP: STORY HATS

Get pupils' creativity flowing with the Story Hats!

Bring in three hats (or boxes) – fill Hat One with objects, Hat Two with locations and Hat Three with characters. **You can cut out the words from the Story Hats Template at the back of the pack or come up with your own.**

One by one, invite pupils to come to the front and choose a piece of scrap paper from each Hat (one object, one location and one character). Give them 5–10 minutes to come up with some initial ideas for a story, and maybe even to write the opening line!





Jacqueline Wilson

Top Tips for Creative Writing

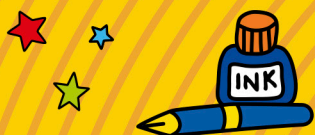


CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1: STORY MAPS

Jacqueline Wilson describes how she likes to find her ideas and inspiration in different ways – through talking to others, or sometimes even by chance! The important thing is to keep your eyes peeled: and to keep track of what you see by writing it down, or even drawing it!

- ★ Think of a time when you have had an adventure. It might be in a foreign place with your family, or it might be in your local town or city (or even your school) with a group of friends. Share your adventure with the person sitting next to you or with the whole class.
- ★ Draw a map of the route that you took on your adventure, taking into account any places that you stopped to rest, or anything significant that you stumbled across. Annotate and label your map with important landmarks. Design your map to make your adventure come to life on the page.
- ★ Annotate each part of your map with one sentence describing the scene, the other characters present, and how the different characters felt. Were there any surprises along the way?
- ★ Can you put your sentences together to reveal the beginnings of a story? Read you story maps out to the whole class; take your classmates on an adventure!

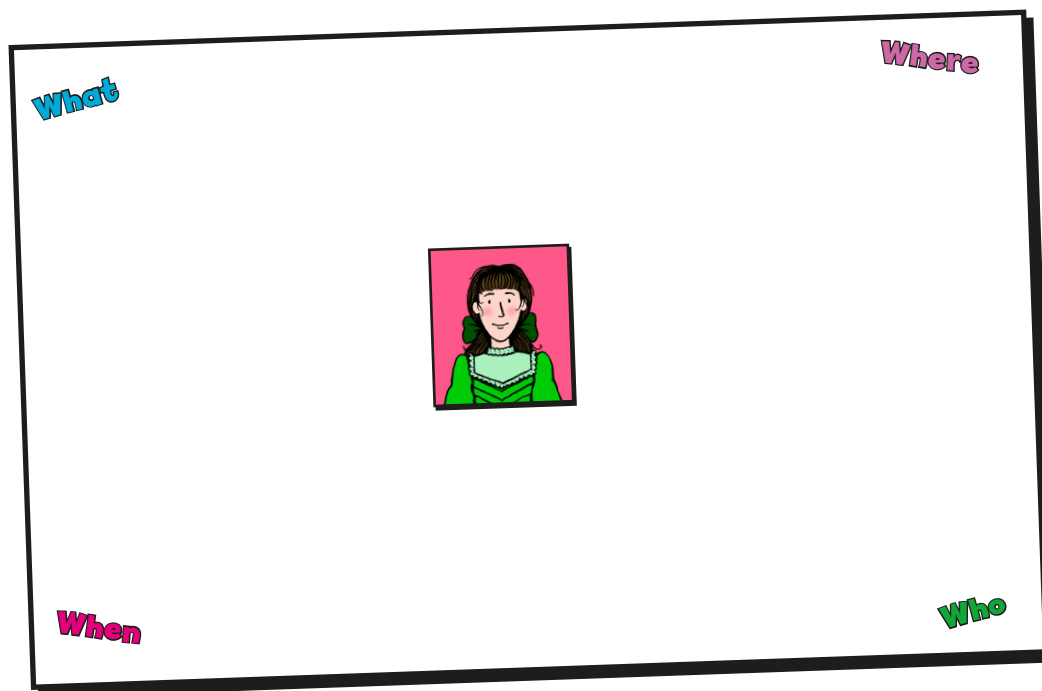




CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2: SETTING THE SCENE

Jacqueline Wilson describes seeing photographs of children in her local newspaper, all needing foster parents – and this gave her the idea for ***The Story of Tracy Beaker***. What can you see in photographs to ignite your imagination?

