

Maria Chatzi



The magical Mr.
Tumblebuddy Flipet
writes stories
Creative writing for children



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Both her contribution to public libraries and the publication of this mini ebook, with a Creative Commons License, are an offer of free services for the common good in the local community and an effort to promote Creativity.

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To Parents and Educators

Dear parents and fellow educators (primary school teachers, SL teachers and FL teachers),

Would you like to help children learn to write stories and fairytales which hold the reader's interest up to the end? If yes, you'll have to teach them how to write a short and simple adventure story - because what makes even the simplest tales unforgettable, and what makes children desire to read a book again and again, are mainly three things:

A) the tension created by the obstacles, difficulties and dangers the hero is confronted with during his "journey",

B) the chance the young reader has to identify with the story's hero - the bigger, the better,

C) the hero's quest for successful ways of solving his problems and his achievements.

On the hero's journey, some of the problems are solved by themselves (as if taken care of by a mechanical God or compassionate Lady Fortune), while for other problems it is entirely the hero's responsibility to solve them, through the choices he makes. But let us not forget that the hero himself, as well as the obstacles, difficulties and dangers he has to overcome on his "journey" are all created by the writer.

What is the best way to start a story or fairytale, what makes a good beginning, such that would capture the reader's attention and create curiosity, so that the reader proceeds to reading the whole story? How does a writer decide when is the best moment for an obstacle or danger to show up in the hero's life? How does the writer know it's the right time in the story-line for the hero to overcome the obstacle or danger? How is the writer to judge if one problem for his hero is enough, or if more need to be added, so that the interest of the story or fairytale rises? If the writer puts too many problems on the hero's shoulders, without allowing him to find solutions, what would happen to the story? How does the writer decide or know his story is coming to an end? All these are justified questions that any child would have.

Finally, how would we, teachers and parents, be able to help a primary-school-age child understand all the above and use this knowledge to write an interesting adventure story or a beautiful fairytale?

This mini ebook gives the answers to the above questions in a simple, fun and direct way (as is appropriate for children of this particular age), that is with the help of the magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet.

The answer to the last question, which refers to us, adults, is also simple:

a) It is a basic prerequisite that we accept that any child is capable of writing a good story. It goes without saying that our demands would be respective to the age-specific skills that have been developed (through various learning experiences at home and at school).

b) It is our job and duty to offer the child the means, the required knowledge, the exercises and, of course, and any type of tools (props included) that would help the child with this deed – because every attempt the child makes at this delicate age is a deed. Whatever gained from this achievement, the outcome of the effort, may support him/her and lead to greatness later in life or drown his/her self-esteem.

Of course, I take A, mentioned above, for granted – we will not be too demanding of a child of this age. So we are left with B, the need to make sure the child is offered the knowledge (methods and techniques), as well as the tools to learn creative writing and to hone his/her newly acquired skills. Such a teaching prop (an alternative puppet) but also a helpful tool in the hands of the child itself, is Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, presented in this ebook.

I conceived and crafted Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet for the needs of a creative writing workshop (on November 9, 2012) which I named “Adventure Tumbles and Flips” and which I undertook to teach, as part of my voluntary work at a local library, to children 8-9 years old. My main goal was to teach children an easy technique to create plot twists and build tension when writing an adventure story. My intention was to help them understand how they could guide the hero to experience a transition from his peace and quiet to trouble, from safety to danger, from being happy to being desperate, from a pleasant encounter in his journey to an unpleasant one. Of course, I was aware that if the children had understood the lesson well, when writing their story, they would be able to create the opposite transition as well, from the “misfortunate” to the “fortunate”, leading their hero to the solution of his problems and, eventually, crafting a happy ending for the story.

In other words, the magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is a theatrical figure, outside the context of the story, whose role is to structure the

adventure story or fairytale. This is the role we desire the child to assume for himself, the role of the “story writer” – it is where the child identifies completely with Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet. At the same time, Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is not only the writer but also the child’s guide, his counselor, his partner, his friend. The child-writer goes to him for advice on the writing craft. The fact that he has a double role to play in teaching creative story writing is what makes him especially effective.

His double role became obvious to all in my creative writing workshop, and accepted, from the very first time the magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet showed up. He proved to be an exceptionally powerful interactive teaching prop, when used as intended.

On pages 25-27 you will find a craft project, with instructions to make your own magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet (of a smaller size). I’ve created and I use two different designs for my creative writing workshops - one was designed for the teacher to use, and an alternative one was designed for the children to use. It is possible to use only one design instead, to simplify things, but in that case you need to craft it in two different sizes (the teacher’s prop has to be bigger, so everyone in the classroom can see it acting out the story plan, as it tumbles and flips).

After you understand the role Mr. Tumblebuddy plays in structuring a story, you will realize how useful this tool is in aiding your teaching other concepts to children, and the relationships existing between such concepts as well, e.g. relationship between cause and effect, opposites etc.

And, now...

