DESCRIBING THE STARS

For the stars, you should again focus on four main aspects: the colour, the reflection, the shape and using an effective simile. This comes back to the concept of looking at the world with an ‘artist’s eye’.

A child loves the way the stars are twinkling like little pulses of light. They also love drawing stars as there is symmetry to the five sides that other shapes don’t have. As well as this, it is the first shape they will draw which gives them a sense of achievement because of its complexity. If you think of it, a square, circle or triangle is relatively easy. Drawing a star, however, exercises parts of the brain that haven’t been used before. Starting at the bottom left, they have to go up, down, up and across, across, then down and across. I often wonder how many teachers actually show them how to do this. I’m pretty certain that it would save a child a lot of time were they to be shown how to trace a star properly from first day. If not, then a lot of stars would have to be drawn in ignorance before achieving success.

These posts I’m uploading hope to achieve the same. Make your students think of the different components that make up descriptive writing. Whether it be the branch of a tree that is compared to a similar shape or the texture of flowers, nearly everything in nature has a colour, shape, action (or inaction, like a womb-still lake) and sensation/smell associated with it. Every English student should be able to grasp that essential fact. It then makes it so much easier to evoke a sensory piece of descriptive writing for the reader. If they are not taught that, they may end up like the child trying to draw a star while other children in the class are moving on to complex octagons.

5 different colours for the stars:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>birthstone-blue</th>
<th>molten-gold</th>
<th>solar-yellow</th>
<th>sequin-silver</th>
<th>polar-white</th>
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The reflection of the stars:

| flashing and flickering | gleaming and glittering | sparkling and shimmering | twinkling and dazzling | glistening and pulsing |
The stars are similar in shape to:

| snowflakes | pinpricks | asters | petals | pentagrams |

5 creative similes for the stars. The stars looked:

1. …like scattered moondust in the sky.

2. …like a large hand had tossed diamond dust into the sky.

3. …like beacons of hope for all the lost souls of the world.

4. … like bejewelled grains of sand allowed to sparkle in silence.

5. …like the glittering sparks from angelfire.

The final step is to pick out which words and phrases you like the best and put them together into a sentence. Also try to pick a remote location for your setting where the stars would be most vividly seen. We will give you an example using the ocean. You are lost at sea. Are the stars comforting and a sign of hope or are they making you pine for civilisation? Are they the streetlamps of nature or are they a flashing reminder of your own fleeting mortality? The story is up to you, but by using our formulas you should come up with something like this:

The waves glopped and slashed off the wooden raft. Then the full moon came out and the wave-motion died down. It was an eerie, spectre-silver moon. Its ghostly lustre sent beams of argent-silver spilling across the sea. The wraith-like light flooded the sea, making it glow like silvered mercury.

Stars winked at me from the endless arch of void-black beyond the moon’s corona. In places they were birthstone-blue and beautiful, all a-glitter in their heavenly finery. The ones furthest away, almost outside the span of human comprehension, were like flashing pinpricks in a veil of darkness. They had a faint, silver tint and they looked like they were the distant, glittering sparks from angelfire. All of them were beacons of hope for all the lost souls of the world, or so I thought. It seemed to me that there was a snowfall sparkling in outer space and I felt privileged to witness it.