- ★ Bring one of your favourite photographs to school – or your teacher might provide you with some photographs to look at.
- ★ Swap photographs with your classmates. When you have a photograph that you're happy with, mount it in the middle of a piece of A3 paper.
- ★ Take a moment to look at your photograph and take in the scene. What are your initial reactions to what you can see? Make a note of your ideas by writing down key words around the photograph.
- ★ Then, in each corner of your A3 sheet of paper, write the following headings: 'What'; 'Where'; 'When'; and 'Who'. Under each heading, make some notes about what you imagine could be happening in the photograph (i.e. What is happening? Where is it happening? When is it happening? Who is present?).
- ★ When you've finished making notes around your photograph, present your A3 sheet to someone else in the class. Ask your classmates what they think of your interpretation of the photograph? Can they add anything to it? Have you created the beginnings of a brilliant story?





Lesson 2: Creating Characters



2 How to create characters

I think the most important part of writing a story is getting to know your characters and making them seem real. Did you ever have imaginary friends when you were little? It's a similar process. Hold conversations with your characters in your head. Don't just think about their looks, though I always like to give some idea what sort of hairstyle my girls have, and what sort of clothes they wear. But mostly I care what they're like inside. Are they happy, sad, shy, cheeky, funny, naughty? What are their hobbies? What are their favourite television programmes? What's their favourite food? Do they like school? What's their best subject? How do they get on with their mum or dad and siblings? Do they have a best friend? Do they want a best friend?

Think it all through, jot things down. You probably won't need to put half these things in your story but somehow it will help bring your characters alive on the page.



SMALL GROUP WARM-UP: FREEZE FRAME

To get pupils into the right frame of mind for creating their own characters, encourage them to think about their own personality traits, for example: are they brave, bold, kind, funny, intelligent, positive, eccentric?

Ask pupils to choose one trait and to create their own freeze-frames representing the trait.

Choose a pupil to come to the front and share his or her freeze-frame with the class. All of the other pupils should write a list of key words or even a short sentence describing what they can see.

Can pupils guess and describe each other's personality traits?



CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1: 3D CHARACTERS

Jacqueline Wilson explains how she doesn't just think about characters' looks and what sort of clothes they wear. Mostly, she cares about what they're like inside. She creates three-dimensional characters!

- ★ Imagine a really famous person is making a big speech for an award that they've just won – for example, a famous actress at the Oscar or a football manager after winning a match.
- ★ Draw an outline of a human body. Around the outside of the body, write down words to describe how the famous person appears to others when he/she accepts their award. How does this person come across to the public?
- ★ Write down a description of the famous person using all of the words on the outside of the body. Consider the way he/she looks, their body language, their facial expressions and the way they speak.
- ★ Inside the body, write down the emotions that the famous person might really be feeling. Use your imaginations!
- ★ Then, write an interior monologue of the person using all of the words on the inside of the body.
- ★ Consider how different these two pieces of writing are. Why is it important to present both the inside and the outside of a character?

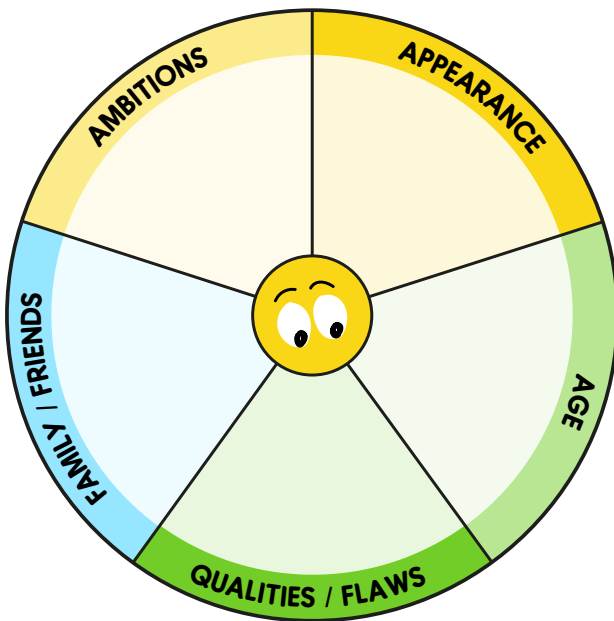


Interior Monologue: *An interior monologue is the expression of a character's thoughts, feelings, and impressions in a narrative.*