Ladies and gentlemen,

I present you ... **The magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet!**

Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet and the Creation of the Adventure Story Structure

The magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is a writer. He writes various stories and fairy tales. He enjoys weaving pictures, facts and imagination together with words. Most of all, he's keen on writing adventure stories. Do you know how he writes them? But, of course, through tumbling and flipping!

Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet has got two faces; one of them on the front, as everyone, and the other one on his back side. One of his faces is a happy and smiling face – that's "Lucky Leo" (= "Luckily - Oh!"). His other face is a sad-looking face – that's "Unlucky Leo" (= "Unluckily - Oh!").

Unlucky Leo always talks about the bad things that happen in the story that Mr. Tumblebuddy's writing, and literally creates them: bad circumstances, inconvenient situations and misfortune, roadblocks and difficulties, dangers, trouble and problems that come up.

Lucky Leo is the one who talks about all the good things in the story and offers a helping hand for them to happen: good luck for the hero, ways to overcome roadblocks and difficulties, ways to keep the hero away from danger and trouble, solutions to the hero's problems.

When Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet decides to write an adventure story, he prefers to allow Lucky Leo to craft the beginning. However, there are times when Unlucky Leo catches up with him and crafts his own sad and unlucky beginning – that's why some stories for adults start with a misfortunate event. Usually, Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet allows Lucky Leo to pick the ending of the adventure story too – it is his responsibility, so it could be pleasant for the readers. That's because Mr. Tumblebuddy knows that people prefer stories with a happy ending. But Unlucky Leo, who is a troublemaker and enjoys fights, would sometimes, more rarely though, give the story an unhappy ending. Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet has to act as a guard when the story reaches its end, to keep Unlucky Leo from being naughty.

As you understand, as the two faces of Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo, never agree on anything their fight is endless. These two faces take turns in coming forth to build the story; first, it's Unlucky Leo who tells us what bad fortune the hero has had and then it's Lucky Leo who tells us how the hero's bad fortune was turned into good fortune.

One competes with and talks back to the other. All this disagreement and fighting between them makes Mr. Tumblebuddy flip and/or tumble lots of times, in order to write his adventure story and/or fairy tale.

It is this tumbling and flipping that brings about changes in the story's plot. This is how action and tension are created. Change, action and tension make the story interesting and push the plot forward. The more disagreements and fights take place between Unlucky Leo and Lucky Leo, and the more flipping from good to bad circumstances or tough situations (and vice versa), the more challenging the hero's quest and his adventure becomes.

For the sake of his peace and quiet, Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet had them agree that it is fair to take turns on deciding what's to happen next in the story. However, Unlucky Leo and Lucky Leo don't always stick to their agreement, they are sometimes naughty monkeys and cheat. That's why, in some of the adventure stories that Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet writes, when Unlucky Leo would hold on to the story plot stubbornly, not allowing Lucky Leo to take over, the reader is presented with two or three bad events, difficulties or problems, occurring one after the other in the hero's journey. This rises tension, of course, but a lot of misfortune and unhappiness often results in a "heavy stuff" read. Creating a feeling of frustration may discourage the reader from reading the rest of the story, as it unfolds without any joy and hope for the hero. On the other hand, when Lucky Leo is the one who would hold on to the story plot stubbornly, not allowing Unlucky Leo to take over, the reader loses all interest in the story - it is all good luck with no challenges and it becomes boring. Bottom line: If there are only good and pleasant things or only bad and unpleasant things happening in a story, it is meaningless to tell that story.

Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet writes stories that become a great success (best sellers) when Unlucky Leo and Lucky Leo follow their agreement, stick to the rules and don't do any cheating. However, a story cannot go on for ever. Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet knows this. That is why when Unlucky Leo decides to throw the biggest problem, obstacle or danger on the hero's path, to block his journey to success and happiness, Mr. Tumblebuddy flips and tumbles once more, for the big "finale", to help Lucky Leo come forth and remain forth. Lucky Leo is the one who chooses the hero's final victory. That is where the story ends. And that is also the end of all the fighting and the disagreement between Mr. Tumblebuddy's two faces, who have built the adventure story.

Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is an admirer of the ancient Greeks, who believed that the story needs to end with "the solution of the drama",

meaning a happy ending, so that the young reader is left peaceful, satisfied and joyful after all the tension and suffering he was put under while reading the adventure story. The magical Mr. Tumblebuddy writes his stories according to Aristotle's prototype plot structure. The 3 parts of a well-written ancient tragedy are: the "prologue" (the setup), the "episode" (the confrontation) and the "exit or choral" (the resolution). Respectively, in a modern story these 3 parts are: The beginning, the middle and the end.

Have you realized why I call Mr. Tumblebuddy "magical"?

It's for the following reasons:

- a) Because he writes his stories by tumbling and flipping
- b) Because he's got two faces and
- c) Because he could change into different forms (or appearances), depending on how we choose to craft him each time (see pages 17-18).

