

THE GLITCH

OPTIONAL LESSON PLAN

WRITING SPECULATIVE FICTION

PRE-LESSON PREP

- Bookmark 'The Glitch' introductory video: <https://youtu.be/xuUmGLx6P8o>
- Request from us or photocopy/download an entry form for each student. Or, if you prefer paperless, log in or create an account at www.youngwriters.co.uk/teachers to use the Online Writing Portal
- Download the PowerPoint presentation that complements this activity
- Put the 8 story starter postcards around your classroom
- All resources can be downloaded at www.youngwriters.co.uk/writing-resources

AIM:

Understand the characteristics of speculative fiction & develop creative thinking skills to craft a 100-word story. All resources can be downloaded at www.youngwriters.co.uk/writing-resources

MAIN TEACHING ACTIVITY

STEP 1 Introduction (1 minute)	Slide 5	Watch the video that introduces 'The Glitch' competition to your students, then explain that today they will be writing a mini saga, a story told in 100 words.
STEP 2 Introducing Speculative Fiction (10 minutes)	Slides 6-9	Explain to students that speculative fiction is a story that takes place in our world, but with an added magical, supernatural, futuristic or other twist that creates a 'what-if' scenario. Here are some famous speculative fiction novels. You can choose which ones are suitable for your students or use your own. Ask students to work out what the 'what-if' scenario is for each one: Twilight – what if vampires were real and a high school girl fell in love with one? Lord of the Flies – what if a group of boys had to fend for themselves on an island? Percy Jackson series – what if you discover you are half Greek god? They Both Die at the End – what if you knew you were going to die today? Harry Potter series – what if magic was real? Peter Pan – what if there was a magical land where children didn't grow up? The Hunger Games – what if children were sent to fight to the death for the entertainment of the elite? Jurassic Park – what if dinosaurs were brought back to life?

MAIN TEACHING ACTIVITY

STEP 3 Elements of Speculative Fiction (5 minutes)	Slides 10-11	Now that they have thought about some example novels, ask your students to come up with ideas of what elements are present in speculative fiction. You can do this as a class discussion or ask them to discuss in groups before sharing their ideas with the class. They could consider themes, settings or plot points. Here are just some of our ideas, but they don't have to be restricted to these: with speculative fiction the possibilities are endless! • Magic • Alternate realities or parallel universes • Future or advanced technology • Supernatural phenomena • Alien life • Reimagining historical events • Good vs evil • Future of humanity • Superpowers • Ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances If you'd like to do more activities with your class before moving on to writing, download the 'Glitch Activities' for more inspiration-generating ideas.
STEP 4 What Is a Mini Saga? (5 minutes)	Slide 12	Explain to students that they will be writing their speculative fiction in the form of a mini saga. A mini saga is a story told in 100 words. There are three golden rules your students need to stick to: • Be original! You can be inspired by other stories, but the plot must be entirely your own. • Keep to the 100-word limit – every word counts! • Remember that mini sagas still need to have a beginning, a middle and an end.
STEP 5 Exploring Plot Ideas (10 minutes)	Slides 13-14	Now it's time for your students to decide what the glitch in their story will be. Ask them to get up and look round the classroom for the 8 story starter postcards. They need to read each one and decide which one they'd like to use for their mini saga. They can use it to start their story or just be inspired by it. We encourage your students to get up and move around to look and interact with each other. Looking for the postcards creates intrigue, they will probably whisper ideas and opinions and it creates a buzz of excitement, and this energy will translate into their writing. Once they have decided which story starter to use, get them to note it on their planning sheet.
STEP 6 Planning a Mini Saga (10 minutes)	Slides 15-16	Now that students have chosen a story starter, they should complete the rest of their planning sheet. This will give them a framework to construct their story. The story starter may give them ideas about the character and setting of their story. Ask them to think about what genre it will be. The Glitch lends itself well to gothic, mystery and humorous fiction.
STEP 7 Get Writing! (15 minutes)	Slide 17	Now your students will be ready to start writing. Make sure they understand the task and answer any questions they have. They can use the story starters to begin or inspire their stories, or create their own. We suggest they write out a first draft and then see where they can make improvements, cut or edit words.
STEP 8 Peer Assessment (5 minutes)	Slide 18	Ask your students to work in pairs to read their mini sagas to one another. Their partner is to provide feedback; something they liked and something that can be improved. The partner can help edit the work down if it exceeds the 100-word limit. Provide your students with a few minutes to make any changes to their work, should this be necessary. Remind them to make sure their name is on their work, then they're ready to submit! This lesson is approximately 1 hour, depending on the age and ability of your students. Introductory work can be done in the lesson (40 minutes) and the mini saga can be written as homework.