

FIRST STORY

TEACHING RESOURCES

BBC
Teach

**“I mainly get my
inspiration from
everyday moments”**

DEREK OWUSU
NOVELIST



**INSIDE the
WRITER'S MIND**

STIMULUS

Imagine that you are sat on a train, when you see someone approaching you to sit down opposite.

“I spot them on the train...”

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1 Describe this character from your perspective. Make notes on:

- their clothes
- their face and expressions
- what they're carrying
- how they walk and sit down
- anything unusual

2 Now add how you feel – or how your narrator feels – about this person sitting opposite. Curious? Scared? Annoyed? Judgemental?

Make notes on your narrator's internal feelings and responses. What does your narrator think the other person thinks of them?

3 Let's move the scene into some action. Does your narrator start a conversation with them? Or the other way around?

Perhaps something else happens that catches you both up in some drama.

What happens next?

- 1 Write those sections up into a flowing narrative, from your narrator noticing and describing the other person, to their inner thoughts, and then into the action that develops the story.
- 2 Now go back over your writing, checking it makes sense. Especially look out for:
 - Have you over-described the character? (Just a couple of accurate, interesting sentences leaves more to the reader's imagination!)
 - Does the narrator's character come through? How do they speak to themselves?
 - Is the action clear – could anyone reading this follow what happens?

RESOURCE AUTHOR

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This resource is by Dan Simpson, an accomplished writer, performer, producer, educator, and First Story Writer-in-Residence.

Dan has been Poet-in-Residence at Glastonbury Festival, Waterloo Station, National Trust Stowe, Imperial College London, and St Albans Cathedral. His two collections of poetry are *Applied Mathematics* and *Totally Cultured* (Burning Eye Books).

Dan delivers primary and secondary school classes around the UK. He also runs both creative writing and professional development sessions for adults.

Find out more at dansimpsonpoet.co.uk.



DAN'S RECOMMENDED READING

On Writing
by Stephen King

**Steering the Craft:
Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing**
by Ursula K. Le Guin

Zen in the Art of Writing
by Ray Bradbury

This resource is one of six published in 2022 by First Story, in partnership with BBC Teach.

These resources complement a new collection of short films about creative writing, *Inside the Writer's Mind*, produced by BBC Teach.

Featuring fantastic contemporary writers and packed with tips and insights, discover all eight of the films among the English Literature resources on the BBC Teach website, [here](#).

Explore all six of our accompanying free resources at firststory.org.uk/bbc-teach.

FIRST STORY

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44 Webber Street, London, SE1 8QW

020 7481 7777
info@firststory.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1122939

