

ENGLISH

Diary writing

Talk about Ada's diaries and the sort of language she used - remember the only words you hear in the film are from Ada's diary. Ada wrote some things with a pencil and paper but also used a typewriter that the explorers had taken to Wrangel Island.

Ada's first language was Iñupiat, not English, but she was brought up by missionaries and not allowed to speak or write in her own language. 'Language suppression' by governments and officials is now considered to be wrong. However, many people today grow up speaking more than one language, and many children and students in schools in the UK are learning and writing in English (or Welsh or Gaelic) but speak a different language at home. Is that difficult? Or is it a great opportunity to understand and speak more than just one language?

Writing Activity

- A diary can be used in advance to remind you of things that are going to happen, for example, an appointment or a birthday, but also, like Ada's diary, as a record of what has happened.
- Diaries are set out by dates so they leave a record of *when* things happened as well as *what*.
- They can also be about *feelings* as well as *facts*.
- Discuss the sort of language used in a diary, the ways of recording and how frequently a diary might be written, for example, daily, weekly or only when something of note happens.
- Some people write a diary to leave a record for other people and some people write one to help them understand their own feelings. Do any of the children keep a diary?

If the school has an old-fashioned typewriter available show the children how it works and let the children try typing on it! It was thought to be important enough to take to the Arctic on the expedition. How has communication changed 100 years later? What if there is no internet or mobile signal?

Show the children how to set out a diary entry and ask them to write an **imaginary diary** using the following prompts:

- Imagine yourself stranded on an island. Are you alone?
- Do you have a companion? A pet? Who do you miss?
- Does anything exciting or scary or wonderful happen? Or maybe it is very dull...?
- How do look after yourself and get food? How do you pass the time?
- Do you eventually get home or not?

Poetry Activity

Read the Inuit poems in the resources section to the children and also show them how they are set out on the page.

- Talk about the language used in poetry, is it different to prose?
- What can a poem do differently to prose?
- How does a poet use their authentic (own) voice in poetry?
- How do these poems make the children feel?
- Do the words make imaginary pictures in our heads? Why do you think that Seagull is set out on the page in the way it is?

Write a poem about an environment that you know.

Think of a place you know that has made a strong impression on you, maybe this is somewhere close to home or somewhere you have visited. Share words that describe this environment and your feelings about this place.

- What do you want to convey in your poem? Facts, feelings, a sense of place?
- Poems don't always need to make conventional sense. You don't have to explain everything, try surprising the reader and maybe yourself!
- Remember some poems rhyme in varying patterns but some don't rhyme at all. Repetition can create rhythm and emphasis and help to build your 'word-picture'.
- Play with the layout of the text to enhance the meaning of the poem. Using a computer, tablet or ipad to set out the text can extend this activity and allow experiments with layouts and fonts.

If you want to provide more structure ask the children to use the **Acrostic form**: choose an appropriate word, write it vertically on the page and then start each new line with the next letter of the word.