

The three example story creation games in this section have all been successfully used to reinforce learning about a class topic as well as playing their part in the English curriculum. The examples used are a Victorian seaside, a local country house and a Tudor castle, but the same method can easily be applied to a hill fort, a coal mine, the street layout around the school or any other physical area or feature being studied. The class design the game board and cards as they learn more about the topic, adding extra details as their knowledge increases

By the end of the topic the class will have produced a game board that reflects the place they have been learning about; and game cards showing locations on the board, people that might have lived/worked in that place at that time, and objects that they would have used. While making the game (or before playing it) talk through with the class,

- the location cards, making sure everyone knows the purpose of that place/room and who would normally use it
- the people cards, developing ideas about their characters, their strengths, weaknesses and aspirations
- the object cards, checking everyone knows the object's original function, and sharing ideas about how such an object could be used in other ways (eg as a murder weapon!)

This physical, tangible model makes sure the class share the same picture of the environment their story takes place in. It also levels the playing field so that pupils who find it hard to hold ideas in their heads and those whose imaginations run riot can focus on the story. Murder stories are most popular with KS2. They can be gory, but as all the elements of the story are introduced by the pupils this will be restricted to what they have already seen on dvd or read in books, so the story is censored by the pupils' experiences.



Starting as a whole class exercise establishes the rules:

- Start at the end - select four cards ; two people, an object and a location. These form the denouement 'The butler murdered the companion with the tape-measure in the library' (for a murder story) or 'the butler found the tape-measure that the companion had lost in the library' (for a more general mystery).
- Then ask each pupil in turn a question to create a story leading up to this event

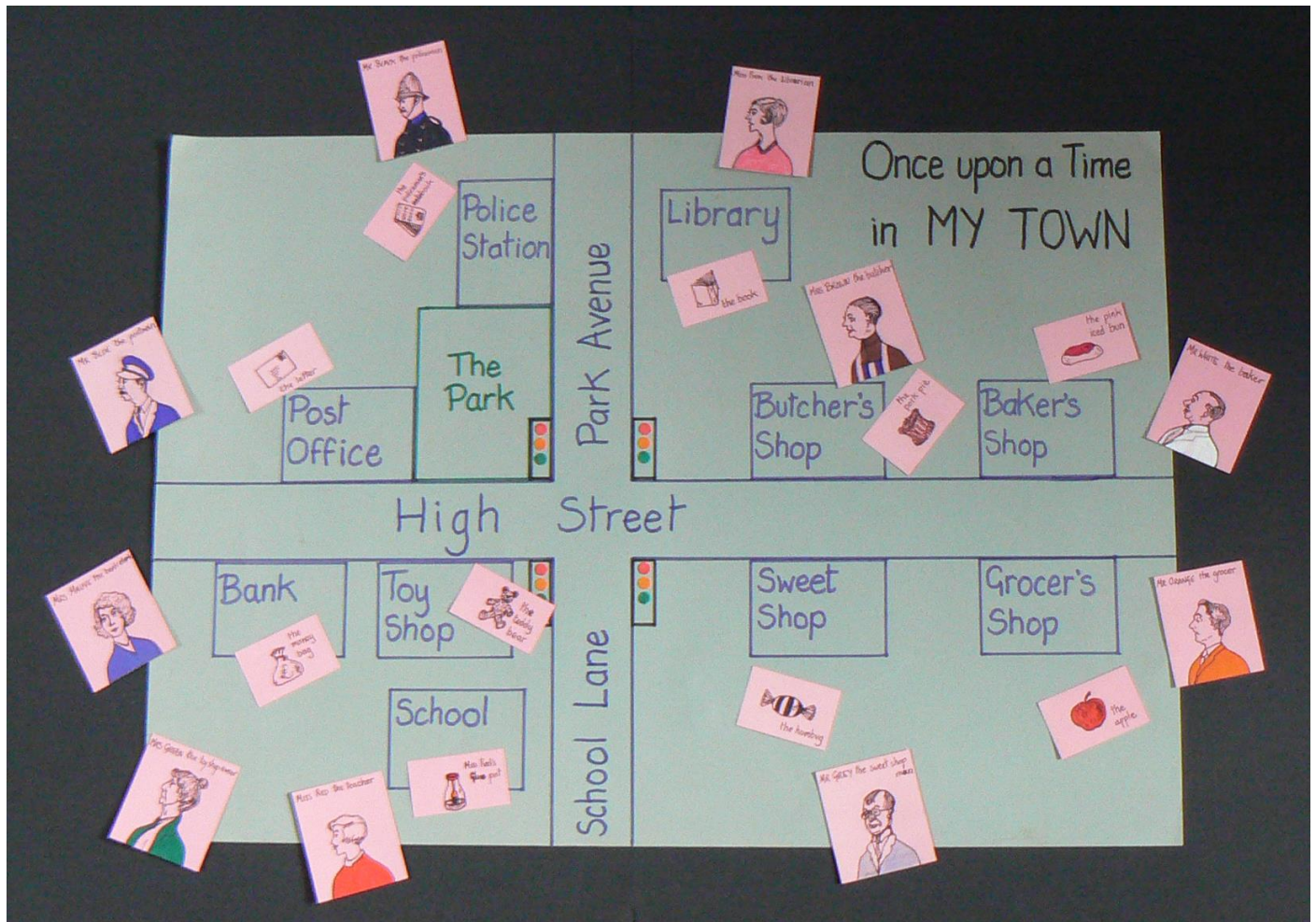
- Limit the answers to one or two sentences only
- No answer can contradict an earlier answer. Once a fact is established it has to be incorporated into the story
 - Begin with closed questions: 'Was it night or day?' 'What was the weather like?'
 - Develop each scene with more detailed questions: 'What did the companion see when she entered the library?' 'What did it smell like?'
 - Finally ask the really broad questions: 'How long had the butler been planning the murder?' 'Why did he think this was his only choice?'

- Pick a different pupil to answer each question, if they get stuck invite them to choose a friend to answer for them.

The story does not develop chronologically, so at regular intervals, re-cap the known facts, putting them in chronological order (or ask one of the pupils to do this).

Once this method of creating stories is understood, the class can be split into smaller groups and each group can create their own story from the same denouement, present this story to the rest of the class and compare the differences.

And finally here's a simple version for KS1...



The teddy bear from Mrs Green's Toy Shop was found by Miss Red the teacher in Mr Grey's Sweet Shop. Why? When? How did it get there?...



where
words
work

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