

National
Literacy
Trust

Change your story

The Great Green Escape

Creative writing competition 2023

The Great Green Escape!

Creative writing competition

What would it be like to be a wild creature in Britain today? What threats does the wildlife in our country face? How would wild animals escape this danger and stay safe?

Write a short story about a British creature experiencing a narrow escape and you could win one of our amazing prizes - including a bespoke Eco Zone tailored for your school or local area, thanks to our friends at Rotary.

Here are a few tips on how to write a story in three parts, starting with a little bit of research:

Pre-learning:

Research British wildlife.

What animals, birds or insects live in our country? Where are their habitats? What do they eat, and how do they survive? You might have spotted some wild animals in your local area, or perhaps you can find out about creatures that you have not seen. Once you have done a bit of research, choose one creature to focus on in your writing.

Threats to British wildlife

What threats face your chosen creature? Does the modern world with its cars, roads and building pose a threat? What about littering, climate change, deforestation or pollution? Your creature might also face natural threats, such as predators.

Part 1

Out and about

- You could open your short story by describing the creature in its natural environment, perhaps hunting or foraging for food. You might want to include a description of the creature itself, as well as the weather, local plant life, rivers, trees, and other features of its natural environment. It would be interesting to describe the creature's senses: what can they hear, smell, touch or taste?
- Decide whether you are writing in the first or third person. Are you narrating the story as yourself, or are you telling it from the creature's perspective?
- Before you start, make a plan of the adjectives and noun phrases you will use in this section. You could even include figurative language such as similes and metaphors.

Part 2

Threat and danger

- Here your creature will face some kind of danger – will they be attacked by a predator, get entangled in some litter, or face the perils of traffic? Perhaps they are affected by climate change, facing flooding or drought, or maybe their habitat is being destroyed – it is up to you! There will probably be a real change in pace and tone for this part of your story.
- You might want to build some tension here before the danger hits – are there warning signs? How will this make your creature feel? You could even experiment with 'pathetic fallacy' – this is when the change in mood or atmosphere is reflected in the weather and other natural features.
- Before you start, plan some verbs to use. Verbs are a great way to create action. How does the animal move as the tension builds or when it is in danger? Does it dodge, swerve or dart? Experiment with using adverbs too, as well as varying the length of your sentences – short sentences can have a lot of impact.

Part 3

Home sweet home

- Following their great escape, your creature will probably return to their habitat – this will be in contrast to the action in the previous paragraph, with description that shows the safety, familiarity and comfort of the creature's home.
- Think about how you will end your piece. Has your creature noticed an increase in danger in their environment? Can the creature look to the future, perhaps learning from their experience? What would they do differently next time? Perhaps they want to protect their young or avoid certain areas.
- Before you start, plan some descriptive phrases that you can use to express comfort or relief. How creative can you be with your vocabulary?

How to enter:

Keep your stories to approximately 500 words or fewer. Make sure the child's name, age and school are easily identifiable, then e-mail to DoncasterStories@literacytrust.org.uk or post to:

**Literacy Lab,
National Literacy Trust,
Mexborough Business Centre,
College Road,
Mexborough
S64 9JP**

Please get your entries to us before **Friday 8th December 2023**.

In partnership with Rotary district 1220 and Rotary Club of Doncaster St Leger