

Welcome to Creative Bursts: short creative activities to do at home with your children.

Creative Bursts are created by Sarah Webb and supported by MoLI – Museum of Literature Ireland.

Sarah Webb is an award-winning children's writer and children's book champion. Her children's books include *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*, illustrated by Steve McCarthy which won the Irish Book Awards Junior Category and *Blazing a Trail: Irish Women Who Changed the World*, illustrated by Lauren O'Neill which won the Irish Book Awards Senior Category. Her latest book is *Dare to Dream: Irish People Who Took On the World (and Won!)*, illustrated by Graham Corcoran.

MoLI is committed to youth creativity and alongside the free primary schools tour and workshops programme, we also run Bright Sparks – a series of art and story workshops facilitated by Irish writers and illustrators where families embrace the opportunity to play and create together.

To get lost in a Creative Burst all you need is a pencil or pen and a notebook or piece of paper.

The writing games and prompts are aimed at around age 9+ but could be done with younger children if you give them a bit of help. Also included are more challenging story prompts for older or more experienced writers of around 11+ (every young writer is different).

Remember grown-ups – please join in too! It's great for children to see you being creative, making mistakes and having fun on the page!

Today's theme is: Jellyfish and Using Your Senses

Warm Up

To get started let's warm up those writing muscles.

You could start by writing this week's quote into your writing notebook, copybook or sheet of paper. You could give it a fancy frame or border if you like!

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

- Roald Dahl

If you've already got that one in your notebook, how about this one:
'The world always seems brighter when you've just made something that
wasn't there before.'
- Neil Gaiman

Creative Bursts Challenge Number 1

I read the poem Adlestrop by Edward Thomas today. Edward wrote this poem
- one of my favourites - in 1914, before World War I. He enlisted in the army
and was killed in 1917. His poem was published three weeks later. It captures
all the sights and sounds of a country railway station beautifully.

Here is the poem:

Adlestrop
By Edward Thomas

Yes. I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

Story Prompt:

Write a story about what you see and hear when you look out the window of
a train, bus or car.

It can be fantasy, real life or set in the past. You decide!

Creative Bursts Challenge Number 2

I love the poem 'Maude, Enthralled' by Irish poet Doireann Ní Ghriofa. Maude was the first person in the world to work out the life cycle of the jellyfish. She features in my book, Dare to Dream.

If you'd like to read about Maude, look at the end of this document.

Here is an extract from Doireann's poem and thank you to her for allowing us to reproduce it here.

Maude, Enthralled
By Doireann Ní Ghriofa

(i) Morning in 1877, little Maude Delap, seventh of ten,
is running on the damp-dark strand of Valentia
island again, laughing backwards at a brother,
braids flying in the wind, until she skids. Sudden
in the sand, a jelly-bell, a lump of glue-gunk spiked
with ink, tentacles trailing from a fleshy pink.
She is reaching for its plump ripples, but her siblings
tug her back, screeching No, Maude, no, it stings!

I love the way she describes jellyfish.

Story Prompt:

Write a story or poem (or do a drawing) about the first time you found a jellyfish on the beach, or saw one swimming in the water.

Creative Bursts Challenge Number 3

Write a story or poem inspired by a particular smell – perfume maybe or something from the kitchen!

Creative Bursts Challenge Number 4

The Popcorn Game

Take a piece of popcorn and use all your senses to describe it

What does it look like?

Smell like?

Feel like?

Sound like?

Taste like?

And remember, you can't use the word popcorn in your descriptions!

Hope you enjoyed today's Creative Bursts!

And remember what Einstein said: 'Creativity is intelligence having fun.'

Keep writing,
Sarah

Maude Delap

1866 to 1953, Marine Biologist

Have you ever gazed at jellyfish swimming in the sea and wondered what they eat or how they reproduce? Maude spent a lifetime studying these curious creatures and finding out.

Maude Jane Delap was born in Donegal but moved to Valentia Island, Co Kerry when she was eight. She was one of ten children and her father was a rector with a keen interest in nature. From a young age Maude shared this passion, searching the island for unusual creatures.

In the 1890s Maude and her sister, Connie (Constance) helped a group of scientists with an important survey of Valencia harbour. They towed nets behind their small boat to catch sea creatures, from plankton to jellyfish or medusae*, and took the temperature of the sea. When the scientists left they continued their own research, rowing their boat out together, rain or shine.

Maude was fascinated by jellyfish and was the first person in the world to successfully rear them in captivity. It took great care and hard work, but she was patient and clever. She kept them in huge glass jars which she shot through with bubbles of oxygen (like a modern aquarium) and worked out exactly how to feed them. She called her jellyfish lab 'the department'.

Scientists had always been puzzled by the complex lifecycle of the jellyfish but it was Maude who finally cracked it! She published her work in 1901 in *The Irish Naturalist* journal. Scientists still use her research to this day.

Maude is buried on Valentia Island beside her sisters and will always be remembered as a dedicated and brilliant 'citizen scientist'.

*the scientific name for jellyfish, named after the Greek monster who had poisonous snakes instead of hair.

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