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| **HA Resource Hub Submission Form** | | | |
| **Resource Title: Historical Fiction Challenge** | | | **Age Range: 11-16** |
| **Author name and email contact:**  Simon Harrison  sharrison@croftonschool.co.uk | **Resource Details: (e.g. how many documents does it consist of? In which order?)**  **One document** | | |
| **Necessary prior learning to complete this:**  None – can draw on knowledge from any aspect of KS3/4 curriculum or prior learning outside of this | | **What does it lead to next?**  n/a | |
| **Explanation: How should this resource be used?**  Can be used flexibly for any student that either requires an extension task, has completed all the work set or is having trouble accessing online learning. | | | |

**Crofton School History Department: Home Learning Challenge**

**Write your own Historical Fiction**

**Your challenge is to write you own piece of Historical Fiction!** It can be completed by any student in any Year group. It’s optional, but have a go if you have finished all the work set by your History teacher, are having trouble accessing any of it, or would just like to try something a bit different!

This guide will help you to plan the story step by step, if you get stuck just use the *Need some help?* section under each step for extra planning activities.

The school will enter the best 3 stories into a competition run by the Historical Association. However if we don’t enter yours, you can still enter it directly. More details of the competition (and the prizes!) can be found here: <https://www.history.org.uk/getinvolved/categories/531/news/3451/write-your-own-historical-fiction-competition-2020>

The deadline for submission to the competition is Friday 26th June 2020, but you can send your story to your History teacher whenever it is ready.

**Introduction**

Remember this is a STORY not an ESSAY. You’re not writing to impress your teacher with your detailed knowledge of history – you’re writing to bring a little bit of history alive to people your own age, and to draw them into the story with characters they may love, or hate, or identify with, and a story that makes them want to go on reading to find out what happens. The historical setting must be accurate, even down to the names you give your characters, so you’ll need to know the time period and location of your story (as well as any real historical figures involved) well enough to do this.

**Marking Criteria**

The best stories will have these features:

* **Historical accuracy** – even down to the choice of names characters are given and any props additional to the historical setting
* **A riveting read** with a good plot!
* **A convincing story** - i.e. is it plausible that these events and/or this character could have existed at the time?
* **Use of historical knowledge** to feed the plot, context and character
* **Effective use of historical vocabulary** and **literary conventions**, including where dialogue is included in the story
* **Creative and interesting perspectives of story-telling**. Anything a little different is always more interesting!

If you want some inspiration before you get started try:

Examples of Historical Fiction set in different periods <https://www.history.org.uk/secondary/news/3700/historical-fiction-list>

Examples of previous competition winners

<https://www.history.org.uk/ha-news/categories/455/news/3771/write-your-own-historical-fiction-2019-the-winne>

**Challenge accepted? Then follow these steps to create your Historical story!**

**Step 1: Choosing your setting**

Choose a period, place, event or person that really interests you: That way, if you need to do a bit more research to give depth and accurate context to your story, you’ll enjoy doing it, and some of your enthusiasm will come across to the reader as well.

*Need some help?*

Task A: Write a list of your 5 favourite History topics. Think back to Primary school too, places you have visited, your own family history, films, books, video games - anything that’s engaged you in History

Task B: Rank them from 1 to 5 (1 = favourite, use this as your setting!)

Task C: Do some research on your setting – most Historical topics are well covered on websites such as Wikipedia and the BBC, and you may also have reference books at home you can use.

**Step 2: Choose your protagonist**

Think about how you want to tell the story and who will tell it: Will you write it as if you are one of the main characters, who is living or observing the story, and sharing their thoughts on what is happening? (‘I did this …. I was frightened ….’ We call this ‘First person’ writing)? You can even tell the story from the viewpoint of two different people, if you want to give a more rounded picture. Or will you tell it like you’re reporting on what happened, able to look at it from different people’s points of view? (‘She said …. He looked frightened … They couldn’t believe ….’ We call this ‘Third person’ writing). Both have their advantages and disadvantages, so choose which you feel most comfortable doing.