Note for Educators and Parents

It would be a good idea to give kids, aged 8-11, notes or photocopies from pages 11-13 so they would remember how Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet creates the plot structure of his adventure stories and use these notes (as guiding reference) whenever they are asked to write a story of their own.

What I am introducing here is the use of a new tool, for all your "Fortunately - Unfortunately" (Remy Charlip) type of stories. The focus is on the fun and easy to handle way this simple teaching prop interacts with the technique, the process, and the writers (the children), to produce amazing results. For it is the tool that goes deeper and reaches farther, thus stretching the technique. And this is what makes my proposed approach to creative writing a fresh one.

A lot of the activities presented in this book are created by me but there are also some adaptations from old, well-known activities.

How Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet Tumbles and Flips -

Step by Step instructions

These are pictures of the first Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet I've designed and used for a creative writing workshop, with primary school age children. You can see his two faces, "Lucky Leo" and "Unlucky Leo".

You could copy my design, if you like, or make a design of your own, according to your preferences.



Picture 1a, Lucky Leo



Picture 1b, Unlucky Leo

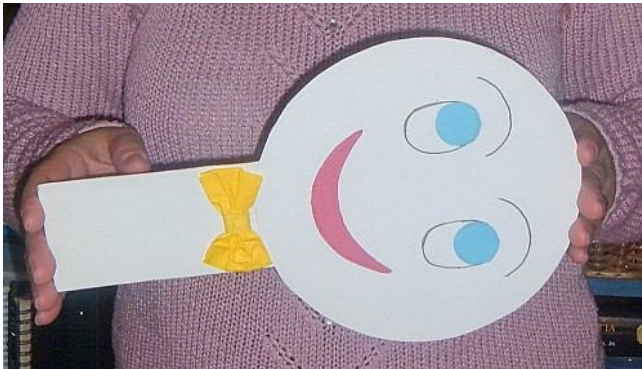
Following are instructions of how I make him tumble and flip

I hold Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet in front of me, at the height of my chest, with Lucky Leo facing the children - his neck standing up straight in my right hand palm. My left hand palm is on his head, as shown in picture 1a, to help the figure keep balance. Holding the figure in such a way will make tumbling and flipping him easier.



Picture 2a, How to hold lucky Leo

I, then, rotate him on his head, to the direction of my left hand, always holding the figure with both my hands (see picture 2b).



Picture 2b, Rotating Lucky Leo

I complete a rotation of 180° . After the rotation has been completed, Lucky Leo is standing upside down, as shown in picture 2c.



Picture 2c

To continue, still using both my hands, I lower Mr. Tumblebuddy's neck forward. This reveals Unlucky Leo's face, while Lucky Leo's face has disappeared (Lucky Leo is now on the back side of the figure, which the kids do not see any more) (see picture 2d).



Picture 2d, Revealing Unlucky Leo

Immediately after Unlucky Leo appears, I hold him straight up so all the kids can see his face.



Picture 2e, Showing Unlucky Leo

So, that is how Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet tumbles and flips. It takes a little practice at home, on the part of the teacher or the parent, but it is not difficult.

If you prefer something easier to tumble and flip, follow the instructions given below (it's a craft project for kids), to make your own Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet using a toilet paper tube. You could also craft him out of a small shoe box, which is ideal for having him stand on a table or a teacher's desk, where all the kids could see him, even if they are sitting at a distance from the table or desk. If the children's group you're doing the creative writing workshop with is not a large one (which means you could all gather around a table), you could craft him out of a small medicine box, like cough syrup (see picture 3).



Picture 3

In the pictures below (pictures 4a and 4b), you can see another design of the magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, which I've crafted for another creative writing workshop that took place in January 2013.



Picture 4a



Picture 4b

As you understand, depending on your needs and preferences, you could use any material to craft him, in any shape and size that suits you, as, for example, in the craft project for kids that follows (with step by step instructions). You could also make a pocket-size Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet using a matchbox, or a very small medicine box, like one used for nasal drops.

How to use Mr. Tumblebuddy for Creative Writing Activities

If you need some ideas on how to use Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet (Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo) to teach kids creative writing you could try some of the activities I have listed below, which combine learning and play. They are simple and easy to apply. I'm certain that the following ideas could not only be improved further by creative educators but could also become the inspiration or the seed for additional and more innovative activities with the magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet.

