

A writing activity from

# Grimm & Co



## Word Play: Getting Surreal

**You will need:** paper (or a notebook or journal) and something to write with

Surrealism was a cultural movement that began in Europe at the end of the 1910s. It includes lots of different art forms: painting, sculpture, dance, music, literature, cinema, and much more!

One of the defining features of surrealism is that it's a bit, well... random. Often surrealist art features **strange juxtapositions** (that means unusual things being put together or placed next to each other); **non sequiters** (which is when one thing doesn't seem to follow on from another); and the **element of surprise**. Surreal art is therefore often full of strange, unexpected, and sometimes funny things!

**Step one:** Surrealist writers often created stories and poems using random words they found around the place. Inspired by this, you're going to create your own *word collage*, using words and phrases you will find around your home and neighbourhood. These need to be existing words and phrases, rather than ones you invent yourself! You might find words in books, magazines and newspapers, on street signs, in recipes, on the backs of tins of beans or cereal boxes... All over the place!

**Step two:** All the words and phrases you find for your word collage need to be linked to the idea of "Where I'm From". "Where I'm From" is quite a broad topic. It could mean something about the place you live, or where you were born or grew up. It could be to do with where your ancestors are from. It could be about the things you like and dislike. It

could be about your personality, the things you believe, the emotions you feel, and all the things that make you “you”. Because we’re being surreal, the phrases and words that you find might be linked to the idea of “Where I’m From” in very unexpected, weird, or random ways!

**Step three:** Search around your home and/or neighbourhood, and find **at least ten words and phrases** that are somehow related (however randomly!) to the idea of “Where I’m From”. When you go on your word scavenger hunt you should bring a notebook and pen or pencil with you, so you can jot down all the phrases you find.

**Step four:** Once you finish your scavenger hunt, you should have a list of ten phrases or words that say something (however randomly!) about “Where I’m From”. You’ve now created a poem! This poem is what’s known as a **found poem**, which means you’ve created it from words you’ve found around the place, rather than from words you’ve made up.

If you like, you could now rearrange your phrases so they ‘flow’ differently. You might also like to add to or edit your phrases so that they mean something a little different, or sound more ‘poetic’ or lyrical. It’s up to you! Or you could leave your list of ten phrases as it is; it’s still a surrealist found poem!

**Step five:** Share your writing with us!

If you’re a member of one of our out-of-school writing groups, you should upload your work to your Seesaw journal.

If you’re accessing this activity independently, or through your school, we’d still love to share in the amazing writing you’ve created! You can post your work on social media, tagging us @GrimmAndCo, or email your work to [grimmapothecary@gmail.com](mailto:grimmapothecary@gmail.com). Happy writing!