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## Treasures adult tutors' notes

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A treasure can mean many things to different people. It can be a memory, a wish, a dream or something else altogether. “Treasures” brings together a collection of enjoyable and inspirational stories from all over Scotland that center on the theme of a “treasure.” The following tutor notes offer suggestions as to how some of the stories might be used to help motivate adult learners to write about or produce a record of their “treasure.” Everyone has a treasure and every treasure has a story to tell.

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Very useful for: personal / imaginative writing, poetry

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## The Boots - Heather JC Beaton (pg11)

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- Key features: prose, short passage, confidence.
- Very good for: emotive description

This short and simple story tells of how an item of clothing, namely her boots, fills a person with confidence.



Ask your learner if there is an item of clothing that does this for them. Investigate why. The chances are they might not know, it “just does.” This opens up the chance to look more deeply into where they got it, when, why or from whom and when do they wear it. Noting each detail on separate pieces of paper allows you to explore the nature and use of paragraphing in a clearly visual form.

Ask how this item of clothing makes them feel using as many senses as possible and ask them to recount what it feels like doing the same activity wearing something else. This can then be arranged to form a short piece of factual writing for themselves or, if preferred and the learner’s imagination rose to it, a piece of fictional writing; a day in the life of whatever item of clothing it is.

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## 2. Daddy’s Bunnet - Marion Jean Bryans (pg12)

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- Key features: poetry (non-rhyming)
- Very good for: connectives, rhythm

The poem tells the story of how her father’s bunnet is one lady’s treasure. It tells of times after her father’s death, when the poet finds the bunnet and the effect that has on her after each time lapse. It is written in verse but follows a clear chronological path that would lend itself well to conversion into a short story.

Read the poem aloud together. If working with a group give each person a stanza and ask them to convert the verse into prose using additional vocabulary where necessary but staying as true to the words of the verse as possible. If working one to one, work through the whole poem together. The piece could then be reassembled in prose and read aloud followed, again, by

the original poem. Learners could then discuss the differences they felt in sound, rhythm and impact of the two versions.

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### 3. The Scotland I Support – Thomas Clark (pg14)

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- Key features: prose, subject matter, football, peer pressure
- Very useful for: memories, personal writing



Always a favourite topic with many adult learners this story tells of one man's life long dedication to the sport of football but with an added boost for adult literacy learners in that it's not all about the sport...it's about the outfits too! It's about peer pressure to be seen in "the right clothes." This story won't just appeal to lovers of the beautiful game but will also resonate with fathers and mothers who have tried to keep up with the ever changing uniforms that are football or, indeed, youth fashion.

#### PERSONAL WRITING:

Is your learner a football fan or the parent of one? Open the can of discussion and see what spills out. Writing could take the form of a personal memoir or a commentary on a game they enjoyed or a goal they remembered which could later be scripted and acted out.



#### FACTUAL WRITING:

An interesting way to add a little fun to generating ideas would be to have a selection of shirt templates which learners could personalise to create their own form of "shirt timeline." Information as to which team it was, when it was acquired and why and any significant memory, fact or detail that went with it could be written on the other side.

These could then be strung together (both physically and literally) to create a piece of both factual and personal writing (as well as some pretty nice literary bunting!)

A good extension to this activity could be to have your learner place themselves in the shoes of the character that has to keep up with buying the shirts. For some this could very much be a piece of factual writing!

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### 4. Still Your Treasure – Hannah Lavery (pg17)

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- Key features: prose, romantic

- Very useful for: personal writing

As with Thomas Clark's football shirts on pg14, Hannah Lavery's 'The Clash' tour T-shirt will no doubt evoke fruitful memories in some learners for pieces of both factual and/or fictional writing. A similar idea could be applied as above here but using a tour T-shirt template which (fortunately, from a resource making point of view) can be remarkably similar in appearance to the shape of a football shirt!

The theme of "treasured clothes" is also found in "The Pyjama Genie" by Carolyn Roberts which can be found on page #25. Again to do with things or people remaining recognisable in someone's life through an item of clothing that, though no longer worn, is treasured and kept.

#### BUILDING BLOCK ACTIVITY:

"My T-shirt which lies like faded love letters wrapped in a bow, like pressed flowers kept safe in scented paper, like photographs and trinkets in boxes."

Hannah Lavery makes use of similes, "like" sentences, in this story to help bring out an emotional response in the reader. A simple flashcard game could be used with your learner to develop this skill.

Make a list of similes found in this story, make 2 piles of flashcards, one each of verbs and nouns. A large sheet of paper or flip chart is set out with another movable card with the word "like" on it. Set all the cards face up on the table. Use an example from the story to create the first "like" sentence, "folded like a secret." Explain to the reader that all the others will make examples of the same kind of phrase. Take turns each to choose cards and create sentences. This activity could then be extended by:

- introducing additional noun/verb vocabulary
- turning the cards over to be face down
- introducing adjective cards to extend sentence
- asking learners to create their own examples as they become more confident, the options are many!




