

Disagreeing Well – Writing (Micro Story)

Aim:

To use imagination and vocabulary to write a story that helps us better understand our feelings and how they help us become happier and healthier people

Activity Description

Pupils will write a micro story exploring a past experience and how they might see it differently now.

At the beginning of Our Place, the characters are meeting a year on from the end of the story. They are in Year 7 and are looking back at Year 6, re-telling the story together.

During this re-telling, they begin to see some things differently. They have questions about how they behaved and what they know. They realise some things have changed over time.

At the beginning of the story, all three characters' experience huge changes in their personal and family lives that are out of their control. They are confused, angry and fearful. They completely disagree with what's happening around them and feel trapped.

But by the end of the story – around six months later – they have found a way to confront those confusions and fear.

Time can often make things seem clearer and easier to deal with.

Starter activity:

Focus on a previous moment in your life where you completely disagreed with what was happening around you, and when things felt unjust and unfair. Perhaps you were much younger – perhaps it is more recent. What happened?

Use your sense memory to try and re-capture the event:

Vision – what could you see? which colours? where were you? who else was there?

Sounds – what were the sounds? were they close up? did things sound strange or odd?

Touch – what was under your feet? how did your clothes feel? what were you touching?

Smell – were there distinct aromas? inside or outside? manufactured or natural?

Taste – could you put a taste to this moment? a flavour in your mouth? in your body?



Disagreeing Well – Writing (Micro Story)

Spend a few minutes on each sense to try and fill the moment with as much detail as possible. Make a note of anything that feels particularly important.

Main activity:

The characters in Our Place each find ways to confront the thing they fear the most, and those with whom they fundamentally disagree, in order to find positivity, hope or understanding.

BETH tells her dying Grandpa that she can't agree with his last request because he doesn't believe in God and she does.

ALI tells his deeply prejudiced Dad, who has separated him from his best friend because he's a Muslim, that he wants to organise a family meet-up with his best friend's Dad.

JOSH tells a whole church congregation – including his Mum, who is pressuring him into becoming a Christian – that he doesn't believe in God.

What do you realise or understand about your situation now that you couldn't or didn't understand at the time? What were the perspectives of other people involved? How has time changed your understanding of the experience?

You now have two perspectives from which to write your micro story – an immediate one from the situation, and one from now, which is looking back at it.

Write the story in the present tense, using 'he' or 'she' rather than 'I'.

Your micro story will be seven lines, made out of both perspectives.

Complete the first part of each line with what happened in the moment, and the second part with something you know now.

All s/he can think about is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can see is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can hear is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can feel is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can taste is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can hear is... but s/he doesn't know...

All s/he can think about is... but s/he doesn't know...



Writing (Micro Story)

EXAMPLE:

Micro Story: THE BULLY

All she can think about is how unfair it is. But she doesn't know that other girl feels everything in life has been unfair to her.

All she can see is blurs of uniform, all blues and greys smudged up through soggy eyelashes. But she doesn't know that the same morning, that girl is crying in her room alone.

All she can hear is shouts and insults. But she doesn't know that the girl gets worse at home.

All she can feel is pain and shame. But she doesn't know that later that same year, they'll both be laughing in the playground.

All she can taste is breakfast coming up. But she doesn't know that feeling in the stomach lasts all day for that other girl.

All she can hear is rushing in her ears. But she doesn't know that later, they'll be listening to one another.

All she can think about is how she wished the world could swallow her up. But she doesn't know that one day, she'll be asking why that other girl feels the same way.

Think about how the second parts of the lines can contrast with the first, giving us a sense of the change between then and the now.

How might you build a journey of reflection that ends somewhere with a sense of positivity, hope or understanding? What are we left to consider at the end?

Finally give your micro story a title that might work as a lens for the reader – something that might help us understand the piece more.

These stories can work as something to be read, but also as powerful short dramatic monologues – solo scripts – that can be performed.

Time required

60 – 75 minutes

Materials required

Pen and paper

