

'Door into a magical world' creative writing task

Many stories involve characters finding a secret door or portal into another world.

1. Working with a partner, list all the different stories you can think of that include a hidden door/portal into a secret or magical place.

- Include detail about the type of door/portal and the place to which it leads.
- You can include examples from film and TV shows.

2. Add notes to the following images. Include your own ideas about where the doors might lead. Your notes could also include questions about the images.



In *Northern Lights* Philip Pullman sets his novel in a magical world with witches, panserbjorn (talking bears), daemons, alethiometers, dust and lots of other fantasy details.

There is a mystery about the power of the aurora borealis (northern lights) in the Arctic. Could the northern lights be hiding a magical portal into another world?

3. Write a story where you imagine that you (or a character) have found a hidden door into a magical world. This could be the world of *Northern Lights* or a world of your own imagining. You could use the images from the last activity as inspiration.

- Describe the room or place in the 'real' world in detail before moving on to describe the hidden door or portal.
- Then describe your journey through the door and the world that you find on the other side.
- Then continue the story ...

Focus on detailed description with vivid and imaginative vocabulary.

Use paragraph changes to clearly show the different places.

Challenge yourself: use similes and metaphors to add interest to your description.



Teaching notes

It may be useful to explain the meaning of the word 'portal'.

The first task could be completed as a homework activity, so that students have time to research and ask the opinions of others. Students could even identify a book on this theme they would like to read.

Many stories involve characters finding a secret door or portal into another world. For example:

- *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
- *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
- *Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster
- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle
- *Elidor* by Alan Garner
- *The Lives of Christopher Chant* by Diana Wynne Jones.