



Scott for Schools:

Story Cards

As well as an author and poet, Walter Scott was also a keen collector of all kinds of curious things. His passion was collecting objects that had interesting stories to tell - especially those objects connected to Scotland's history. His house, Abbotsford, became a little bit like a museum, full of weird and wonderful objects. As a writer, Scott would often use these objects to find inspiration for his poems and stories.

These Story cards show objects from the University of Aberdeen's collections, and from Abbotsford, Scott's home in the Scottish Borders. One side of the card shows a picture of the object, and a quote from one of Scott's works, whilst the other side shows three prompt questions. Story cards can be used in a range of storytelling and creative-writing activities. Use the cards to get pupils talking to each other or invite them to create their own scenarios and stories. You can find some suggestions of ways to use the Story cards in fun activities here.

Activity One: Talking Objects

- Working in pairs or in small groups, for the first five minutes the pupils should look only at the image-side of the card, trying to work out what it is they see, and what they think the object might be for, as well as anything else that they notice about the item. You could use prompts such as:
 - What (colours / materials / shapes) do you see?
 - What (details/ features) do you notice?
 - What do you wonder? (Is this used for something? Is it broken? Is it very old? Does it have writing / a pattern on? What does the writing / pattern mean?)
- After the first five minutes, pupils can turn the card over and use the prompts on the back to find out more about their object and discuss the talking points or prompts to begin to imagine stories connected with the objects.
- After a further five minutes, pupils should take it in turn to report back to the rest of the class what they discovered, wondered, and any ideas for stories that they may have had, using the prompts on the cards.



- NB if preferred, this would also work well as a full-class activity, showing the cards on a screen and discussing them together.

Activity Two: Writing Objects

- After completing the 'Talking Objects' activity, pupils begin to create their own story about an item.
- The story should not just feature the item- the item should be the central feature, character, symbol or plot development. You may wish to discuss these different elements of a story before beginning the writing activity.
- Pupils should think carefully about the role that the object will play in their story.
- It may be helpful to ask the pupils to first of all write a description of their object.

Activity Three: Storied Objects

- Arrange chairs into groups / create space for groups to sit in a large circle, with a piece of paper.
- Give each group a card. The groups have five minutes to come up with the beginning of a story inspired by their object, which they should write down on their paper (you can use a template for this if preferred).
- At the end of the time, each group should move one group forward in a clockwise direction, leaving their story behind. They will continue the story that has been left behind by the previous group, deciding what happens next.
- This repeats, with the groups moving on after five minutes five times, until all group has contributed to each story.
- The groups can take it in turns to read the stories out loud to the rest of the class.