

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MASTERCLASSES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

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HOLLY SMALE: BURY DEEP AND USE YOUR EMOTIONS



BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

GET IN THE ZONE!

In her video, Holly talks a lot about the importance of conveying emotion in writing. She says that emotions are complicated, and you need to bury deep to put yourself in your characters' shoes.

Get started with this **drama game**, in which students will silently act out a range of emotions, thinking about how they can be expressed. They will need a space large enough to interact as a group. To begin, have a brief discussion about the range of emotions you can experience. Encourage

students to go beyond “happy” and “sad.” Can they name and explain emotions such as guilt, joy, and more? Then, to play the game, ask each student to think of an emotion. Choose a student to begin the game as the host. The host will mime getting ready to enter the room in a manner that silently expresses their chosen emotion. The other students should join the room one by one while acting out their emotion. As each student joins, the others in the room should change their behaviour and expressions to show the same emotion as the new participant.

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do the characters seem to be **feeling** in this extract from *The Valentines: Happy Girl Lucky*?
2. What **descriptive words** does the author use to show you their feelings?
3. Have you ever been in a **situation** that made you feel like Faith, the speaker, in this text?
4. The extract reveals that the Valentines’ mother is in rehab. Do you think your feelings in this situation would be **similar** or **different** to theirs?
5. How would you describe the **narrator** of this text? Why?
6. Imagine you’re rich and famous. Would it change the way you **interact** with your family and friends?

FUN ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: DON'T JUST WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW

Holly disagrees with the notion, 'write what you know'. She says that if we all wrote about what we know, we'd be writing autobiographies, not fiction. With this in mind, play a game together to practice thinking about unusual situations that you are not familiar with...

- Imagine that you are a famous movie star attending the premiere for your latest film. Sit in a circle. Then go around one by one each adding one line to the story. The lines must alternate beginning with "fortunately" and "unfortunately." (For example: Fortunately I arrived on time; Unfortunately it was the wrong train station.)
- Continue around the circle, alternating between "fortunately" and "unfortunately" to complete the story of your famous movie star.

ACTIVITY 2: DRAW UPON YOUR OWN EMOTIONS

Holly explains the importance of drawing upon our own emotions to make characters relatable.

- Draw upon your own emotion bank to make a character relatable. First of all, discuss in pairs how it might feel to be a famous movie star.
- Now write a story, starting: "Unfortunately the paparazzi were waiting for me when I arrived..." Try to add another sentence describing how you feel about each thing that happens. Remember to use Holly's advice and to 'bury deep' into your own emotions in order to imagine how your character feels.

ACTIVITY 3: UNUSUAL CONTEXTS AND NEW EMOTIONS

Holly says it's important to 'get in the head of your character' because it 'makes your stories more powerful' and makes stronger connections with the reader.

- Following on from your ideas in Activity 2, write a diary extract in-role as your famous movie star.
- The diary extract should be written after the film premiere. Consider how your character feels looking back at the events of the evening.
- Try putting your movie star character into a brand new situation: one that is strange or unexpected. For example, what if your character became an anonymous chef in a busy kitchen, or a teacher in a school where no one knows his or her name? Write a new diary entry for your character in this new, unusual context.

SHARE A STORY

Think about a story that you've felt emotionally invested in or where you've connected to the characters on an emotional level. Take ten minutes to share your story with your classmates, teachers, friends or family. Tell them which characters you felt the most invested in and why, and the impact that it had on you as a reader. Can you see any characters in your chosen story that your classmates, teachers, friends or family members might also identify with?

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION...

AN INSPIRING SHARE A STORY CHALLENGE FOR YOU:

Including a quick recap of the expert advice from Holly:

Imagine you are rich and famous, with everyone watching everything you do. You turn up to an event in a car and the paparazzi want to interview you. How do you feel or how do you think you'd feel? How would your best friend, brother/sister, mum, etc feel? Write down three different ways you could react to the same situation.

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