**Argyll and Bute notes on Storyline approach**

This is an approach which can be used in any context. For training purposes, the context of “The Visitor Centre” has been used as this is relevant to all areas across Argyll. The context may change; however the structure should remain the same to support a cross curricular approach which maintains pupil ownership and motivation.

The story format is a traditional form of learning. However, what does a story need?

* Characters (usually people and in this context they must be able to talk)
* Setting
* Plot – this in turn is made up of **a direction or sequence** (beginning, middle and end), **key incidents** and a **climax.**

This Storyline topic has 4 stages:

1. Construct – the setting of the story
2. Atmosphere – the characters of the story
3. Incidents and events – the plot of the story.
4. Ending

Each stage can create meaningful contexts for writing and other curricular work. Key to every stage are the questions which the teacher asks to drive the learning forwards.

NB The initial stages of this involves a lot of practical art work. It is important that setting, characters etc are displayed on walls / tables so that they can be referred to.

**STAGES OF PLANNING & DELIVERY**

**INTRODUCTION.**

*Choose the topic* (in this case The Visitor Centre).

Sometimes a good starting point for the class is for them to receive a letter which outlines a problem, or idea that they can support. The letter can outline the first stages of the process (e.g. design a visitor centre) Another simple start is the ‘addition sum.’ List words that add up to the visitors’ centre or shopping street or family.

**STAGE 1.**

*Construct the place and time.*

This gives you the opportunity, through discussion with pupils, to:

* discover what the children know (and don’t know)
* unpack (and teach) the more difficult language

The constructions of the setting can be done in different ways by different groups e.g. model making, creation of an inside or outside plan, an x-ray picture showing inside and outside. Lots of learning around things such as scale, position, shape, measurement can be introduced here.

Groups then present their creation to the class – again, questioning should be used effectively to draw out key elements of learning.

In some topics the setting is best created in the form of a large scale wall frieze. This forms a backdrop against which the events of the story are created.

Ideas for possible writing that could take place at this point:

* persuasive letter in response to original letter
* advert for centre (language of advertising study\_
* Instructions (how to make a model)
* Report (how I made the model)
* newspaper report
* tripadvisor review
* information leaflet / brochure
* invitations to opening

With all writing it is important that pupils consider context, purpose and audience. They should also be given the opportunities to discuss the type of text they’re being asked to produce. Not all pupils need to produce the same – this can vary according to need (e.g. some can produce an invitation, others an advert with accompanying supporting work)

**STAGE 2.**

*Atmosphere – create the characters*

For the visitor centre, you can ask what kind of people might visit as well as which staff would be needed. This provides lots of opportunities to think about the world of work, particularly if the discussion is developed to think about opening times, wages, shift patterns etc.

At all points it’s important that children take ownership of the characters they have made so beware inserting too many of your own ideas.

At this point, pupils create characters – ideally one each. If only a few large scale figures are created they can be owned by the groups of pupils who made them or ‘adopted’ by the whole class.

Different ways this can be done:

* a head drawn onto a sheet and fabric / coloured paper used to construct the rest
* head and shoulders pictures with / without features added
* draw round a child then create a life size template
* Plan the sizes to suit the available materials, class and wall space for display.

RULES FOR CHARACTERS

* The person who created the character is in charge of him or her
* You can use characters other people have made in discussion – but if you want to use them in a piece of writing you have to ask permission
* New characters can be introduced as needed e.g. air sea rescue, police, celebrity. All characters should have a speaking part. Babies and pets are extra!
* It is wise not to kill your own or other people’s characters

Each character should have a biography that is displayed by them on the wall.

Ideas for teachers – you could remove a character after lunch – this leads into discussions about being lost, activities where people need to remember details to tell the police etc.

**STAGE 3.**

*Incidents*

Children think of ideas of incidents which might happen in the setting, involving the characters.

For example, for The Visitor centre:

* a power cut
* a rude visitor
* a visit by a famous person
* a member of staff wins the lottery
* 2 characters get married
* a staff Christmas party
* storm damage
* a member of staff gets fired
* someone is ill
* vandalism

This is a great place to bring in cross curricular areas – all kinds of HWB topics, science, social subjects, can be tackled here.

However, don’t have too many teacher directed incidents or the pupils may lose interest.

Planning for writing.

At the point, teachers / teachers and pupils can use a grid like the one below to think through writing tasks for groups, class or individuals:

|  |
| --- |
|  WAY OF TELLING |
|  INCIDENT | 1. Lottery winner
 | Role play | Diary | Narrative | Newspaper report |
| 1. Toilet trouble
 | Health and safety guidelines | diary |  |  |
| 1. Vandalism
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Lost child
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Charity fundraiser
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Wedding
 |  |  |  |  |
| 1. unwell staff
 |  |  |  |  |

This then supports the structure of the activities that take place. For example:

* Children could be grouped together. They decide on an incident, create a story, then choose a way to tell it. All groups may finish with a diary entry using the previous work to support it.
* Together, the class decides on an incident and creates the story. This is role played then a cartoon strip created in groups. This is used to support writing at different levels & perhaps from different points of view according to need.
* One incident is chosen. Different groups work on different bits of writing to support it.
* The teacher decides how many incidents / over what period of time this lasts.

The incidents form the chapters of the ‘story’ and may be used to introduce various curricular requirements.

**STAGE 4.**

*The ending*

It is important to have a fitting climax to the story. This could take the form of:

* a class visit to a related place
* a visit to the class by someone involved in something related to the topic – e.g. a visitor centre manager
* a class party!
* a member of staff dressing up as someone related to the story and attending a visitor themed morning
* parents invited in to view the work that has been taking place and listen to pupils present their Storyline topic.

**STAGE 5.**

*Review of Learning*

It is very important to take time to reflect on the learning that has taken place during the development of the Storyline. This can be done in a number of different ways – class, group discussion followed by written reviews, individual.

Key questions for review are listed in the Storyline Planner.

Any comments, photographs etc may be shared at literacy@argyll-bute.gov.uk or Clare.Bryden3@argyll-bute.gov.uk