

11+ Creative Writing — Story From A Picture

Student assignment — “Create a story using the picture below.”



One thud. Two thuds. Three thuds. More... The sun-baked Savanna was painted with deliciously vibrant colours as the fatigued elephants, wearing a coat of dried mud, traversed across the grassland in search of water.

Notes for student

- This is a great opening to your story Mary, well done!
- You have used personification and a metaphor nicely, by describing the elephants as wearing coats of mud.

It seemed the younger elephants were merely walking on air, whilst the older elephants were left trundling behind, laboriously lifting their heavy legs along the parched land in the maliciously hot weather. It felt like an eternity of walking before their treacherous journey would come to a close but Mabinti, the motherly matriarch, stuck to her archaic ways and encouraged the elephants to keep going.

“Think positive, we’re nearly there!” she commanded supportively. To Mabinti, this meant, “Think cunningly, don’t let them know the truth for their own sake.”

Notes for student

- Great use of alliteration here, well done Mary!
- You have used lots of lovely descriptions. To improve, remember to describe the feelings of your characters as well as describing the plot. How are the elephants feeling here? Are the baby elephants excited? Are the older elephants exhausted?
- You have used lots of writers’ tricks, good work! You’ve personified the weather nicely by using the word “maliciously”.

The passing wild animals showed masses of respect to the herd, as elephants are renowned for their intellect. Even the lion, such a powerful, vigorous animal knew his place and would bow down before the elephants.

Suddenly, thump! Then a whimper. The youngest elephant; simply an infant and unsteady on his feet, tumbled to the ground over the long blades of grass. A veil of darkness blew over the setting sun as daylight drained away. Mabinti and the other ancient elephants knew they had to work quickly and used all their might to try and help the baby elephant up. However, the baby elephant would not move. The herd cried like a gushing waterfall.

Notes for student

- You have painted a lovely picture here of the other animals bowing before the elephants. It’s a brilliant, original idea.
- This is a nice, exciting plot, well done. You develop tension nicely by setting the sun and suggesting that the elephants are running out of time.
- Brilliant simile Mary: “The herd cried like a gushing waterfall.”

The following day, the baby elephant stirred before mustering up the strength to roll over and get up. All the elephants were overjoyed. Mabinti was relieved but secretly worried whether the herd could continue the trek much longer. The daylight, however, brought with it more great news. Just beyond the trees, Mabinti noticed a watering hole. The herd had been so worried about the baby elephant that they had not noticed it the evening before.

Notes for student

- This is a great resolution to your story.
- To improve you could have described the watering hole in more detail. For example, "the water glistened in the rising sun".
- Also, you could have personified the sun by saying "the sun rose and watched over the baby elephant until it was able to stand once again."

One thud. Two thuds. Three thuds. More... The elephants had finally arrived at their destination. The acacia trees drank peacefully at the serene place whilst the elephants shared the refreshing water. The water cascaded down their throats and quenched their thirst. This was the remedy they had all been searching for.

Notes for student

- This is a brilliant, exciting ending Mary! You have taken inspiration from the picture but still made your story interesting and original. Well done!
- Good use of repetition to end your story. Repeating parts of your opening paragraph in your final paragraph shows the reader that the story has come full circle and is at its end.
- To improve, you could have mentioned the baby elephant in this paragraph to help conclude the story. Was the baby okay? Did the water help it?

Progress Plan

- Overall, this is a great story Mary! You should be proud of yourself.
 - You have done a great job of describing your plot and what your characters are experiencing. To improve, don't forget to include how your characters feel. Are they scared, excited or exhilarated? Also remember to include the five senses: what can you see, hear, smell, taste and feel? This will help you deepen your description.
 - As an extension task, go back over your work and write down one sentence you could add to each paragraph which uses one of the five senses.
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Your work was marked by Ellie.

Qualifications: 1st class English and History degree

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A bit about me: I studied creative writing and children's literature while at University, as well as the Tudors and Cleopatra. In my free time I swim, read and play Pokemon. I love to write and I hope to become a published author one day.

This work was reviewed and approved by James Davey, The Exam Coach.