Notes:

a. When creating adventure stories with children for the first time, you could use the words "Luckily" or "Fortunately" and "Unluckily" or "Unfortunately" (modeling it after Remy Charlip's book of 1970), while you're flipping Mr. Tumblebuddy to his one side or the other. The use of these four words helps kids, especially those that are younger (6-8 years old), understand quicker and easier the role and significance of Mr. Tumblebuddy's two faces in structuring the plot of an adventure story. Once this is understood, make it clear to kids that, when writing a story, it is wiser to avoid the repetition of the words "Luckily", "Fortunately", "Unluckily", and "Unfortunately". It is best to find other words or phrases to use, with the same meaning (see page 30).

b. For older kids (9-11 years old), it is especially helpful to hand them two lists of words or phrases they could work with: One with words (and phrases) Lucky Leo would begin his sentences with, and one with words (and phrases) Unlucky Leo would begin his sentences with. For example, Lucky Leo would use phrases like "Thanks to his good luck" and "He was lucky that", while Unlucky Leo would use phrases like "Because of his bad luck" and "What a misfortune that". Explain to children that the words and phrases, in the lists you're compiled for them, are substitutes for the words "Luckily"/"Fortunately" and "Unluckily"/"Unfortunately" – they denote plot twists and they are mainly conjunctives. Alternatively, you could have the children compile the lists themselves, in groups or altogether – offer your help if needed. Only remember that this would take more time.

c. It is important to notice that in the first stage of writing the adventure story everyone's attention has to be focused on the story's plot structure. Once that is achieved, children need to pay attention to expressing themselves correctly, in terms of grammar and syntax, to make meaningful sentences. Last but not least, their written work must be enriched with other elements of language, like adjectives, hyperboles, metaphors, similes etc.

Ideas for Creative Writing Activities

1. You could start by making two sentences (using examples from everyday life), one sentence beginning with the word “Luckily” or “Fortunately”, and the other one beginning with the word “Unluckily” or “Unfortunately”. For example, tell the kids: “Unfortunately, I’m not in a good mood because I’ve got a bad headache.” Immediately after, add: “ Luckily, I’ve got a pill in my bag, which would make me feel much better after I swallow it.” Explain to them that the headache is the problem and the pill is the solution to the problem.

For children up to 9 years old a dance-like swirling game will follow, which I’m describing below. The aim is to use this game as a means to help kids become aware of the way the plot structure of an adventure story is created and learn how to do it by blending knowledge with experience – that is, by connecting what ignites imagination and provokes thought with the simultaneous participation of the body (movement).

The children need to work in pairs, forming a circle, standing back to back, with their arms extending horizontally to both their sides, palms facing backwards. As they are standing, ask them to lower their arms a bit (in a less tiring position) and hold hands with the person they are standing back to back with. Tell them that, in each pair, one of them is going to roleplay Lucky Leo and the other is going to roleplay Unlucky Leo. Unhappy Leos will be the ones facing the inside part of the circle they have formed.

To continue this activity, set a starting point in the circle. The first kid who is playing Unlucky Leo must form and call out a sentence-problem situation. The pair have to immediately turn around in a dance-like motion (still standing in a back to back and hand in hand position), so that the child playing Lucky Leo will be now facing the center of the circle. Lucky Leo has to answer to the challenge Unlucky Leo has put him to, by forming and calling out another sentence, which is the solution to the previous problem.

All pairs have to take turns in going through this dance-like motion. A second and a third go follow. The winners are all pairs that formed correct sentences, both for problems set by Unlucky Leo as well as solutions to those problems found by Lucky Leo.

When this dance-like game is over, the educator(or parent) guides children to write a short group story, sentence by sentence and step-by-step. Inform kids of the procedure and make it, once again, clear for them that, in the story they’re asked to write, Unlucky Leo will be setting the

problems and Lucky Leo will be finding the solutions to them, just like in the game they've played before. Tell them: "Unlucky Leo will be putting blocks on our hero's road and Lucky Leo will be helping him get over the blocks."

A word of caution: In order for this activity to be successful, it is absolutely necessary to give them an example of what they are supposed to do in this dance-like game, by acting it out yourself, so that they would have a model to follow. You could also ask two or three pairs to repeat what you've told them they should do and imitate what you've shown them, just to make sure everyone has understood. Of course, they could make their own sentences as examples. In case kids are at a very young age (6 years old), it may be better for the parent/educator, after forming the pairs, to form and call out the sentence-problems and the sentence-solutions himself/herself and have the children perform the dance-like game only (swirling according to their roles).

2. Another idea is to ask kids to sit on the floor and form a circle, to tell a group story. Tell them that this group story will be told as Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet will be tumbling and flipping from one child's hands to the other's, all around the circle. The child to start the adventure story will act out the part of Unlucky Leo, the second will act out the part of Lucky Leo and this is how they will continue, one after the other, till the story is ended by the last child to speak in the circle. Before the story starts, the parent or educator must name the hero, decide on the time and the setting of the adventure story, as well as the incident that triggered the story your group is going to tell. If the children are older (9-11 years old) they could decide on all the previous as a group. While they're weaving the story, let them use their imagination without interfering with negative comments or corrections, in how the story develops, even if it is utterly unrealistic. They are not supposed to be telling a real life-story. Also, keep in mind that most first-time group story telling by kids is not that successful and the plot structure is going to be loose, but it's O.K. This first-time story-telling experience is a very good exercise for future improved results.