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## 5. Ma Coal Fire – Liz Niven (pg33)

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- Key features: prose, written in Scots
- Very useful for: finding your voice in your own dialect

Liz Niven's treasure is her coal fire. Written in Scots, the story whirls you into the living room of many a house in Scotland and tells a tale of how the coal fire is the heart of the home:

"If ye fling away the 'h' in hearth ye get "heart."

What is at the centre of your learner's world or home? Ask them to talk about this. If possible record the conversation and then ask them to listen and transcribe exactly what they have said using their own dialect, not in formal English but through their own voice on the page. If working with a group it would be interesting to ask the group to listen to and transcribe another member's words.

#### BUILDING BLOCK ACTIVITY:

Is there a sound or a scent that makes things feel like home? Is there an aroma that reminds you of somewhere or a noise such as "the sound o crackle and hiss" that Liz Niven writes about on page 33?

Explore the use of onomatopoeia and sound in writing with your learner by bringing in various "sound making" objects. Ask your learner not to look but to write down a word or even invent a "word" for what the sound sounds like to them. Ask them then to write adjectives that further describe the sound or to say how they thought it travelled, i.e., slowly or rapidly, was it a "slow hiss," or a "rapid crackle?" The aim of the exercise is to explore the use of the senses and form word banks that will help the learner to expand their powers of description in their writing.



An ideal example for this is bubble wrap; it can be "lightly popping" or twisted and scrunched to make a sound like crackling and exploding fireworks.

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## 6. Colours of the wind – Bethany Ruth Anderson (pg51)

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- Key features: prose, use of colour for scene and mood setting
- Very useful for: effective use of adjectives

A child's favourite toy can be the birth of many a family tale. A Pocahontas doll is the treasure that features in Colours of the Wind by Bethany Ruth Anderson. Ask your reader to think about toys that have featured in their own or their children's lives. Is there an heirloom teddy bear or, perhaps, a Power

Ranger costume that had to be washed while its wearer slept because it was the only time he'd take it off? Is there a family story to be told?

#### BUILDING BLOCK ACTIVITY:

Colour features strongly in the opening paragraph, “green or grey” and “shifted brown,” and continues to feature further through the story. Help your learner to expand their descriptive powers by focussing on colours. See also, Liz Niven’s description of the “yella an reid an blue flames” of her coal fire, (pg33.)

Try choosing a picture and taking turns around the group or as a pair to pick out an element in the picture and give a single descriptive sentence for it using a colour, for example: her teeth were bright white or the car was a hot racing red. These can be listed and kept as prompts to refer to.

This task can be particularly useful also with learners who have perhaps already written a story and are looking to go over and expand their work with a little more description and detail as well as learners who are starting to write their own.

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## 7. Garden of Birds – Richard Holloway (pg74)

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- Key features: prose, visual activity potential
- Very useful for: personalisation

In Richard Holloway’s story a woman, an artist, who has left her abusive husband, is given refuge in a rectory that is home to not only the rector and his family, but also “filled with curates, students and people in trouble.” Having no money, she cannot pay rent but, feeling bad about this, asks if she could contribute in any other way. She is told:

“You’re an artist, make us a picture. Paint your rent. That’ll do.” She does and the results are far greater and long-lasting than the family could ever have imagined.

Ask your reader if a piece of art has ever had any effect on them. It could be a famous piece hanging in a gallery like the painting of “Christ of St John of the Cross” by Salvadore Dali that hangs in the Kelvingrove Gallery in Glasgow or “World Service” as mentioned in Hardeep Singh Kohli’s story of the same name on page 77. The art might be a child’s drawing or piece of sculpture from school. Ask the learner to describe the piece and give background as to how and where they came upon it and why it affects them. If possible, open it up on a screen or suggest the learner might bring it in and ask them to write about it in any way and genre they choose.

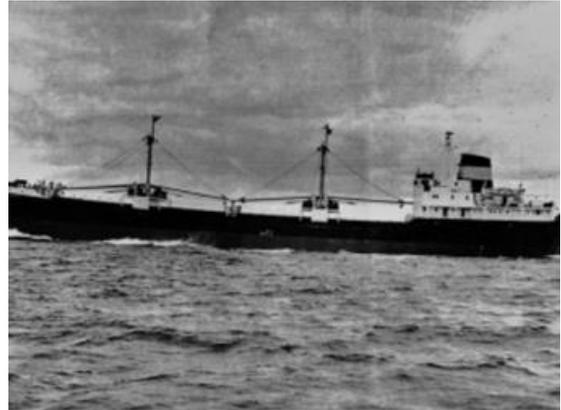
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## 8. Her Yard is #867 – Melvin Barnes (pg81)

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- Key features: prose, punctuation
- Very useful for: highlighting differences between personal and factual writing, punctuation

Factual information and research are clearly demonstrated in Melvin Barnes' story about his memories of his youthful experiences on the MV Holmside. In this story the writer moves between factual detail and personal recollection making this a good example to use if you want to highlight the difference between the two kinds of writing to your learner. Use the story to help your learner see the kinds of facts that engage a reader and also how good punctuation can add clarity and definition to a story.



