

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS

GLITZ & GLAMOUR

Teachers' Notes

Creative Writing Workshops for
Keystage 2 at the Wallace Collection



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'A writer lives, at best, in a state of astonishment...To transmit that feeling, he writes'.

William Sansom

And where better to experience a state of astonishment than at the Wallace Collection?

A two hour workshop based on a selection from eight of the treasures in the Collection is an exciting and memorable source for creative writing and will help to instil in young people an awareness of an environment like the Wallace as an abiding source for creativity.

These notes are designed to accompany the KS2 workshops on creative writing at the Wallace Collection. The notes provide a summary of the sessions, some information on the images used as sources and some ideas on follow-up work.

Students take away with them a notebook of ideas and reminders of the day and some starting points for the completion of finished pieces of writing to be done at school or in their own time. Sessions are 90 minutes for Years 3 and 4 and two hours duration for Year's 5 and 6 and are based on one of the three themes listed below. A selection of four of the eight art objects in the list will be explored by the students preparatory to some short creative writing exercises in their own 'Writer's Notebook', provided by the Wallace Collection.

The Workshops

The introduction to the session will look briefly at the history of the Collection and its collectors, a discussion of the chosen theme and its attendant activities, and a 'warm-up' word game.

The students will pass through the magnificent rooms to then focus on the four art objects that will stimulate their writing. The tour is interactive and students will be encouraged to voice opinions and ask questions. Two stops will be made for some short writing exercises, some of which will be shared but all of which can be the basis of more finished work later on.

The Writing Exercises will include a selection from:

- description
- dialogue/monologue
- voice and point of view
- vocabulary building
- persuasive writing

and will trigger thoughts on editing and research.

The theme you have selected for your school is "Glitz and Glamour" and students will look at four of the following pictures and objects:

A Southern Harbour Scene, Nicolas Berchem, Late 1650s

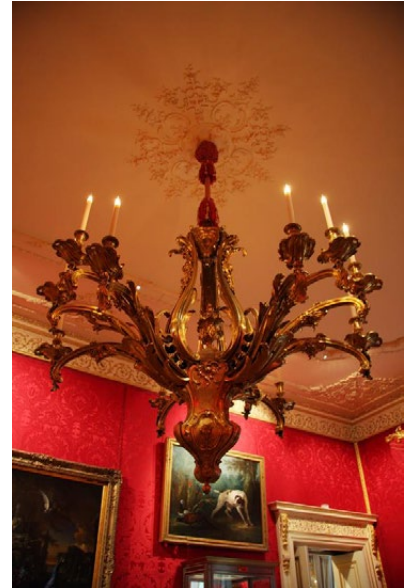
This detailed and atmospheric harbour scene was a complete fiction – a storybook setting. Berchem may have been to Italy and became enthusiastic

about the fashion for painting exotic scenes painted in warmer climes than his native Netherlands. In this picture, he invents a sumptuously dressed wealthy woman, with people and animals around her to stimulate the imagination of the viewer as to her story as she stands, on a raised part of the quay beside the great ship that has brought her to land. Where has she come from? Who is the woman with the baby? Why is the man on the left blowing a trumpet? Write the story of the woman, or any of the people or animals in the picture.



Chandelier

The epitome of glitz and glamour, most of the chandeliers in the Collection are made of crystal, but two that once belonged to royalty are of solid gilt bronze, built round an iron central cage. Once they all held candles but are now converted to electricity. In the days of candles, they would have set the whole room shimmering, the light flickering across the precious pictures and objects below and bathing the people attending a ball or a party in a soft, flattering radiance.



Mantel Clock

The design of this clock shows Louis XVI dressed as a Roman general and receiving counsel from Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom – rather poignant, since he lost in head a little later during the French Revolution. The gilt-bronze reliefs on the base depict, from left to right, the king dining with his brothers, the king in Roman military dress dictating laws from a book held by Justice to France, and the king enthroned on a dais, surrounded by allegorical figures including Truth banishing Falsehood. The clock face is in the shape of a globe. Round the circumference of the globe are two rotating dials with numbers on enamel plaques indicating the hours (in Roman numerals) and the minutes. The lowest of three fleurs-de-lis on the globe indicates the time.