3. You could also choose an old, well-known fairy tale to use, which by itself is a series of adventures till the hero finds success and happiness at the end of his road. Personally, most of the times, I prefer to use the "Cinderella" fairy tale or "Jack and the Beanstalk" (you'll need to alter this one a bit, especially the ending). To start, ask kids to tell you the "Good" and the "Bad" things that happen in the fairy tale - work as a group and write two lists of these "facts" (these are the turning points in your adventure story). One of the lists contains whatever Unlucky Leo would say and the other one contains whatever Lucky Leo would say. When

you've finished with the lists, divide the class or group in two teams - one is Unlucky Leo's team and the other is Lucky Leo's team. Then, ask the two teams to tell the story together, just like Unlucky Leo and Lucky Leo would, using the lists.

4. Another activity, which is as fun as play for kids, is the following: The parent (or educator) writes an adventure story of his/her own, as simple as possible and cuts it down to strips. If these strips are glued onto thick craft paper, you have handcrafted story-cards. Every strip must have a part of the story such that it would be easy for children to tell if it is Unlucky Leo or Lucky Leo who's the story-teller for this part. The children are then asked to put the story-cards in the right order, telling the whole group which card is whose (Unlucky Leo's or Lucky Leo's) each time. When finished, kids retell the story or act it out.

5. An alternative is to form teams of 4-5 kids each and have them write a short adventure story of their own, from their everyday life (this could be, for example, about a real adventure they've had during their summer vacations on an island or an utterly imaginary adventure they've had in Fall in the mountains). Just tell them that, in order to organize their thoughts carefully and plan their story successfully, they need to use Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet's help. To make planning easier for younger kids, you could use a short story, that is well-known to them, as a model.

6. Instead of writing the adventure story in words, younger kids could write their story ideas in two lists, under the category names: "PROBLEMS", and "SOLUTIONS". When they'll have finished with their list-writing activity, give them blank cards and ask them to tell their adventure story with pictures, by making simple line-drawings. Make it clear for all that these picture cards (with their line-drawings) have to be put in the correct chronological order, as taking place in their story. Finally, after the cards are placed in the right order, they need to cooperate to write the story as a group.

Notes

1. It is necessary to make it clear that whenever you talk about "PROBLEMS" you also mean any type of Danger or Road Block that your hero is facing or is going to face. Also, explain that when you talk about "SOLUTIONS" you also mean any way your hero will *Get Away* from danger or trouble and *Survive*.

2. Keep in mind that younger kids will need help from the parent (or educator). Try to adopt an explanatory role only.

3. I'm going to stress this point once more, due to its significance (in determining the success of all the activities in this mini guide): It is extremely important that you read pages 11-13 of this guide very carefully.

4. When the kids you're writing the story with are older (e.g. 10-11 years old) you could experiment crafting an adventure story where Unlucky Leo speaks twice as much as Lucky Leo (throwing a lot more hurdles on the hero's road) or vice versa (the hero experiences more fortunate events than misfortunate) and see the difference in the appeal your story will have to its readers (or listeners, if you're telling it). This is more difficult to master, though, than the simple one-to-one exchange model in crafting dialogue and stories – it works only under the condition that children have had some experience with plot structure and the one-to-one exchange model, before proceeding to this higher level.

5. You are the only one to know best the language skills level of your students/children. If you believe the above activities will be difficult for them it is better to begin with this simple game:

Have kids form a circle (they could sit on chairs or on the floor). Tell them that they will take turns in saying one thing that Unlucky Leo would say and one thing that Lucky Leo would say, without Lucky Leo having, necessarily, to respond to what Unlucky Leo has said. In fact, there need be no connection at all between the two sentences – the only prerequisite is that they form correct sentences (in terms of grammar and syntax), and of course meaningful. Remember, the children are not making a story at this point – this is only an exercise to help them craft the adventure story later on. Most of the times, everybody gets a second go, as the first attempt is used to “test the ground”, or as an example of how to proceed with the activity. This helps kids be more relaxed and less hesitant but another session is needed to proceed to the other activities described in this guide and do some “real work” on story-writing.

6. All the activities mentioned here have better results if the group you're working with is a small one (not more than 12 kids). If there is a larger number of children in your class/group, it is better to have an assistant and divide the group in two teams. You could also achieve better results if the children know what to expect. It is advisable to prepare them some days ahead, explaining the type of story-writing or story-telling activities you chose to do with them, why you're doing them, how fun it will be etc. By giving them this information before they engage with the actual activity, you add value to the activity itself by making it meaningful, you help them understand and you also build anticipation. One warning: Telling kids something will be fun is a promise for them, not a

wishful thought – so, make it fun. It is also advisable that you set the rules for groupwork or teamwork before the activity starts. Another thing to keep in mind is that younger kids get more enthusiastic than older ones about crafting a story with Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, but they also have a shorter attention span.

7. With older kids, avoid using a fairy tale as a story model. It is far better for educators (or parents) to write an adventure story of their own, a good example being “Robinson Crusoe” (but a shorter one, with a smaller number of plot twists). Or, choose one from the many story books for their age, you can find in the market. Then, rewrite this particular story in the form it could be told by Unlucky Leo and Lucky Leo, to hand over to the children to use as a model in creating their own adventure story.