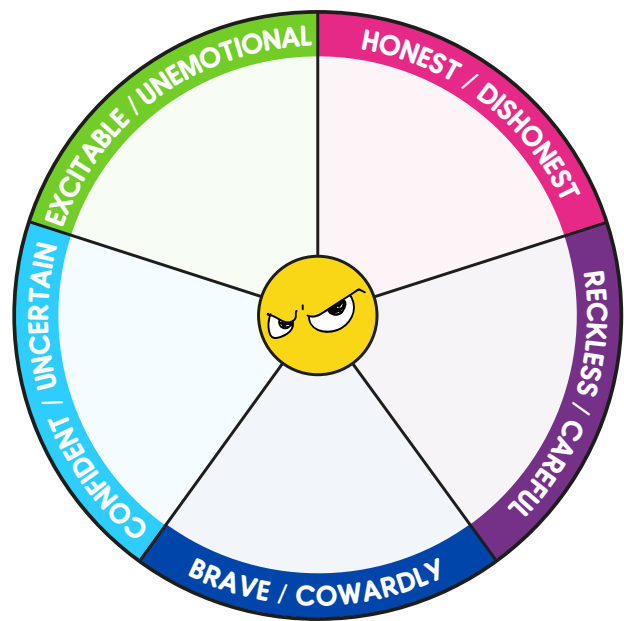


CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTER WHEELS

- ★ Now, use your famous person to base a character on for a piece of writing – but **remember not to reveal his or her full name!**
- ★ Write a biography for your character, including their qualities and their flaws.
Use the character wheel templates at the back of the pack to help you!
- ★ When writers build characters, they have to make sure that all of the elements of the character wheel are covered in detail. In order to achieve this detail, it might be helpful to create further wheels for each of the categories. For example, look at the next wheel below for ‘character qualities/flaws’. Can you use it to go into more detail when describing yourself or your imagined character?
- ★ Add some segments to the Qualities/Flaws Wheel. Alternatively, create a new wheel for one of the other categories from the first Character Wheel. Go into as much detail as possible about your character – the more the better! Once you’ve created a few wheels, use them to write a paragraph describing your character.



Character wheel 1

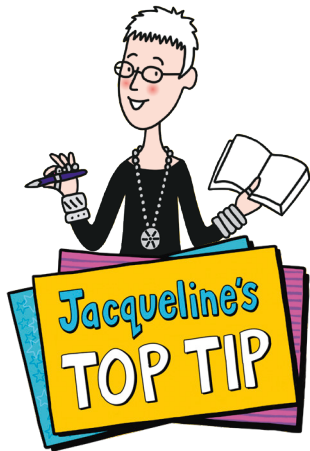


Character wheel 2 -
character qualities/flaws

- ★ Use the large character wheel templates at the back of the pack ★



Lesson 3: The Beginning - starting a story



3 How to start your story

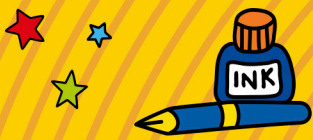
This is the difficult bit! No-one likes looking at a blank page or screen. It's so hard to know how to start. Everyone always says a story needs a really good eye-catching beginning – but of course that makes you go all self-conscious and unable to think of even one simple sentence.

My tip would be to pretend you've got the most amazing piece of news and you're dashing into school to tell your best friend all about it, and you just have to seize hold of them and give them the whole story straight away, making it as amusing and astonishing as possible so that you keep their full attention. I don't think you need several paragraphs of description and explanation before you get started on the story. Jump straight in. And do you know what I mean by Show not Tell? Okay, two ways to start a story:

NUMBER ONE: George walked along the road with his mother. He was feeling fed up and miserable. He wanted a bar of chocolate but his mother said no. George was cross.

