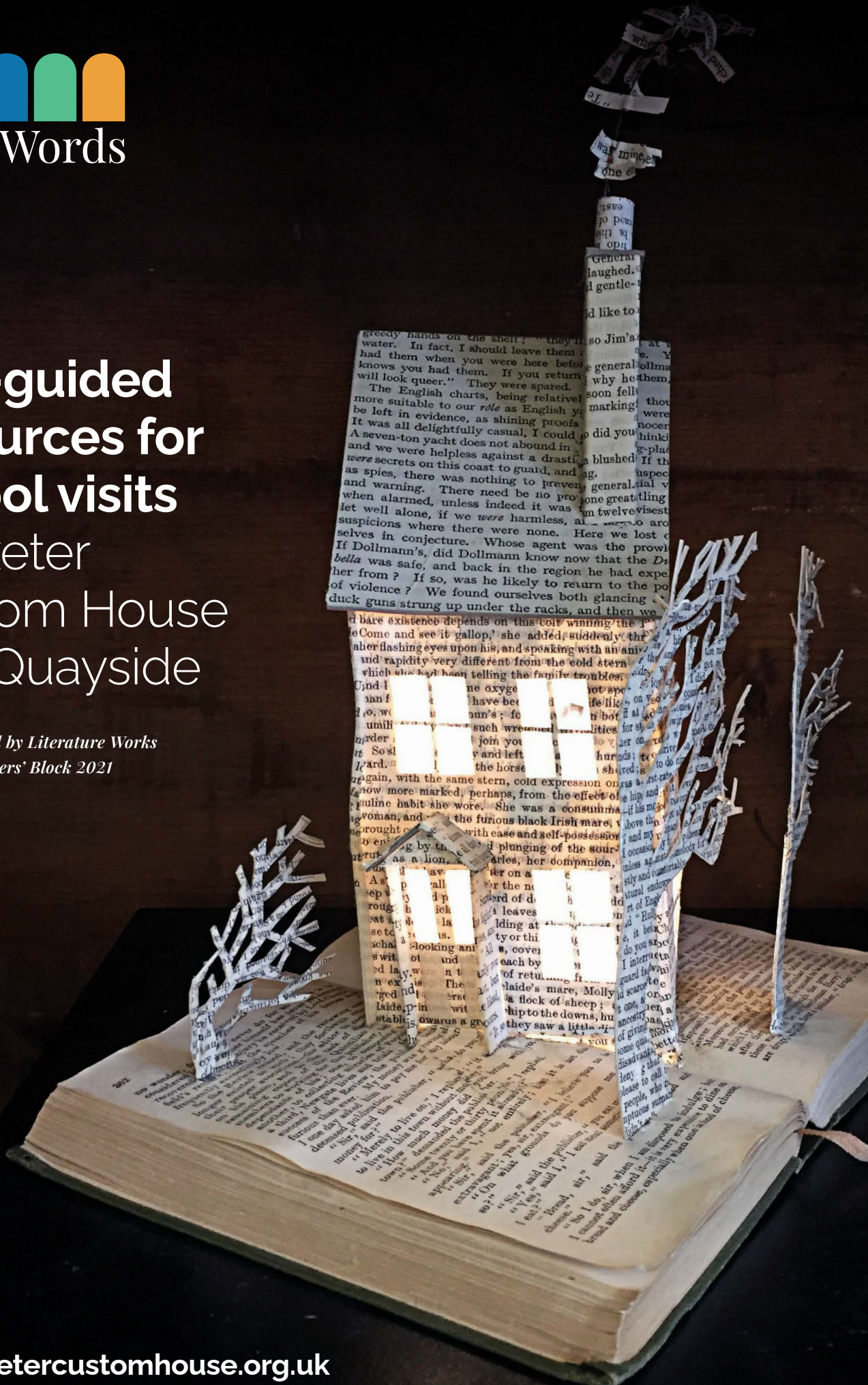


Self-guided resources for school visits to Exeter Custom House and Quayside

*Commissioned by Literature Works
from 'The Writers' Block 2021*



ABOUT QUAY WORDS

Quay Words is year-round programme of words, stories and performances, showcasing literature as a flexible, diverse and dynamic art form with something for everyone. Based at the historic Exeter Custom House, Quay Words is a core project of Exeter as a UNESCO City of Literature, celebrating all our words and stories. Literature Works, the regional writer development agency, delivers and programmes Quay Words on behalf of Exeter Canal and Quay Trust, with support from Arts Council England.

We are developing a strand within the programme for school groups, specifically at Key Stage 2. We have been working with our consultant advisers from The Writers' Block in Cornwall to develop awe-inspiring creative writing workshops for schools, based on the amazing building and location.

This self-guided resource complements the programme of workshops. We hope teachers will use the writing activities here for creative exploration of Exeter Custom House and Quayside, which can be followed by or combined with a scheduled workshop in the building.

Getting started

To fuel the children's imaginations before your visit, we recommend you watch [this Quay Words film](#) with them, in which writer Wyl Menmuir gives a preview of Quay Words for schools.