*Need some help?*

Task A: Write two paragraphs, one in the First Person, the other in the Third Person. Which one was easiest to write? Write you story using that one!

Task B: Write a list of your 3 favourite fictional characters. They could be from a book, film, TV series or video game.

Task C: List the things they have in common – these can be the characteristics of your protagonist, so try writing a paragraph describing this person, using the method you chose in Task A.

**Step 3: Characters**

Characters are really important: They can be:

* A real historical figure linked to a real event (you will need to be sure you get your facts right!)
* A real historical figure but at a time of their lives when there’s very little – or no – recorded history of what they were doing, for example, when they were a child or teenager. Then you wouldn’t have to match recorded facts, but you would have to know enough about the person, and what life might have been like for them at that age in that particular period and place, for people to read your story and think ‘This is believable, it might have happened’.
* A completely fictional character - someone you’ve made up – perhaps an ordinary person swept up in an extraordinary historical event, or someone whose story shines a light on how very different life was for people, especially children, in that time and place. Here you’ll need to know enough accurate detail about day to day life in your chosen historical setting to make it come alive.

Characters don’t need to be human – some great stories have been written from the point of view of animals too.

Remember your characters probably won’t have as much knowledge of the broader history behind their story as you do. You have the advantage of looking back at the past through the eyes of lots of historians who have researched this in detail. Someone living through an event or in a particular period of history would probably have a much narrower view.

*Need some help?*

Task A: For each character (maximum 3) write them a profile that includes

* Name
* Age
* Gender
* Appearance
* Voice
* Role (in the Family, Job, Historical setting)
* Strengths
* Flaws

Task B: How will your character be introduced to the story?

Task C: How will your character change as the story unfolds (Their ‘Character Arc’)

**Step 4: Start writing!**

You need a good beginning that draws the reader in quickly, so don’t put too much background information in too soon. You can fill this in later. For example, if your story is about Viking raiders, you wouldn’t want to spend your first paragraphs telling your readers all about yourself, your family, your home and your village. You might start with a sentence like ‘I was walking home along the cliff path when I looked out to sea and saw the Viking longships …’ and then, as you run to sound the alarm, you can start giving a bit of information about the people and place you are racing to save. Some people find it helps to plan a definite beginning, middle and end of the story – it’s certainly good to think what end you are working towards – will it be sad or happy or a mixture of both? But once you’ve got the beginning right, everything else tends to come more easily.

*Need some help?*

Task A: Look at the opening lines of any novels you have at home. How do they make the reader want to find out more? You could also search ‘Best opening lines of novels’ to find lots of famous examples

Task B: Write your opening line, then show it to somebody else. Ask them if it would make them want to read more? Use their feedback to re-draft it until you are happy with it.

**Step 5: Keep writing!**

Now you just need to keep going. Most authors say that the best thing you can do is just to keep writing, a little every day. Don’t worry if it’s not perfect, you can always go back and make changes. And finally don’t forget to give your story a title!

There are no rules on length, try not to make it longer than 3,000 words, but it can be much shorter. The most important thing is that it is good piece of Historical Fiction. Do check the marking criteria at the start of this document to remind yourself of what we are looking for.

*Need some help?*

Task A: Plan your story out using a diagram. There are lots of ways of doing this but you could try:

* A storyboard – for each part of the story draw a simple picture with a caption
* Draft three paragraphs, beginning, middle and end. Then you can work out what needs to go in-between to make the story flow
* Use the ‘Three Act’ structure to plan, making notes on each one before you start to write.
  1. Setup – Introduce the characters / setting and the first dramatic incident. This usually sets up a problem, the solution to which will drive the rest of the story
  2. Rising Action – How the characters try to deal with the problem, and how they respond and begin to change
  3. Resolution – How the problem is resolved (this could be good or bad) and what impact this has on the characters