OR: George trudged along the road, scuffing the toes of his trainers. Miss Horrible Hawkins had been moaning about his spelling and handwriting again. And Wayne the Pain had snatched George's lunch-time crisps and his Whizzo Wonder Bar. 'I'm starving. Can I have a chocolate Whizzo, Mum?' asked George. 'No, of course not. You've already had one today,' said Mum. George sighed and stuck his bottom lip out.

The first version is fine, but we're being told it all. It's a bit dull. I think the second version is better. It brings it all alive.



WARM-UP TASK: CLASSROOM ADVENTURE!

It's time to ask pupils to start building stories! First of all, push all of the tables and chairs to the perimeter for the classroom – giving everyone space to move around. Transform each table into a different 'station' or 'checkpoint'. On each checkpoint, put a single, coloured sheet of paper, a 'feeling card' with an emotion written on it, and a different classroom object (e.g. a rubber, a ruler, a whiteboard pen, an exercise book). To make it even more immersive, perhaps play some music to create a distinct atmosphere.

Ask pupils to walk around the room and make creative connections between (even the most mundane) objects, colours and feelings. Do they spark any interesting ideas for how to start a story? When children sit down, give them 10–15 minutes to note down their ideas. They could even be challenged to create a character for their story, based on their own experiences during their task, or their observations of another classmate!

CREATIVE ACTIVITY: ANALYSING THE OPENING OF 'MY MUM TRACY BEAKER'

Jacqueline's Top Tip for starting a story is to pretend you've got the most amazing piece of news and you're dashing into school to tell your best friend all about it, and you just have to seize hold of them and give them the whole story straight away, making it as amusing and astonishing as possible so that you keep their full attention! Let's see how Jacqueline herself starts her own stories...

We're about to read the beginning of *'My Mum Tracy Beaker'* by Jacqueline Wilson. Before reading, have a discussion about what you associate with the word 'mum' or 'mother'. What sort of person do you picture? You might use an image (e.g. opposite) to help formulate your ideas.





Jacqueline Wilson

Top Tips for Creative Writing



Read the very first paragraph of *My Mum Tracy Beaker* by Jacqueline Wilson:



HAVE YOU HEARD of my mum Tracy Beaker? You'll know her if you live in Marlborough Tower. The whole of the Duke Estate knows my mum. Everyone knows her – in the shops and down the market, in the library and the fried chicken place and the chippy and at my school.



★ Answer the comprehension questions below in pairs:

1. Why has Jacqueline Wilson chosen to write the first sentence as a question? Why is it effective?
2. What can you infer about Tracy Beaker's mum from the opening of the book?
3. How can you tell that Tracy Beaker's mum might be unconventional?
4. Why do you think Jacqueline Wilson has chosen to mention the 'fried chicken place and the chippy'?

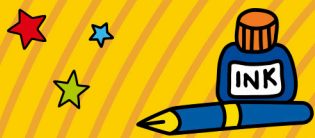
★ Think of a character that you might be able to make unconventional, strange or surprising. Choose from the list below:

- Teacher
- Nurse
- Brother/sister
- Firefighter
- Lawyer

★ Note down as many ideas as possible for how you might make your character surprising or unconventional.

★ Using Jacqueline Wilson's opening as inspiration, write your own opening for your unconventional character!





Lesson 4: The Middle - making something happen



4 How to make something happen

Think of all the stories you've ever read, short stories, small books, huge great long books with hundreds of pages. They start. Then something happens. Often lots of things. And then they finish.

It doesn't matter what sort of story you write, it's good to have a bit of conflict – a bit of a struggle, something going wrong, something surprising – and your main character has to try to sort it all out.

A princess might be locked up in a castle and she has to escape. A boy has lost his dog and has to find him. A dinosaur is suddenly spotted walking down the High Street, nibbling the treetops. It's up to you to let the story evolve. Sometimes it's good to work it all out beforehand so you don't get stuck halfway through.