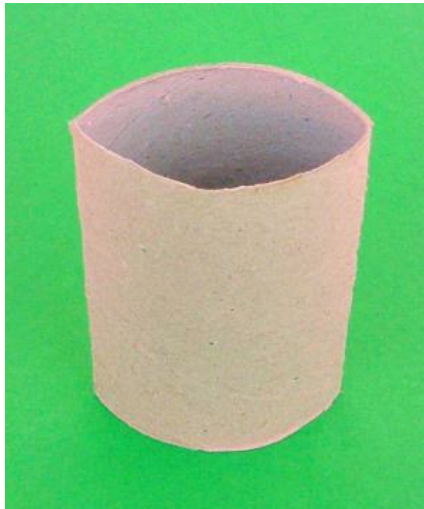
Make your own Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet - Easy Craft Project

Materials

- a toilet paper tube
- 2 circles cut from white paper (to make the faces)
- markers
- 2 small scrap pieces of paper (or fabric, or ribbon) to make the bow-ties, any 2 colors you like scissors, and glue

Step by step instructions

1. Press the toilet paper tube, with your palm, to form it into the shape shown in the picture below (picture 5).



Picture 5

2. On the white circles, draw with your markers Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet's two faces (Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo).
3. On the one side of the toilet paper tube glue Lucky Leo (picture 6a).
4. Tumble and flip the toilet paper tube to its other side and glue Unlucky Leo (picture 6b).



Picture 6a, One side of the paper tube (front side) - LUCKY LEO



Picture 6b, The other side of the paper tube (back side) - UNLUCKY LEO

IMPORTANT: Unlucky Leo's face could either be glued on the lower part of the back side of the toilet paper tube (which means the face on the back side would be upside down in relation to the face on the front side) or exactly behind the face glued on the front side (in the same direction). It depends on whether you intend to tumble and flip Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet or only flip him. Personally, I always prefer to tumble and flip him (that's his name, after all), instead of just flipping him from front to back. Kids love that too ☺ it reminds them of Head Over Heels gym exercises they all do to show off their tumbling skills.



Picture 7, Magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet Craft for Kids (a profile of the craft project)

5. Make 2 small bowties, one for Lucky Leo and one for Unlucky Leo, from the scrap pieces of paper (fabric or ribbon) - they would look like butterflies. Glue them under the 2 circular faces you've already glued on the two sides of the toilet paper tube. Your magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is ready to perform for the kids. With his help, the children could now write their own interesting and imaginative stories where adventures tumble and flip.

Some Additional Ideas and Tips

1. On one of my sessions with kids, after I had handed out the photocopy with the step-by-step instructions for the craft project and showed them my toilet paper tube Mr. Tumblebuddy (which I had crafted as a specimen for that particular writing workshop) the following happened. One of the kids, a girl who was listening attentively to what I had been saying and watching carefully anything I did, raised her hand and said: “We’ll make him and always keep him on our desk, by our side, to help us *when we’re reading a story too!*”. I saw the enthusiasm of discovery and the spark of creativity in her eyes.

I was certain this student had become fully aware of the role and magic of Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet. How quickly she made the connection between writing and reading, when she saw he could be crafted in another form (different from the one I’ve first introduced to the kids, shown in pictures 1a and 1b of this mini guide)! This paper tube figure was their “smaller and personal Mr. Tumblebuddy” – he was their friend, their “BUDDY”, as I had told the kids before we started the craft project. She was right – Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is the best helper for reading literature not only as a reader but as a writer as well. So, he could also be used successfully in a reading club too, helping primary school kids detect and pay more attention to the structure of the story plot as their reading.

2. The more often you use Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, the more ideas you will get on how to use him further. Lots of ideas will come from kids, telling you what you can do with him or how they use their mini Mr. Tumblebuddy at home (with friends or alone), when writing or reading or telling stories. I haven’t tested it yet, but I believe you will probably discover that, with his help, story-telling turns into an easy game for all.

3. Mr. Tumblebuddy is the idea tool to create adventure stories with kids, which are based on a specific topic related to other school subjects as well, not only language arts. Such stories could be about Nutrition, Hygiene, Travels and Travelling, the Family, Traditions and Customs etc.

4. Another good idea is to promote him to a teacher’s (or parent’s) helper, in the classroom or at home, with assignments like learning opposite concepts, the opposites of adjectives and verbs (with a prefix or not), e.g. joy - sorrow (or sadness), light - dark (or darkness), beauty - ugliness, justice - injustice, useful - useless, healthy - unhealthy, known - unknown, responsible - irresponsible, fill - empty, write - cross out (or erase), etc. As a follow up activity, you could guide kids to write an

adventure story, as a group, using the opposite concepts and words they have learnt in their lessons.

