

26 Avoiding Common Mistakes

Once you have the Boomtastics, you have, for life, the ten techniques that will give your children's writing flair, style and power.

Isn't it great? They love finding them, you love demonstrating them, and actually, their writing has improved enormously. However, beware. There are two common pitfalls that children can slip into when working with the Boomtastics.

Number one: over use. They find one of the Booms that they think, "Wow! I'm really good at simile, I'm going to really go for it", and they use it a little bit too much.

We need children to be able to dance the ten and the repertoire of all the Boomtastics beautifully, choosing them deliberately, carefully and precisely as a writer. Just because you're good at simile, don't over-rinse it. Be careful. As a teacher we need to watch out for moments when children are just leaning on one of these lenses.

Another trap that children can fall into is cliché. Actually, they might like simile, and they might use in their writing "as white as snow". This is a moment when we need to say, "Ridiculously rubbish! Actually forget it, ditch it, dump it, put it in the bin! As white as snow? It's too obvious... you can do better than that." As white as a bleached shirt... thinking about making links and connections that are different, more interesting, more poetic.

We can really help children make these choices. And let's not go for the obvious. Let's help them, through reading, through demonstration, through our responses, know how they can be a better, more skilled writer.