Though sometimes it works just to write at white-hot speed and see what happens without planning anything at all. There's no one way of writing. Everyone's different. If you've got started on your story but are stuck in the middle, try talking inside your head to your main character. Ask them what would really worry them? Then write it, and see how they cope.

DISCUSSION WARM-UP: FAIRY TALE PROBLEMS!

Start by asking pupils to consider some stories that they have (definitely!) heard about: fairy tales! These stories often begin from the point of view of the main character, who faces some kind of a problem. This problem becomes the main theme of the story. Look at some of the examples of common problems below. Can pupils match the fairy tale characters below to their problems?

★ Aladdin ★ Beauty and the Beast ★ Cinderella

Ask pupils: is it possible for one character to have lots of different problems? Can they come up with a problem of their own?



Jacqueline Wilson

Top Tips for Creative Writing



CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1: SOLVING PROBLEMS

In her **Top Tip for making something happen in a story**, Jacqueline says that it doesn't matter what sort of story you write, it's good to have a bit of conflict – a bit of a struggle, something going wrong, something surprising – and your main character has to try to sort it all out.

- ★ Using your ideas from the Warm-up Task, create a list of problems or struggles that you have experienced recently in your own life. They might be big or small – it's completely up to you! These can become your character's problems.
- ★ Now, pick one of the problems that you have come up with. Consider how your character would describe this problem to a friend if they were having a conversation over WhatsApp or text message.
- ★ Then, write back in role as the friend, replying to your character. What advice would he/she give?
- ★ In pairs, role-play your character talking to the friend character about his/her problem. When you've finished, make a list of the best advice that was given. In what ways might your character's problem be resolved in a story?

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2: STORYBOARDING

Storyboarding is a great way to organise a story because it can help you organise your ideas and experiment with different events and plot twists before writing them down!

- ★ Make an original storyboard with a partner! Fold a blank paper in half, and then fold it in half again to create four boxes. In the first box begin your own storyboard by drawing a character at the beginning of an adventure. Remember that your character must have a problem to solve! (You can only use illustration, no words, to tell your story!).
- ★ Next, swap pieces of paper with your partner. Continue their story by drawing the second scene in the next box. They will do the same to your story. You might even be able to add another problem!
- ★ Swap pieces of paper until all your boxes are filled. Make sure to use the information your partner contributed to create a story with consistent characters, a beginning, middle and an end! Consider how the original problem is resolved.
- ★ Use your storyboards (and everything that you've learned) to write your story! You're nearly there...

★ Use the storyboard templates at the back of the pack to help you ★



Lesson 5: The End - finishing the story



5 How to end your story

That's the best bit. You've written and written, and now you've nearly finished the story. You can't wait to write THE END after the last line. It's a terrible temptation to hurry things along, because if you're anything like me you just want to be finished with the whole thing. I used to find I wrote the last few pages of my stories too quickly, in a hasty scrappy sort of way, and then an editor (they're a bit like your teacher, and even more picky) would suggest I rewrite part and expand it and think it all through carefully.

Now I try to give the last chapter even more time and attention than the first. I try to round everything off in a satisfying way. That doesn't mean I always spell everything out. Sometimes I deliberately leave my readers to work out what's going to happen next, though I always give a heavy hint. (Lots of you want to know if Lily gets reunited with her family in *Lily Alone* – or does Destiny make it as a famous singer in *Little Darlings* – or will Hetty ever get together with Jem?) I wanted to keep all the options open – but if you find my endings disconcerting you're always free to write your own versions.

I always try to write reasonably happy endings – but occasionally characters play tricks on me and won't do as I tell them. I think my saddest book is *My Sister Jodie*. I had no intention of making it end like that – but somehow my hand wrote the story in a very unexpected dramatic way.

So, let's say you've taken your time over your ending and are pleased with your story. I'm afraid you've still got a little work to do, especially if it's a story for school, for a special project, for a competition. Read it through. See if there are parts that don't seem very important, or they're maybe simply a bit boring. How can you improve them? Could you pop something new in that will make your story seem more interesting?