Piccinino, Lucio Marliani, Parade Armour, Milan, c. 1570 – 1590

This magnificent armour, covered in silver and gold, is first and foremost an elaborate costume. The breath-taking decoration required almost every technique available to the metalworker – embossing, chasing, silvering, fire-gilding, and false-damascening. To

allow the brilliant sculptural work, the metal had to be made soft and very thin. This was possible because it was never meant to be fighting armour – it would have been worn only in parades and other very important ceremonial occasions. The decoration includes many fantastical and mythical motifs, including Hercules fighting the Nemean Lion, Roman heroes, grotesque, monstrous masks, and bound captives. These themes were found everywhere in Renaissance art of the time, and in fact, the purpose of this armour is to transform the wearer into a kind of living work of art.



Chalice, J Heuber Vienna, 1780 – 92, Silver gilt, garnet, topaz and other precious stones

The original use of this magnificent chalice is unknown; it seems to have begun life as a secular object, which was then adapted for religious use, presumably given in 1781 to a church or chapel by the unidentified individuals whose names appear in the inscription. Richly set in silver gilt with precious stones and fine decoration, it was clearly an important object and one to be treasured. Lit by candlelight, as it would have been when it was made, it would have glittered and shimmered, catching the eye and evoking awe in the beholders.

Ice cream cooler, Sèvres, porcelain, 1778 – 79

One of four ice-cream coolers from the dinner service made at the Sèvres factory for Catherine II of Russia (Catherine the Great). The service was originally composed of some 797 pieces, ten of them ice cream coolers of which four are in the Wallace Collection. Inside the cooler is a tin liner in which the ice cream was placed. Ice was packed between the liner and the porcelain shell, to keep the ice cream cool. In the 18th century, ice cream was slightly runny, rather like thick soup, and could be made from fruit but from more exotic things as well, such as rose or violet petals and even meat.



Mlle de Camargo Dancing, Nicolas Lancret, 1730

One of the artist's most original creations, the picture was a new departure in the depiction of dance. Marie Anne de Cupis de Camargo (1710-70) was the first great virtuoso ballerina of the Paris



Opera. She was famous for her athleticism as a dancer and introduced the shorter skirt and ballet slippers, considered shocking at the time. Lancret observes details such as the dress and a ballet position on demi-pointe, contrasting her pale complexion with the musicians in their dark earthy tones in the background of this theatrical scene.

Rendezvous de Chasse, Antoine Watteau, c. 1717 – 1718

Beautifully dressed young men and women relax on the grass in a wooded park to amuse themselves and to be admired. In an age of elegance, they have leisure and money to do both. The horses and dogs seem to have very little to do with a real hunt, which would have been arduous and muddy! Their clothes would have been entirely inappropriate for such an activity. This genre of painting was meant to entertain a wealthy clientele with the notion of an ideal, but imaginary existence and proved very popular in 18th-century France. Interestingly, Watteau added all the dogs and hunting equipment and part of the left-hand side of the painting at a later stage.



Follow up Activities

- Choose the 'starter' you did at the Gallery that interests you most and turn it into a finished piece of writing.
- Think about some of the textures and smells you found in the pictures and objects. Look around you, or think about somewhere else you know well. What other things might feel or smell the same as those in the pictures? Could you use one to make a simile for the other?
- Take one of the pictures or objects you saw at the Gallery and make a flipbook of a story about it. Or make a flipbook of lots of things you saw and give each page an adjective to describe the object. Write the word large enough to be readable at speed when you flip the pages.
- Which of the objects did you like best? Imagine you are the person who used to own it. No photos in those days! Write a letter to a friend, telling them about your new acquisition.
- Write some dialogue between two of the owners of a picture or object. What might they be talking about? Whose is best? Who spent the most money? What are they going to do with it? What have people said about it? Why do they like it so much?
- Do you think rich people or celebrities today would buy the same things as the ones you have been looking at? Choose someone you know about, or like, and write about what they would buy and why. You can write it as a report in a magazine, or in the first person.
- Write an auctioneer's blurb about a picture or object. They want to sell it for as much as they can. Will they stick exactly to the truth, or will they exaggerate?
- Run a mock auction in class, selling all the pieces you saw, taking it turns to be the auctioneer. Will it be class members who are buying, or will you role-play celebs or royalty or other rich people? Keep a note of how much everything was bought for. Perhaps there's a tv camera present with a presenter giving a commentary on events – who has bought what. When it's done – write the script as if for a play.
- You are planning a party to show off your new acquisition. What will the room look like? What food and drink will you provide? Who will you invite? Write the invitations. You can write about now and choose something special you'd like to own yourself, or as if you were the owner of one of the pieces you saw and what their party would have been like.