The resources are designed for a full day visit with a lunch break on site, but can be adapted to suit a half day, with children consolidating their ideas and free writing back at school. Or, if half of the class has a workshop in the building with a writer, the teacher can lead on these exercises with the other half until they swap.

Exeter Custom House is both beautiful and full of history. With these resources we are aiming to unlock children's imaginations and build their confidence in playing with language, with the setting and history as an inspirational backdrop.



Equipment to bring with you:

Clipboards, pencils, coloured felt tip pens (enough for all children to draw with)

We will supply:

A large roll of paper can be supplied on request if you wish to do the River Exercise and a template of a Diamanté poem for each child. [Email us in advance to let us know you're coming: customhouse@literatureworks.org.uk](mailto:customhouse@literatureworks.org.uk)

On arrival:

Climb the stairs and gather in the Long Room. Leave coats and bags in adjacent room. Hand out clipboards with paper, the template for the Diamanté poem and pencils or pens (school's own).

EXERCISE 1

Kennings and riddles warm up

Exercises 1-3 will take about 45-50 minutes

This is fun to do outdoors in good weather.
Start outside the building

Teachers reads out the kennings and children need to find the objects they are describing:

- When modelling them, ask the children to think of the "jobs" that something does e.g. for trees: rain catcher, fruit grower, wind dancer etc.
- Then imagine the tree has fingers and thus what can it count, catch, touch etc e.g. star counter, cloud catcher.
- Then an eye at its top. What can the tree see? E.g. moon looker, storm watcher etc.

Children listen to these kennings and then find the object:

WHAT AM I?

I'm a jungle prowler
A mane shaker
A wild beast stalker
A loud roarer
A stealth hunter

(Lion in coat of arms above main door)

WHAT AM I?

A building protector
A shell firer
A powder smoker
A fear bringer
A toe crusher

(Cannon)

TEACHER'S OWN KENNING

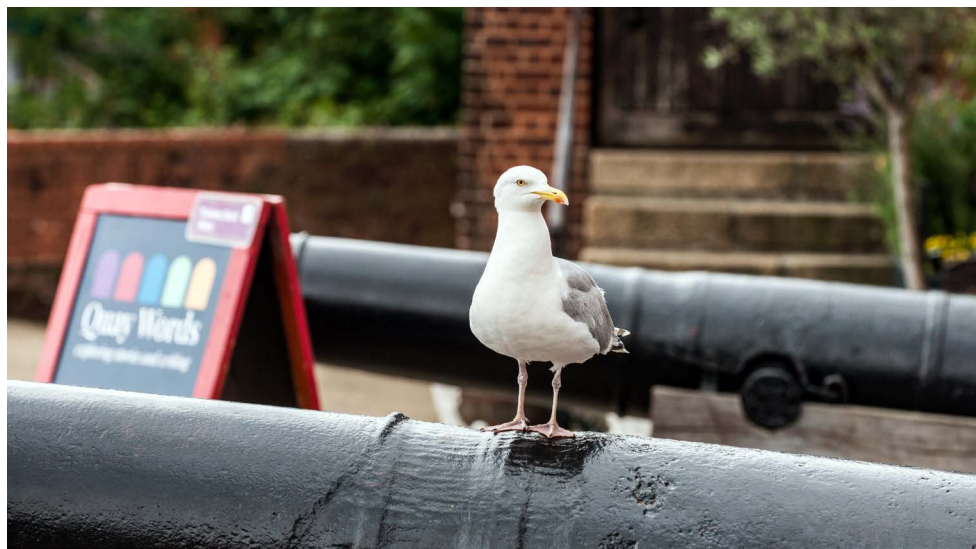
WHAT AM I?

...

(Children need to find it.)

Kennings are a great way to collect ideas and the qualities of whatever you are writing about.

They are almost instantly pleasing, and therefore are great for building confidence.



EXERCISE 2

Describing the river

There is shelter down by the river if wet.

- Model a kenning together (choose an object or animal of interest e.g. boat, and model writing a kenning live)

What am I?

- Children to choose their own: Tree? Swan? Bird? Something they can see by or on the river
- Children write their own kenning.
- Share in pairs /groups / as a class as teacher wishes



EXERCISE 3

Diamanté poem

This form is also great for building confidence, as it has instant pleasing results. It's about choosing the best words, which the restrictions force the writer to do. The children can use Kenning phrases in lines 2 and 6. The last word can be a repeat of the title, or a word to sum the poem up.

Again, the poem can be completely made up of single words that describe what you are looking at. Think sounds, colours, movements, smells etc.

Extending the Kenning into a Diamanté poem which takes the form below. The children can use the template provided to complete this.

First line **1 word**
 Second line **2 words**
 Third line **3 words**
 Fourth line **5 words**
 Fifth line **3 words**
 Sixth line **2 words**
 Seventh line **1 word**

EXAMPLE



Teacher to model one on a different subject, e.g. 'Tree'.