Perhaps your learner might want to take an item or location that interests them and research it through the local library or internet resources and create a factual piece or perhaps they might like to delve more deeply into the history of something or someone they have long admired.

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## 9. VHS Tape: Christening 1984 – Peggy Hughes (pg84)

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- Key features: prose, visual memories
- Very useful for: alternative approaches to long pieces of writing, use of direct speech

Peggy Hughes' story of the video tape of her christening presents many an opportunity for both visual and audio literacy work. As with the story of Pocahontas (pg51), old family films or photo albums can provide a good source of inspiration for personal writing. However, another approach to try if you have access to computers is software such as Comic Life where pictures can be uploaded to form comic strips. If this option is available to you, ask the learner to bring in photos that could be used to create a comic style account of an event in their life such as a wedding.

If these facilities are not available, the same idea can be created manually by making paper storyboards still using the pictures and speech or thought bubbles made in the same comic style. A story-boarding template is also available on page 12 of the SBT transitions resource pack here: <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/treasures/resources>

An extension to this task, if desired, would be to then have the learners convert their “comic strips” into a script, allocate rolls and act it out. This allows the learners to hear if their writing “sounds” right, as well as see if it “looks” right.

Link to Comic Life:  
<http://comicliffe.com/>

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## 10. All of us are still alive – Martin Stepek (pg90)

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- Key features: prose, letter writing, historical data
- Very useful for: focus and concentration in reading, fact extraction, historical / factual writing (see also “Her Yard is #867 (pg81)

The opening letter introduces us to the writer’s grandmother whom he never knew. We learn that it had been received by his grandfather and we hear the story of what happened to the writer’s ancestors during the course of the war.



The story makes strong use of factual writing. Focus on understanding and concentration in reading by creating a timeline of the major dates mentioned in the story with your learner. By doing this they will have to move backwards and forwards within the story, extracting details that are sometimes obviously stated but at other times require working out. See how many events and how much detail they can extract from the story.

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## 11. Smells like Bat Table – Ewan Morrison (pg96)

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- Key features: prose, engaging and vibrant vocabulary, song lyrics
- Very useful for: vocabulary extension, word choice

Taking a twist on the title of an iconic Nirvana song “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” the piece tells the story of how the writer and his wife, after a long hunt for “The One”, the perfect authentic dining room table, come across it when all

hope was almost lost - and while dressed as Bat-Woman and the ghost of Kurt Cobain!

There are two suggestions for activities with this piece of work: firstly, that the learner might take a lead from the idea of a piece of furniture. Be it inherited, found or bought, every object has a history and thus its own story. Using the writer's story as a model for setting, description, vibrant language and characters, ask the learner to try and write the story again but this time ... from the perspective of the table....

The second suggestion involves song lyrics. The writer quotes a Kurt Cobain line in the penultimate paragraph of the story. Is there a song or a lyric that resonates with your learner? Ask them to share it, listen to it with them while they tell the story of why it is important to them then ask them to write what they just told you.

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## 12. An Rudas Priseil Dhomsa – Catriona Lexy Chaimbeul (pg112)

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- Key features: prose, written in Gaelic
- Very useful for: imaginative / romantic writing



Sandy loved Jessie but he betrayed her once and paid the price forever. Jessie insisted Sandy do the honourable thing and marry the woman whose child he fathered while away with his job as a sailor. Years passed and although she kept Sandy's wish bestowed upon her in the form of a tin brooch bearing the inscription "Forget Me

Not" wrapped with care in a secret place, she never forgave the man and she never found love again. Not even when he returned to be near her, not even before she died.

Read the story with your learner. Can you think of any films that could help set the scene of what Sandy and Jessie's village might look like? It is written in Gaelic, imagine the era, imagine the people, imagine the young couple in love and imagine being separated for months at a time.

The following is a good link to help your learner get into the mood of the time. There is a post office scene at 11:50sec

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-CpkFgxx2I>

Now ask your learner to write a love letter from Jessie to Sandy or vice versa the day after he has given her the brooch and returned to sea.

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## Granny Special – Alayne Barton (pg120)

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- Key features: prose, activity potential
- Very useful for: personal / imaginative writing. Poetry

Alayne Barton tells us about the relationship she had with her not “traditional sort of Granny” and of the special inheritance she received from her.

After reading the story with your group or one to one learner, bring out a box full of memorabilia. The contents might be a concert ticket, a wine cork, a hair clasp; the ticket for a bus journey or a subway or little more than a slip of paper with an address on it. Ask each learner to choose one thing and write about it. They can choose to write either from personal experience, from a memory they have or completely freely but they must write no more than 4 lines. When done, lay the stanzas out on a table and ask each learner to choose the order in which they think the poem should go. Let your learners experiment with combinations and rhythms, adding or subtracting words to lines but never exceeding the 4 line limit “playing” with the words in order to mould the verses to create one full poem about “The Treasure Chest.”

An extension to this would be to let each learner choose further objects in turn and create their own fully individualised poem.

Further reading (or listening/ watching!) that would complement the story and the activity would be Jenny Joseph’s “Warning.” The following is a link to the poet reading her work:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cACbzaniq>

