



Literacy: Comprehension/Writing: Place on the wall

Purpose of Activity

- To develop comprehension and promote oral discussion.
- To create a visual framework for a fictional recount.
- To extend a piece of text using the recount genre.

Materials:

Text: "Life of a Convict" (Primary Comprehension Book G, Prim-Ed)

Blackboard, chalk and post-its

Procedure:

Place on the Wall is a simple and visual way of gathering together and recording what the pupils create about a scene and can act as a framework for a written fictional recount.

An inanimate object or place is personified and the pupils are given the opportunity to describe and comment on characters and events that could occur.

The Teacher draws a large rectangle divided into four, on the blackboard with the headings:-

Description	Beginnings
Characters who live there	Events that occurred

Description

The children are asked to describe the prison camp given the information in the text and to elaborate on what they might consider it to be like. Words or phrases can be written on post-it notes and stuck on the board.



Beginnings

The children as a group decide why and when the camp was built, the information again being recorded using post-its

Characters who live there and Events that occurred
Children create 2 -3 characters and detail one or two events that occurred in the prison. Whole class discussion and development of character profiles is encouraged by describing the characters, their personality and feelings about events that occurred.

The teacher could invite a range of responses –

- “What do you think about this character?”
- “What do you think this character might be feeling at this time?”
- “What does the character think about the place?”
- “What did the other characters do/think/feel?”

Responses are written on post-its on the board?

In pairs, the children then create a written account of “The Prison Camp” told from the perspective of the prison.

Later, they read their story to the class and compare and contrast the different versions

Q: 1. Discuss which targets this activity supports.

**Q: 2 How would you use this activity?
In class? Small Group? One to one? Home?**



Story: Life of a Convict

I was born in London, England in 1826. My life as a young child was extremely unhappy. My mother was the only member of the family I knew and she died when I was nine years old. I then lived on the streets and had to steal so I could live. When I was 13 years old, I was caught picking pockets.

I thought I would be sent straight to prison, but instead I was sentenced to transportation. This meant I would have to take a long sea voyage to a place called Van Diemen's Land – now known as Tasmania. Although I was frightened by this, I couldn't help feeling faintly hopeful. At least I wouldn't be on the streets anymore. Nothing could be worse than that. Or could it?

With hundreds of other convicts, I spent about five months on the ship that travelled to Australia. I was miserable – it was cramped, dirty and uncomfortable and I was seasick a lot of the time. When we arrived in Van Diemen's Land, I was taken to a place called Point Puer. This was a prison for boys aged between 9 and 17. It was across the bay from the men's prison called Port Arthur and consisted of a group of dilapidated buildings.

Soon after I arrived, I was assigned to a labouring gang, which meant physical work like cutting firewood and making bricks. After a few months, I was among a group of boys who were chosen to learn trades. My chosen trade was shoemaking. To my surprise, I quite enjoyed it. What I didn't enjoy was the harsh conditions at Point Puer. Life was an endless cycle of prayers, church, work and school. The only free time we had was on Saturday afternoons. There was also a constant threat of punishment. Any boy who misbehaved could suffer solitary confinement, reduced rations or beatings.

Not long after I arrived at Point Puer, I spent 10 days in solitary confinement for fighting with another boy. It was so terrifying that from then on I was mostly well behaved. However, like many of the other boys, I stole food and tools to trade with the men who arrived each day from Port Arthur to bring us water and food. I was never caught, although some of the other boys were.

Finally after two years at Port Puer, I was given my ticket-of-leave. I went to live in nearby Hobart and soon found work with a shoemaker. When I was 20, I married a young woman named Mary Clifton and we had a son called Matthew. Life became much better. I eventually bought my own shoe shop.

I now have a happy life living in Hobart. I have no wish to go back to England. Matthew doesn't know about my former life yet, but one day I plan to tell him. He is now exactly the same age I was when I left England. I know that his life will be better than mine.