

Writing Exercises

- 1) Writing teachers will tell you that stories start with characters. Try creating the following two characters:
 - a. A new hero – imagine that you have to write a second book to follow **Red Slider**. Benjamin has already been the hero once, so you need to make a new hero. Answer the following questions about your hero:
 - i. What species is your hero? (turtle, frog, lizard, human...)
 - ii. What does your hero look like? Strong or weak? Lovely or ugly? Young or old?
 - iii. Choose three words to describe your hero's personality.
 - iv. What is your hero's favorite food?
 - v. Does your hero have any unusual hobbies or habits?
 - b. A new villain – imagine that your characters have to face a new bad guy. Bad guys can either be really evil (like Voldemort in Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling), sort of funny (like Count Olaf in A Series of Unfortunate Events by Lemony Snicket), or any number of other things. Think about your bad guy and answer the following questions?
 - i. What species is your villain?
 - ii. What does your villain look like? Does he or she look normal, or look creepy?
 - iii. Choose three words to describe your villain's personality.
 - iv. In what way does your villain like to make life difficult for others?
 - v. What are your villain's evil goals?
 - vi. Does your villain have any unusual interests or habits?
- 2) A good story starts with a problem. The hero of the story should be trying to solve the problem. The villain either causes the problem, makes it worse, or stands in the hero's way. Think about a new problem that could face the characters in either **Red Slider** or its imaginary sequel.
 - a. What is the problem?
 - b. Is the problem fairly ordinary (eg. the sunning log is too slippery), bizarre (eg. the dragonflies all grow two heads), or catastrophic (eg. an earthquake swallows up the pond)?
 - c. Why does the hero need to or want to solve the problem?
 - d. What ideas will the hero have about how to solve the problem?
 - e. In what way will the villain cause problems for the hero when he or she tries to solve the problem?
- 3) A good writer makes his or her readers feel like they're actually in the scene of the story. A writer does this by using all five senses in descriptions. Make up a setting for your story. It could be somewhere normal (like a pond, a field, a house) or somewhere imaginary (like a cloud, a fairyland, a magic cave).
 - a. Where does your story take place?
 - b. What is the temperature of the air? How does it feel on your skin?

- c. What does it smell like in this place? Is it fresh or musty? Sweet or sour? Familiar or unfamiliar? Are the smells strong or hard to find?
- d. What sounds do you hear? Where are the sounds coming from? Are they loud or soft?
- e. What does the place look like? Is it indoors or outdoors? Is it bright or dark? Is it beautiful or ugly?
- f. Imagine that you reach out and touch the nearest thing you see in your mind. Is it soft or hard? Wet or dry? Smooth or rough?
- g. Is there any food in your setting? If so, does it taste good or bad? If not, is there any taste in the air (for instance, ocean air tastes salty)?
- h. Use five words to describe what your setting is like.