

Hello!

Welcome to Day 2! Firstly, let me say well done for coming back. Trying and starting something new shows great courage so give yourself a pat on the back!

While putting together ideas for today I started to think about how I started writing, and what books I loved as a child, and how that has shaped me as I've grown older. So, this week is inspired by some of my favourite children's authors and illustrators and I hope they in turn inspire you!

Books and stories are such a great way to introduce new ideas and challenging times to younger kids. As the mam of a 3-year-old, I rely A LOT on books to explain things I'm not sure how to answer. (Shout out to Everyone Poops by Taro Gomi!)

I think also, we can learn a lot from small children and how they interact with new things and their ability to be curious and play without judging themselves. Curiosity for the world around us is such a powerful tool to have at our disposal. Think about your own self and how you can practice more curiosity and less judgement.

I work a lot with children's authors and illustrators in my professional life – mostly programming them for events for younger audiences, and see first-hand the power that stories have to change outlooks, inform and inspire. Writing for children is HARD! You have to wrap very complex ideas into something that younger minds can understand and interpret themselves. You'll be using your own skills and knowledge as new writers to think about the themes and ideas, and use them to inspire your own writing.

We'll follow the same format as yesterday – a warm up, a piece of work to get you thinking and a prompt.

Eimear

*My favourite book from childhood is *Where The Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. It's a classic with only 12 sentences but boy does it pack a punch. It's also Barack Obamas favourite so I'm obviously in good company!

The Warm Up

1. From yesterday try Free Writing again. Set the timer for 4 minutes now. Choose a topic. (Caterpillars, a broken bone, siblings are a few themes to inspire you if needed). And write!
2. What's your favourite book from childhood? As I said in the intro, mine was *Where The Wild Things Are*, but *Matilda* by Roald Dahl was also incredibly important to me. In *Matilda* I saw myself – bookish and a bit of an outcast. I also would have loved magical powers! (My mam would like me to point out that my parents are lovely and not at all like *Matilda's*.)
Write about your favourite book – why did you love it? What themes did it explore that you connected with? Write down all the things you remember about it. (And better yet, if you have it at home still – reread it!)

An Ode to Michael Rosen

Okay, so let's get this out of the way. I love Michael Rosen. I love him like some teenage girls love Korean bands. It's embarrassing, and if I ever met him, I think I might combust into a heap of starstruck ashes. I also know that some of you might be thinking... Michael who?? You know him. Honestly, you do. He wrote *We're Going On a Bear Hunt*, he's published over 140 books, he was the British Children's Laureate and has a YouTube channel with HILARIOUS stories and poems. He's also a scholar, a professor of Children's Literature and hosts a fascinating podcast on linguistics with the BBC.

Here's a link to *Babysitting* – a poem/ story of his on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/6rAcfcg2gFM>

Have a watch. (*I'm aware I'm breaking my no internet rule but this is worth it!*)

Write down what you think.

Do you have siblings? Does it describe sibling relationships well?

Does this seem believable to you?

What does Michael use to create rhythm?

Now, write about a time you got in trouble with your parents – it can be real or made up.

For me the genius of *Babysitting* is in the telling of it – he tells it like he is telling a friend. When you're writing your piece imagine you're just telling it to a friend in your own words and language.

The Prompt



This image is an illustration by the incredible Shaun Tan - an Australian artist and illustrator who makes spectacular picture books. Use this image to inspire a story, a poem, an essay, whatever you like. No other rules.

With visual prompts take the time to look at the detail, the colours, the areas your eye is drawn to. How does it make you FEEL? Take time to identify those feelings, don't judge them, use them to inspire your story.