5. Try to connect the subjects of Language Arts and Geography, using creative story-writing. For example, Lucky Leo will be talking about positive facts in a particular continent (eg. "Africa has dense jungles with wild animals") and Unlucky Leo will be talking about negative facts in the same continent (eg. "Africa's got a big problem with water shortage."). If you'd like to use Mr. Tumblebuddy with Maths, Lucky Leo would do the additions, Unlucky Leo would do the subtractions – then kids write a group story, using additions and subtractions.

If the Magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet becomes children's everyday companion, very soon, you will discover that you have succeeded not only in turning creative writing into a game for them but you've also turned learning into a game too.

Words and Phrases that denote Plot Twists in the Adventure Story

For LUCKY LEO

Luckily,...

Fortunately,...

He was lucky/ fortunate that/ to...

Luck was on his side.

He was lucky to...

For UNLUCKY LEO

Unluckily,...

Unfortunately,...

What a misfortune!

Luck was against him.

While everything seemed to be going well/ seemed to be under control...

There was no hope left.

All hope was lost.

General

but, suddenly, although, without any warning, then everything changed, then a... appeared etc.

Exercise: Enrich the above two lists with additional words and phrases.

THE LOTTERY

(A Model for Writing a Short Adventure Story with Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet)

Beginning

One day, John won the lottery and bought a house.

Middle

1. ☹️ The house was in the mountains, in a small and far away village.

☺️ John had a car. So, he set out for his new home.

2. ☹️ As he hadn't been to that place before, he took the wrong road and got lost in the mountains.

☺️ He always kept a map in his car, so it wasn't very difficult for him to get to the right road again.

3. ☹️ When he was about to reach the village, the road led to a path. He had to leave his car and continue on foot.

☺️ Luckily, the village was not far from where he was. He arrived before dusk.

4. ☹️ When he arrived, he saw that all the village houses were old and abandoned. There was no sign of people living there.

☺️ However, John could hear music and voices coming from the house he had bought. Someone was expecting him.

5. ☹️ It turned out that there were two ghosts, twins, living in his house, who had no intention of leaving their home to John. They asked for a one to one fight of honor – whoever survived would keep the house.

☺️ Fortunately, John was not afraid of ghosts. He suggested that, instead of fighting, it would be better if they got to know each other, become friends and share the house.

End

The twin ghosts agreed. John was a writer and felt happy for sharing his home with the ghosts because they would give him new ideas for his stories.

After School Creative Writing Exercises and Activities

In the pages that follow, I describe creative writing exercises and activities, for parents and educators who would like to engage kids of primary school age with after school activities. Most of these ideas and activities could be used during summer vacations, so that children keep exercising and improving their creative writing skills.

1. Ask kids to describe a day in school, first as Happy Leo would describe it (mentioning only the good things that happened) and then as Unhappy Leo would describe it (mentioning only the bad things that happened). They could choose to start the other way round, with Unhappy Leo first. Also, they could tell the whole story with Happy Leo and Unhappy Leo taking turns to speak (just like in an adventure story of sequenced good and bad events). For younger kids, it's easier to describe story events while making, at the same time, two lists, one of "good" things and one of "bad", so they would have a visual picture of the development of the story they're telling.

2. Team up with the kids to make two lists, one of good things that may happen during a birthday party (this list belongs to Lucky Leo) and one of bad things that could happen during the same party, meaning things that could go wrong (this list belongs to Unhappy Leo).

3. Cut out 6 pictures from old, useless magazines. Ask children which 3 they believe Lucky Leo would pick and which 3 they believe Unlucky Leo would pick. What would Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo say about the pictures they would choose? Remind the children that Unlucky Leo would have to talk about a misfortunate event, about something that blocked the hero's road to success/happiness or about some sort of danger he encountered. Tell them that it could be only a sentence for each picture they choose. This activity works best with children of 10-11 years old.

4. This activity asks kids to imagine they're super-heroes and are going to save our world. What road-blocks or types of danger and problems would Unlucky Leo create for them? How would Lucky Leo help them overcome all these problems?

5. This is a group activity. What would Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo say if:

a) Aliens landed in your neighborhood?

b) Suddenly, one day everyone in your family turned into a giant?

6. For this activity, you need 2 empty Mason Jars (jam jars). Use your scissors to cut out 2 identical circles from a piece of paper. Draw Unlucky Leo's face on one of them and Lucky Leo's face on the other. Glue a face on each jar. Give kids 24 small square pieces of white paper and ask them to draw 12 pictures Lucky Leo would like (showing "good things/events" in a story) and 12 pictures Unlucky Leo would like (showing "bad things/events" in a story). Have them use a blue or green marker to draw the good events and a red marker to draw the bad events. When they've finished with the drawings, wrap the paper pieces well, so the drawings won't show. Then, put all the blue (or green) pictures in Lucky Leo's jar, and the red pictures in Unlucky Leo's jar. Whenever you want to write an adventure story as a group, you pick 6 pieces of paper from one jar and 6 from the other. These 12 drawings will be the Middle part of your story – the parent or teacher will start the story, while the ending will be provided by the whole group.

