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**Learning Journal**

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**About the Ministry of Stories**

The writer Nick Hornby, Lucy Macnab and Ben Payne co-founded the Ministry of Stories in November 2010. It is a creative writing and mentoring centre for young people in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Islington. We use storytelling to inspire young people aged 8-18, in the belief that writing unleashes their imaginations and builds their confidence, self-respect and communication.

Children and young people come on school trips to Ministry of Stories for writing workshops. Local children can also sign up to come to our weekly writing workshops in their own time after school or on Saturdays. All our workshops are free of charge.

We are interested in all kinds of writing. We also think it’s important that young people have a goal to work towards with their writing. This goal could be seeing their writing published in a book or newspaper or seeing the script that they’ve written acted by actors. Writing Mentors are there at every stage to give young people the one-to-one attention that we believe makes the difference. So, as a mentor, you are at the heart of everything we do.

**And Hoxton Street Monster Supplies?**

Ah yes, the monster shop. Ministry of Stories also runs **Hoxton Street Monster Supplies**. It’s a real shop, but all products in it have been created with monsters in mind. We hope that the shop helps to spark young people’s imaginations. Sometimes the world of the shop inspires them to write stories about monsters, but sometimes they come up with completely different ideas. The shop welcomes customers from near and far and they can also buy our products through an online shop www.monstersupplies.org. All the money we raise from the shop goes back to the charity. This helps to keep our workshops free of charge to schools and local young people. There is a section further on this Handbook on how you can get involved in volunteering at Hoxton Street Monster Supplies.

**Learning Journal**

Please use this journal to reflect on your training and volunteering as a Writing Mentor at the Ministry of Stories. It will enable you to track your progress and capture what you’ve learnt as a Writing Mentor. It will also act as evidence of your time with us, should you choose to progress to a workshop leader or expert volunteer role.

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| Was there anything that surprised you about the training or anything that you had not expected? |
| What skills of yours do you expect to be developing further during your role as a Writing Mentor? |
| What new skills do you expect to be learning? |
| Is there anything that you feel you may need further training for in order to be a successful Writing Mentor? |
| Do you have any questions or worries that you would like to resolve before you begin? |
| Use this space for taking notes during your training session, or for broader reflections concerning the role of the Writing Mentor. |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 1 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 2 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 3 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 4 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 5 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |
| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 6 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop?For example, did you: Ask open questions/praise frequently/listen carefully to young writers/help to refocus a child/adapt a task to suit the child/deal with a difficult situation positively/contribute towards a young writer building their confidence up… |
| What were the challenges of this workshop?For example, did you find that a child was distracted/felt negatively about a task/found a task difficult/bickered with other children/didn’t want to share their work with you… | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |

Developing Further as a Writing Mentor

Once you have completed your first 6 sessions as a Writing Mentor you might like to think towards the future and your progression. There is not obligation to take on more responsibility as a volunteer; Writing Mentors are incredibly valuable and without them workshops at the Ministry of Stories would not be possible. However, if you would like to explore the possibility of becoming a workshop leader or expert volunteer, you are required to complete ten sessions as a Writing Mentor and show us written reflection on these workshops.

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| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 7 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop? |
| What were the challenges of this workshop? | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |

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| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 8 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop? |
| What were the challenges of this workshop? | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |

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| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 9 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop? |
| What were the challenges of this workshop? | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |

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| Workshop Reflections | Workshop 10 |
| Date: Workshop type: |
| What were your achievements during this workshop? |
| What were the challenges of this workshop? | What steps did you take to meet these challenges? |
| What steps, if any, do you need to take before your next workshop? |

Great! You have completed your first ten workshops as a Writing Mentor for the Ministry of Stories. If you would like to pursue becoming a workshop leader or expert volunteer, book yourself a chat with the workshop leader at your next session. Make sure you bring your learning journal to show them and have a think in advance about what role might suit your skills best.