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ENGLISH

TEACHER'S

SCRAPBOOK

Christopher Sion

Vol.

ii

This book is dedicated to Mario Rinvoluceri, with thanks,
for singlehandedly and very patiently facing the slings
and arrows of those outraged authors whose contributions
went unacknowledged for far too long.

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STORIES BY ASSOCIATION

Bryan Robinson

Level: Intermediate to advanced

Time: 2 sessions of
20 - 30 minutes each

1. Ask the class to give you any six words and write these up on the board, for example: sun, leather, woman, mother, office, dog.
2. Divide the class into six groups. Each group should work on one of the six words so that each of those words is covered - two groups may not work on the same word. The group's task is to think of as many associated words as they can. The associations need not be direct - in fact, the more imaginative the better. From the set of words above you might get:

SUN

moon, stars,
planets, hot,
astronomy,
telescope,
lens, bright

LEATHER

plastic, silk,
cloth, material,
rubber, imitation,
cowhide, whip

WOMAN

man, animal,
child,
attractive,
ugly, kind,
sexy

MOTHER

father, warm,
family, pregnant,
baby, busy,
unappreciated

OFFICE

typewriter,
stapler, desk,
calculator,
chair,
boss, prison

DOG

cat, mouse,
rat, kennel,
bark, bite,
friend, bone

Ask the groups to delegate members to come and write their lists on the board.

3. Tell the students to copy down the lists and explain any new words. Then ask the students to write a story using at least one word from each of the six word sets. You might like to set this for homework and could perhaps offer a prize for the story which includes the most words from the six lists.
4. Once you have collected and corrected them, you can ask the class to work in the same groups as before and read out their stories to each other. As one student in each group reads, the others should pay careful attention in listening for the words from the lists.

Editor's note

The initial "brainstorming" phase serves as a valuable creative stimulus. I would imagine that many teachers wonder why their creative writing classes fail when all they need is a simple warm-up activity to set off the students' imaginations.



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