Whole group create a Diamante poem on 'The River'. First line is the title This exercise is about choosing the best words to describe the river. Everything you see, hear, smell.

Share work

* * *

Break

Indoors or outdoors

* * *

EXERCISE 4

Exploring the building and developing language

Duration: approx. 40 mins

This could be either in the Long Room or on the stairs if it is occupied.

PART I:

Look up at the ceiling, draw a section above you. What would you add to the fresco on the ceiling from current times? Discuss in pairs. Draw a new section. *Duration: 10 mins*

PART II: BUILDING A WORD BANK

Choose one element from the plasterwork e.g. an eel.

Explain that you are going to be taking the word through a series of transformations to create a word bank (and to write some interesting and possibly unusual poetry). For each mini exercise, give the pupils about 45 seconds, and then for the final exercise, four or five minutes. *Duration: 20-30 mins*

This exercise builds up word banks and sometimes creates connections where a writer might not have seen one before, and images from the poems created can be incorporated into longer narrative writing.

The first transformation is alliteration, so each line will consist of two words – the first in our example will be 'eel' and the second will be a word that is alliterative to the word eel (so, have the same first letter or initial sound) e.g.

Eel energy
Eel extract
Eel evil

Eel equal
etc.

The second transformation is rhyme, so model a similar process in which the first word of each line is eel and the second word rhymes with eel.

Eel peel
Eel meal
Eel teal

Eel deal
Eel steal
etc.

The third transformation is association, so the second word of each line will be something you associate with eels, e.g:

Eel slimy
Eel bizarre
Eel Sargasso
Eel pie

Eel jellied
Eel dark
Eel electric

The fourth transformation will be leapfrogging, so starting with eel, the second word will be related to eel, and then the next line will start with the second word of the first line, e.g.

Eel pie
Pie crust
Crust mantle
Mantel piece

Piece work
Work hard
Hard day
Day long

The final activity combines all the techniques above, used in random order and written quickly, in order to create a flow of words e.g.

Eel silent
Eel steal
Steal field
Field work
Field flood
Flood tide
Flood fast
Fast scamper
Fast swimmer
Swim home

Swim skim
Skim lightly
Skim homeward
Homeward bound
Homeward call
Call home
Call fall
Fall silent
Silent eel

EXERCISE 5

Cupboards

Duration: approx. 40 mins

There are cupboards in both the Long Room and the Surveyor's Office, use whichever room is free.

- Teacher chooses a cupboard
- Children draw the shape of cupboard.
- Draw and label what you think might be in it? Maximum of 3 objects, but 1 is fine.
- Think about what it is doing in there? How it feels? Maybe discuss this in pairs.
- Think about who might have put it there?
- Think about that person: we'd like to know more about them
- Think of five things in his or her pocket which might tell us a bit about them.

Children explore the cupboards

Find an artefact that interests them.

- Where has it come from?
- Who did it belong to?
- What was it journey?
- Draw and label ideas.

Taking Wyl Menmuir's idea of 3 objects, children choose 3 – one could be their imagined object, and start to think how this could form the outline of their story.

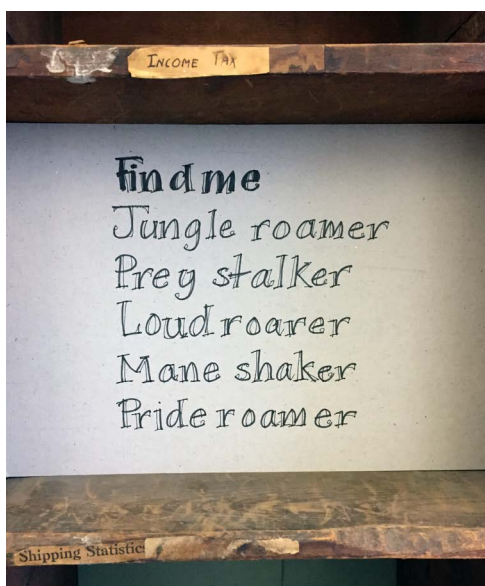
In small groups children discuss their ideas with each other.

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End of half day work day

Either lunch on site or back to school

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FULL DAY WORKSHOP EXTENSION

Recap of morning.

EXERCISE 6

Story river map

Duration: approx. 60-90 min

incl. discussion and sharing time

- Teacher draws a wide winding river on a long roll of paper that all children can sit round.
- Teacher models an idea for a story using the river as story map, then draws it and labels it. Discuss with children how they might add to their story.
- Ask the children to draw, write a couple of things that have sparked their imaginations on the river.
- Choose a few to discuss with everyone or all if time. If not children, to discuss in pairs their drawings/words.
- Children can do their own smaller river outlines on their clipboards. Use the river to map out how their story might flow.

(15 mins)

- Children given time to go off in chosen space and to start writing 30-45 minutes. Think of a title for story – could be a kenning.
- Sharing in Long Room

If time, each child chooses their favourite line or poem and writes on a postcard or a folded up piece of paper and leaves in a cupboard for a visitor to find.