7. I've named this activity "The Rescue". Form 2 teams, one of them will play the part of Unlucky Leo, the other the part of Lucky Leo. Ask children to imagine they were eye-witnesses to a rescue (from a sinking ship, a big fire burning in the city or in a village, or from an earthquake disaster). Both teams must describe what they saw, according to their roles. Every team member has to add a sentence (what he/she witnessed) to telling the story of the rescue. This activity works best with children of 10-11 years old.

8. Give kids a photocopy of a short adventure story, where you have typed only the parts that either Lucky Leo or Unlucky Leo have provided to your story. Also, your story has a beginning but you have not written the ending. Children are supposed to add whatever parts are missing from the story (this could be pair-work, team-work), as well as the ending. When they finish, you will have as many different stories as the number of pairs or teams in the kids' group. It works well as an activity done individually too.

9. This is an activity for pair-work but could also be done individually. Ask pairs to cut an A4 paper sheet in half. Each child in a pair takes one half. They must then draw two circles (random) and a square on each half and, then, make simple drawings using these shapes. One child plays Lucky Leo, and the other one Unlucky Leo. With the help of the pictures they drew, Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo write or tell an adventure story that "tumbles and flips" (each one of them changing the plot the other one is developing).

10. "The Adventure of the Alien's Transformation" is what I've named this game. It is a chalk game, so you need a yard or sidewalk to draw on.

However, you could also play it inside if you have a chalkboard or a whiteboard and a marker. The instructions are simple: The teacher (or the parent) make a line drawing of an alien. Tell kids that the alien has visited our planet (as a tourist) and that in a week's time his appearance has changed by Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo. Every day of the week they said one sentence with the word "Luckily/Fortunately" and one with the word "Unluckily/Unfortunately" which worked like magic.

For example: The teacher (or parent) calls out "MONDAY". The child who plays Unhappy Leo answers: "Unfortunately Druck (that's the name I've given to my alien visitor) couldn't see well in the light of our planet". The child who plays Happy Leo continues: "Fortunately, he went to the doctor and wore glasses" You give kids the marker or a piece of chalk to draw glasses on the alien you've drew on your board, yard or sidewalk. Similarly, you continue with all days of the week. It works well with teams, pairs and individuals.

11. Make a path on the floor, using large cards – they need to be as many as the beginning, the events (problems and solutions) in your adventure story and the ending. The "problem" cards belong to Unlucky Leo and the "Solution" cards belong to Lucky Leo. Let the children write the sentences (that make the story) on the cards, one by one, as they proceed with the story-telling. When they're through with writing, have them retell or act out the story.

It is important and necessary for kids to feel that they have total freedom to express themselves when doing the exercises and activities mentioned above. However, it is equally important for you to set the necessary rules that kids must obey in order to respect other people's opinions (whether these people are their friends, siblings or classmates).

Some of the above activities could be adapted for classroom use. You need to keep in mind that creative writing takes lots of time and patience on the educator's/parent's part. You also need to plan very well and in detail, in advance, as well as be focused on your final goals. These goals are: to offer kids a chance for better self-expression, to strengthen their self-confidence, to help them acquire learning and self-knowledge through self-expression, to exercise their imagination. Creative writing is not only a game, although many of the activities in this mini guide make it look like one.

REMINDER

Children get excited with Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet, and all the activities suggested here with Lucky Leo and Unlucky Leo. However, the first time, some of the activities may seem a bit difficult to kids who have not been taught how to think creatively.

Do not let them get disappointed and frustrated – do not let them believe they cannot succeed. If you see that they are having some difficulty, ask them to do an easier exercise or activity first. For example, instead of asking them to think themselves of what the next danger or roadblock in the hero's path will be, help them out by saying something like: “What would Unlucky Leo say if he was thinking of having the hero get in trouble from a lion?”. Or, you could help them with finding solutions to the hero's problems. Then, let them form Lucky Leo's answer (to the problem set by Unlucky Leo) on their own.

With a little help, encouragement and regular exercise everyone can, finally, be successful.



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The idea of **Saita publications** emerged in July 2012, having as a primary goal to create a web space where new authors can interact with the readers directly and free.

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Have you been in need of a practical and pleasant way to teach kids how to write an adventure story? This mini guide for teachers and parents is the answer to your need. The magical Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet is a teaching prop, a simple and effective tool to be used by the educator and the parent. Through tumbling and flipping, he guides kids to write an adventure story with a series of plot twists. He reveals all his story-planning and story-writing secrets and becomes children's guide and buddy, who trains them in the magic of creative thinking and creative writing, helps them express themselves, frees and cultivates their imagination. This ebook presents Mr. Tumblebuddy Flipet and gives you step-by-step instructions to create him, as well as detailed explanations on how to use him. I have also added notes, tips and ideas for additional activities.



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