Have you checked all your spellings and remembered all your punctuation? I know, these are the boring parts. I hate fussing over everything too – but it's truly worth it. It's often only when I've got to this stage that a sudden really good idea occurs to me. I don't like rewriting – but it's generally vitally necessary. You want your story to be as good as possible, don't you?

The best part of ending my book for me is sending it to my friend the illustrator Nick Sharratt. He'll read my story very carefully, often several times, and then send me a few illustrations of the characters. He always gets them exactly how I imagined them – it's uncanny.



SMALL GROUP WARM-UP: FILM TRAILERS

Jacqueline Wilson talks about deliberately leaving readers to work out what's going to happen next in her stories, so it's time to challenge pupils to create their very own nail-biting cliff-hangers! First of all, ask them to get into small groups (of four or five).

In their groups, they need to choose their favourite storyboard created in **Top Tip 4: Creative Activity 2**. Their task is to create a film trailer (or book trailer!) for that storyboard – making sure not to give anything away about how the story ends, but leaving plenty of hints for the audience!

Watch a few examples of film trailers to get pupils into the zone, asking them to make a note of the success criteria for a good trailer. How can they set the appropriate mood and tone? How can they incorporate the story's characters? Will they use freeze-frames? Will they use lots of different scenes? Can they think of ways to incorporate sound effects and musical instruments?

Ask pupils to perform their book trailers to the class and give feedback on their favourite trailers. Which has the best cliffhanger? Why?

CREATIVE ACTIVITY 1: CREATING A PLOT GRAPH

Jacqueline explains how she always tries to write reasonably happy endings – but occasionally characters play tricks on her and won't do as she tells them! She uses the example of her story, *My Sister Jodie* – in which she wrote the ending in a very unexpected, dramatic way. It's time for you to have a go at plotting the drama in your own stories!

Using your storyboard, plot your story using the graph below.

Consider the following things:

- ★ What is the problem at the beginning of your story
- ★ How does the problem create 'rising action'?
- ★ What is the most important event or 'climax' in the story?
- ★ How does the action fall after the climax?
- ★ What is the resolution or ending of your story?

Share your plot graphs with your classmates. What do they think of your story? What do they think of the ending or resolution? Have you included a cliffhanger?

★ Use the plot graph template at the back of the pack to help you ★



CREATIVE ACTIVITY 2: THE FINAL TOUCHES

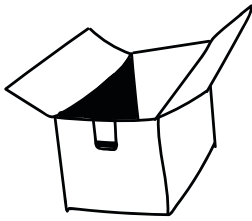
So, you think you've finished your story? Jacqueline says not! Her advice in Top Tip 5 is to 'read it through' – editing is a very important, if not the MOST important, part in the process of writing a story.

- ★ Split your story into sections and plan one day a week (for a whole week!) re-reading your story and checking your spellings. You might even ask a friend or classmate, or someone you trust, to read your work for you.
- ★ Write a book blurb to accompany your story.
- ★ Jacqueline explains how her favourite part of the process is sending her work to illustrator Nick Sharratt, to see her characters truly come to life! Become a book illustrator for the day and create a book cover for your story!

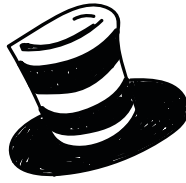




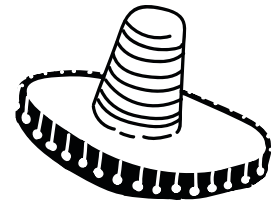
Bring in three hats (or boxes) – fill Hat One with objects, Hat Two with locations and Hat Three with characters. Use these examples or come up with your own. One-by-One invite pupils to choose a scrap of paper. Then give them 5 – 10 minutes to come up with a story.



