

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: All Creatures Great and Small

Stories, word games and poems inspired by animals.

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

And here are some new ones for you today:

'Creativity is a wild mind and a disciplined eye.' Dorothy Parker, American writer

'There is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost.' Martha Graham, American modern dancer and choreographer

Creative Bursts Challenge #1: Seagull, Seagull

I love poems about animals and here is a famous one that really captures the essence of an eagle:

The Eagle
By Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

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This first writing challenge is inspired by a New Zealand poet called James K. Baxter. He wrote a poem called 'The Seagull' and asked the bird 'What do you see/With your bold, bright eye?'

Imagine you are a seagull (or another kind of bird) flying over your town or village. What do you see?

What do you hear/smell/taste/feel? Use all your senses.
Try to capture the essence of the bird.

Creative Bursts Challenge #2: The Summer's Day

Poems about animals make me happy. I love this one called I Wish. We don't know who wrote it but it makes me smile.

I Wish
I wish I was
A dragonfly
Hallelujah
In sungleam.

Have you ever seen a dragonfly? They are remarkably beautiful creatures. I adore Mary Oliver's poetry as she writes so beautifully about animals big and small. In her poem, 'A Summer's Day' she talks about a grasshopper who is sitting on her hand:

'who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down,
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.'

Imagine you are in a field or a garden. You lie down on your back in the grass and put your ear to the ground. What do you hear below? Are the worms talking?

Imagine you put your hand out and a mini beast jumps onto it, a grasshopper or a dragonfly. Does it look at you? What happens next?

Now write about this encounter from the point of view of the mini beast in your hand! What does it make of you, a giant!

Creative Bursts Challenge #3: Dog Tales

Recommended poems to read: 'The Sweetness of Dogs' by Mary Oliver,
'Bliss' by Eleanor Farjeon'

Look at the world through your dog's eyes – if you don't have one, invent one! Name her or him and draw a picture of them.

One day your dog starts talking to you. What does she/he say?

Extra Creative Bursts Challenge: Under the Sea

I often wonder what it must be like to be a sea mammal or a fish, swimming in the sea.

Imagine you are a whale or a dolphin, a seal or a shark. Write a poem or a story about how your life under the sea.

Recommended books with an animal theme:

I, Cosmo by Carlie Sorosiak (Age 9/10+)

Charlotte's Web by E. B. White (Age 8+)

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo (Age 9/10+)

I hope you enjoyed today's Creative Bursts!

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

Keep writing,
Sarah

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