

Tutors Notes – for use with Adult Learners

Ideas and Activities to accompany the Stories and Poems found in 'My Favourite Place'



Background

'My Favourite Place' contains inspirational reading materials for adult learners as well as examples of subjects and places they may find motivating to write about themselves. To this end these brief support notes offer ideas of how to use the stories with adult learners in relation to reading, writing and encouraging them to tell their own tales. The common thread throughout is that people's stories come from a variety of sources and that everyone has a story to tell whether they know it or not!

'My Favourite Place' has been sent to adult learning tutors and support workers in time for Book Week Scotland (week beginning 26th November 2012) and in addition a few will be broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland. Some of the stories have been written by professional authors but there are contributions from the wider public about their own favourite place in Scotland too.

The stories are also available in digital format here:

www.scottishbooktrust.com/myfavouriteplace

1. The Wonder of You

This story by Kenny Pieper can be found on **page 100** of 'My Favourite Place'.

In his short story the author describes himself as a boy watching his local football team from the stands, and how later, as a young man it remains his favourite place and because he provides his own personal insight of his Scottish football experiences you may find that many adult learners will relate to this, and therefore be inspired to read his story.



Follow up the reading of this story by getting your learners to share their own sporting knowledge. Ask them which team they support and if their experience of attending a game has been similar or different? Get them to talk about a recent game they attended or watched on TV or played in themselves? Ask them if it was an important match, who scored a goal or let one in? Then ask your learners to write down their own experiences. You can also introduce the resource Comic Life into

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this activity and by doing this you will encourage them to write about their own experience in the style of 'a game report' and present it in the format of 'the back page of a local newspaper' there by giving their writing an authentic look.

We also suggest that it is good to encourage them to write for a 'real audience', if they are keen to share what they have done. Scottish Book Trust has a blog on this site you may be interested in, in relation to this. It is written for younger learners but the message remains the same.

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/blog/learning/2011/10/how-to-give-challenging-pupils-a-voice>

2. Ardencraig Gardens

This story by Ann Foster can be found on **page 74** of 'My Favourite Place'.

In this short story the author tells us how an award winning Victorian Garden is always a source of pleasure to all who step inside. The walled garden contains Victorian greenhouses bursting to overflowing with colour but all is not as it seems. Encourage your adult learners to read this story to the end to discover the twist in the tale and then share any mysterious happenings that may have happened to them in their own or friends lives.



Encourage your adult learners to share any mystery and/or crime and/or detective stories that they know about. They may have watched them as a t.v. series or a film. Get them to explain what the twist in the tale was and how the crime was solved. After this discussion split your learners into two groups, each group writes down a list of words to describe a location and then they swap lists so that each list is turned into a descriptive piece of writing, by the other group respectively. Do this by taking the place described in the original list and adding into it some 'unexpected happenings' so that all is not as it first seems. This is a good exercise for explaining and practising 'scene setting' in creative writing.

A short story which is a good example of this is Janice Galloway's 'The Meat'.

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3. Kellie Road

This story by Hannah Lavery can be found on **page 48** of 'My Favourite Place'.

"The road is bustling with children in uniform, with mummies, and daddies, childminders, grannies, and grandas."

In this story the author describes her favourite place as the nearby Kellie Road a place where over the years she has seen many members of her local community pass by as well as her own family. For the sentimental amongst your group, reading this short piece may bring a tear to their eye!

As a follow up to reading about Kellie Road, learners could discuss what makes their own community distinctive – the environment as well as the people in it – is this something to be preserved or changed. How can this be done? If they are happy to, they could then write a short piece about any character that is larger than life within their own community (real or imagined) as an exercise in character development for an imaginative piece of writing that could also be linked to the 'scene setting' activity outlined above linked to Arden Craig Gardens or this can be a standalone piece of work.

4. Mobile Library Man

This story by Howard Swindells can be found on **page 97** of 'My Favourite Place'.

The author describes his poem as a 'song' and his song contains events that have actually happened to him on his journeys around Scotland's North West coast when he was a mobile library driver.



Before reading this poem ask your learners if they think there is a different approach to life from those who live in the countryside compared to the town? Ask them to provide examples to back up their thoughts. Then together, read the poem aloud – a verse each and the chorus collectively. Does the poem evoke a sense of time and place – in what way? The poem seems to portray a quite distinct community where the physical environment is hugely influential and a sense of community spirit and neighbourliness are highly valued. Use this information to write some dialogue that could be used in a play script focussing on the arrival of the library man in each location and cover what the discussions would involve between him and the locals he encounters? The characters created in this activity could be drawn from the character development activity outlined above linked to Kellie Road or as a standalone piece of work.

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5. The United Colours of Cumnock

This story by Jim Monaghan can be found on **page 103** of 'My Favourite Place'.

The United Colours of Cumnock is a poem where the author describes the changing fortunes of the area. After reading this piece, ask your learners what their view of their home town or nearest local town is? Then individually set an exercise to do some research at the library or on the internet and gather together as much history of the location as possible. Once this has been gathered share the findings with the rest of the group and discuss and then write an historical account about how different social/ economic happenings at different points in time may have influenced the image/identity of each home town.



You could encourage your learners to display their research on a KWL chart (a graphical organiser designed to help with learning), (or something similar). This will really help them to focus their research.

http://content.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/l/lessonplans_graphicorg_pdfs_kwl.pdf

Once they have carried out this activity it would be an idea to share their work about the local community with the local community at an event or included in a local newsletter or any other appropriate publication. For support in relation to creating your own publication go to:

http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/files/shared/learning/A_Brief_Guide_to_Producing_Learner_Publications.doc

6. Talk of Armadale Trees

This story by Susan Anwin can be found on **page 109** of 'My Favourite Place'

The author describes her sharpest memory of a Scotland roundtrip – an encounter with an ant at Armadale Wood! After reading this piece, ask your learners to think about their favourite outdoor place: perhaps a garden, a country park, a beach walk or a munro? Get them to describe the location without saying where it actually is. Describe the smells, sounds; what they would be standing on and what they can see in the distance? Get them to write down as many descriptive words to describe their favourite outdoor space as possible and only reveal in the last line where it actually is!

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7. The Clyde at Rothsay Bay

This story by Alison Clark can be found on **page 53** of ‘My Favourite Place’

The Clyde at Rothsay Bay is a short story but the first paragraph can be extracted and turned into a short, concise, ten lined poem about how the sea remembers everything and never forgets! After turning this paragraph into a short poem (as follows), ask your learners to read it and then ask them: ‘If they enjoyed the poem?’ and ‘What they think makes it so effective?’

The sea remembers everything and never forgets.
She keeps everything she wants deep and close to her,
Spitting out what she doesn't.
She keeps the tears of emigrating peoples
And the dying breaths of sailors
And throws up, on beaches thousands of miles away, everything
From plastic ducks to fishing boats,
To remind us,
We who live on the land,
That she is everywhere.

Now set your learners the challenge to write a poem about their favourite place using ten lines only. Encourage them to use as many descriptive words as possible. This activity can link to ‘Talk of Armadale Tree’ above or as a standalone exercise.

This may also be an opportunity to incorporate some shared reading here. You can encourage your learners to take or find photographs, and then turn their poems into a short illustrated picture book? They could then read it together with their children if they have any or their friends’/ colleagues’ children as appropriate?

Alternatively there is also a lovely exercise you can do to highlight a poem’s use of language: give them the original copies of the poem, and then let them see new copies with some of the key descriptive words changed. The idea is to see if they can spot which words have been changed, and this leads to discussions about why the words were memorable and effective and why the author might have picked them instead of other choices etc.