Objects



Characters



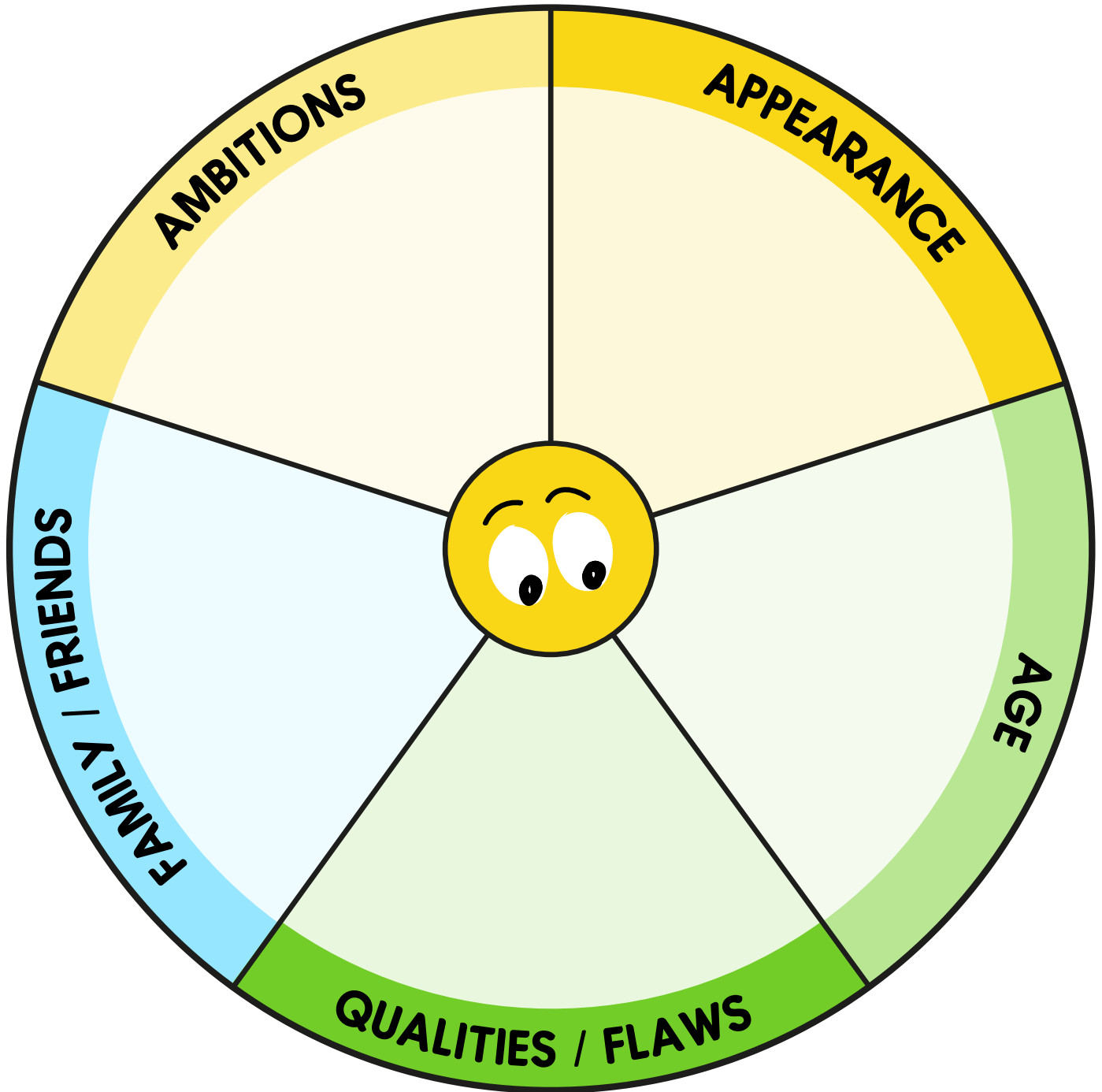
Locations

Umbrella	Twins	City
Watch	Security guard	Farm
Football	Ballet dancer	Desert island
Mobile phone	Footballer	Aeroplane
Car keys	Baker	Leisure centre
Book	Pilot	Swimming pool
Dog Toy	Gardener	Park



