

My Creative School Tools

Part of the My Creative School Learning Resource:
Arts-led, schools-focused tools exploring new
approaches to school development

www.anewdirection.org.uk/mcslearningresource

Choose Your Own Adventure

A tool to develop a Choose Your Own Adventure story

Use this tool with your class to help create a new engagement in, and excitement about, reading and writing. Through a collaborative and highly interactive story format, readers can make their own choices about the direction of the plot.

What is a Choose Your Own Adventure?

- A story made up of short story segments outlining the plot, which is usually a mission or quest.
- Each segment ends in a set of choices for what to do next.
- The reader assumes the role of the main character and the story is written in the second person, using the word 'you'.
- The reader determines the plot outcomes by making decisions throughout the story, turning to a chosen page for the next story segment.
- Other story characters include friends, enemies and people with information (real or false).
- The book is peppered with failed quests, readers must get to the last story segment to complete the mission. This last segment is not always at the end of the book!
- The setting can be based anywhere, but this example explores the school grounds and rooms as the pupils will know the buildings well and can imagine the journey around the area as the plot unfolds. You could also use the local park or streets.

12 steps to your class's own Choose Your Own Adventure

1. Read a selection of Choose Your Own Adventure books as a class. Vote together to decide what to do next. (Source books appropriate to age and ability on Amazon).
2. Discuss this format. How is it different to a normal book? How does the way we read it differ from other books. How could we author a book like this?
3. Make a 'Choose Your Own Adventure insert' into your normal class book. E.g. A bookmark that gives pupils the permission to break a normal story and add their own Choose Your Own Adventure moment into it. Use this in the class book or any other reading book. Pupils could design and personalise their bookmark for themselves.
4. Develop a flow chart of story segments and choices. Ask the pupils to develop their own simple story outlines on a sheet of paper, e.g. based on what could happen in a room in the school. These will be your story segments. Facilitate by finding links between the stories. You might find it easier to identify links by spreading the story outlines out on the floor, reading them all as a group and using tape to connect them. The aim is to create a flowchart of choices for the reader to visit a number of different

story options. Collaboratively make suggestions to each other's stories for how they could connect together.

5. Inspiration Hunting. Once the pupils have their story ideas, explore ways to seek more inspiration from your surroundings. Can a trip around the local area help create an overarching mission / theme? Can observing members of the public inform the development of characters and plot? Can other writing be developed from this experience, e.g. poetry?
6. Make a giant map of the world where your class's Choose Your Own Adventure will be set (e.g. School grounds). Move desks and chairs back to the side of the room and use large paper on the floor. Label the rooms or places on the map.
7. Further develop the story ideas. The stories will still be general outlines at this stage.
 - Characters: Generate ideas for characters by asking open questions about each one. Pupils can write/draw details of each character on paper and move them around the map, e.g. big green eyes, weakness for marshmallows, loves trampolining, hates boys, huge flat feet, mannerisms, backstory ideas etc.
 - Scenes: Develop ideas for scenes further by thinking about the scene/room/space for each story segment. Write notes on the map.
 - Senses: Explore senses like smells, sounds, feel, taste and atmosphere. E.g. was a space really cold? Was it lonely? Did it smell like baked cakes? Etc. Write notes on the map.

N.B. Using different sorts of paper for these ideas and notes can be productive and fun: for example, use blank hotel door signs for notes about scene/room descriptions, people-shaped cut-outs for character information, and paper plates for sensory ideas.

8. Explore the map together with these new pieces of information. Read the story outlines as you 'walk' around the places in your large map, which is now populated with all these ideas, characters, scenes and sensations. Any other details to be added? You should be getting an idea for how you can move from one place to another and how the stories link. Each story needs to have a room/place, and each story needs to end with either a choice to go to one of 2 new places, or an ending. Make sure all the stories are linked in this way.
9. Pupils can now create their first full draft of their individual story segments. How could the writing exercise become part of the fun and adventure? Could the pupils write using quill pens or write on some alternative form of writing material?
10. Share, revise and edit drafts. Explore further what choices the story segments could generate. Do they become a dead end; do they offer no choice but just direct you to the next scene or if they give you choices how can we make them difficult to choose between? Children may need extra time to work on developing these choices, so that they relate to the overall story/plot.
11. Test out your drafts with a guest audience of readers. Transcribe their journey route (like the flow chart) to map the links between scenes - Listen to their feedback. Make final edits.
12. Type out story segments and publish. Consider emphasising words by highlighting or changing fonts. Print and publish a complete draft to try together!

Why not create a real-time, interactive Choose Your Own Adventure experience? Post your different story segments on the doors of rooms, on windows and walls of the school. Your readers will physically walk around the spaces in the school as the plot unfolds. If you have based your story in a park or local area, why not stick the story segments in shop windows, on lamp posts, or tie to trees?

Good luck!

This tool was originally developed by Thor McIntyre-Burnie (creative practitioner), with Louise Fredericks and Megan O'Mara (class teachers) at Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School (Kingston).

To learn more about this project go to:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/schools/my-creative-school>