

## GENRE WRITING

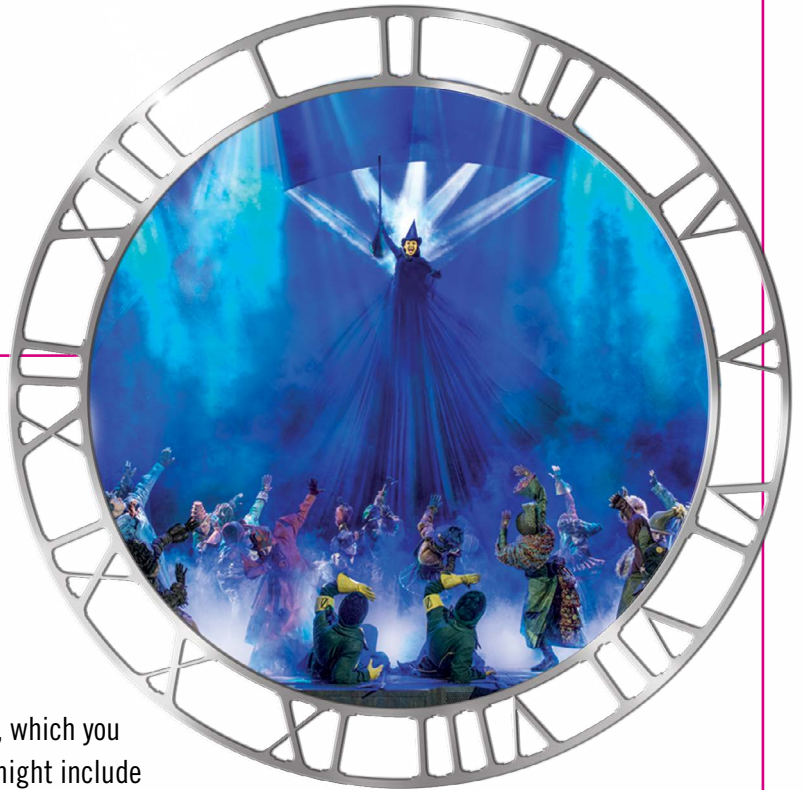
Not sure what kind of story you want to write? These classroom exercises will support students to explore genre writing, and help them to understand the kinds of stories they are interested in writing.

### WHAT IS A GENRE?

A genre is a category of stories which share similar **features**. When Gregory Maguire decided to write *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West\**, the novel on which the musical is based, he chose to explore further the land of Oz, creating a story which fits into the fantasy genre.

Students should brainstorm different types of genre, which you should note down on the board. Examples of genre might include HORROR, ROMANCE, SCI-FI, CRIME, ACTION, FANTASY, ADVENTURE...

**Top Tip!** If pupils are stuck for an idea, try prompting them with film or book titles and explore what genre each could be.



### FEATURES OF A GENRE?

For the purpose of this exercise, the **features** of a genre are like the **ingredients** which make up the story. Pieces of writing within the same genre often share the same features.

Using *Wicked* as an example, as a class, explore the features of the **fantasy** genre by asking the following questions:

- Where is the play set? Is that a world which could exist in reality?
- Do any of the characters have magical powers?
- Are there struggles between goodness and wickedness in the play?
- Are there creatures in the story which don't exist in real life, or who have powers which they don't have in real life?

If the answers to these questions is YES then *Wicked* is most likely a piece of **fantasy** writing.

Given these characteristics, can pupils think of any other examples of fantasy literature or films?

## GENRE BRAINSTORM

Students should work in groups for this exercise, choosing 1 genre to work on.

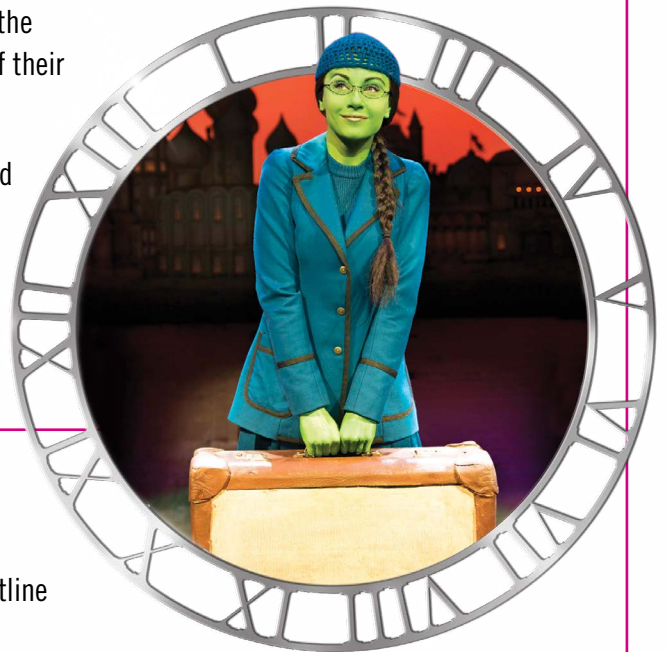
Together they should think about the features of this genre, what are the common ingredients of this topic? It might be useful to use the following headings to help define their topics:

- Where are the stories generally set?
- What kind of characters feature?
- What sort of language might be used? Pupils could give examples of the kinds of words you might find in their chosen genre.
- How does the audience feel as they are reading it?

Still working in their groups, ask pupils to rewrite and conclude the following passage describing a scene from *Wicked* in the style of their genre. They can change or add as many words as they want to!

Elphaba arrived at university with her sister. Their father dropped them off at the gate, and gave Elphaba's sister a present. They were greeted by the headteacher, who seemed to dislike Elphaba immediately, because...

Share back their responses.



## GENRE WRITING

Students should now choose a genre to write a story within.

Working in pairs or individually students should plan out the plotline in terms of Beginning – Middle – End.

Once they have planned out their story, they should create the blurb for their story. You may want to share some examples of these from other book jackets. How do the blurbs help to indicate the genre of the story? Encourage them to use the same sort of language which may be used in the story itself.

Now, it is time for the students to write their stories!

**Top Tip!** Remember, many stories sit within 2 genres, for example a historical romance / a crime set in space / a detective fantasy story.

Once the students have completed their stories, remember you can enter these to the Wicked Young Writer Awards online or via post for the chance to win some amazing prizes for your students and your school!

[www.wickedyoungwriterawards.com](http://www.wickedyoungwriterawards.com)

\*Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West is a book appropriate for readers aged 16+