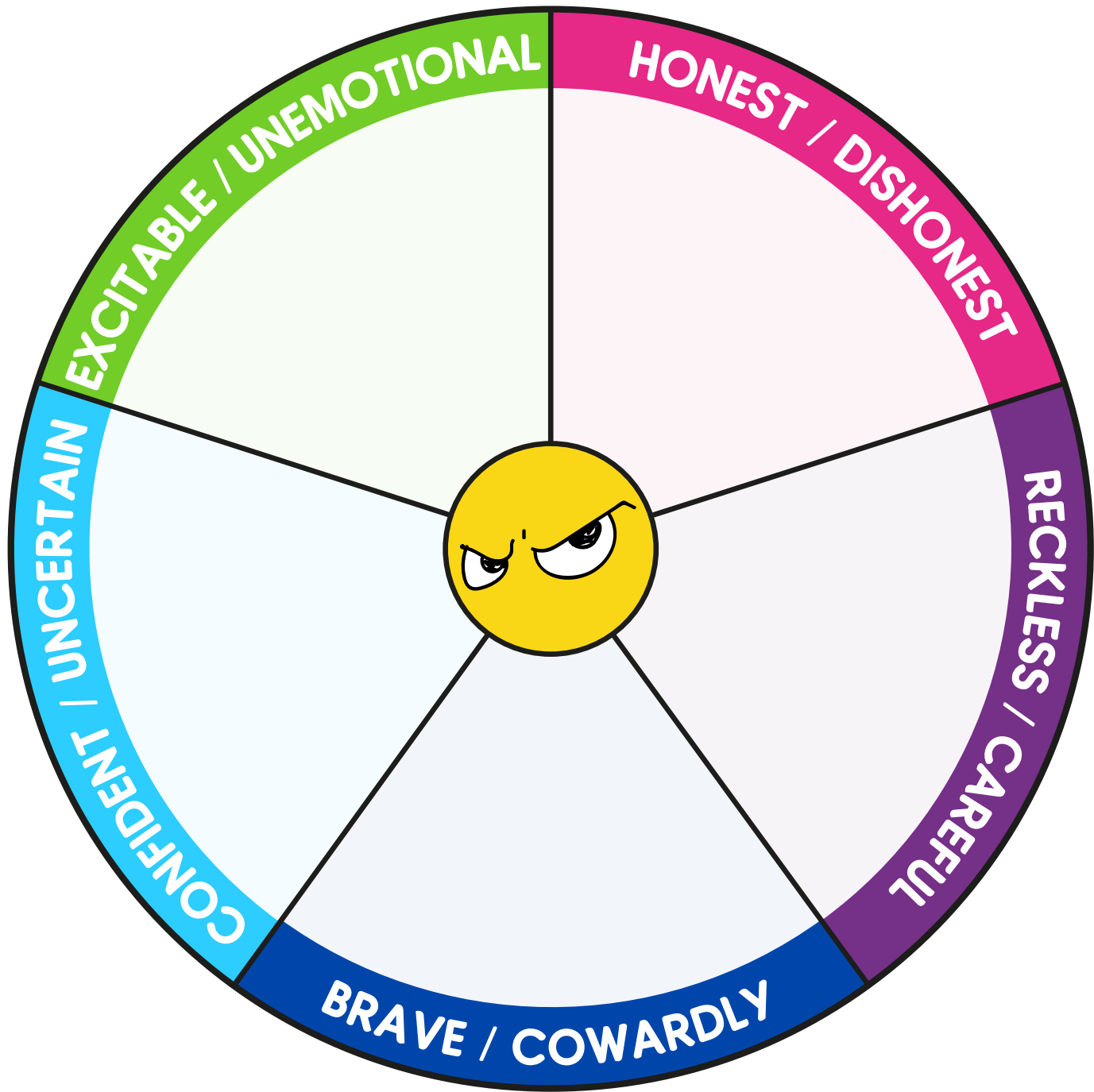


Help students build characters, making sure that all of the elements of the character wheels below are covered in detail. Encourage them to have a go at completing their own character wheels for a fictional character!





Qualities / flaws





STORYBOARD



FOLD 1

FOLD 2





PLOT GRAPH

