

The  
Economist

EDUCATIONAL  
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THE ORWELL  
FOUNDATION

Creative conversations  
about the news:

# STARTING SMALL

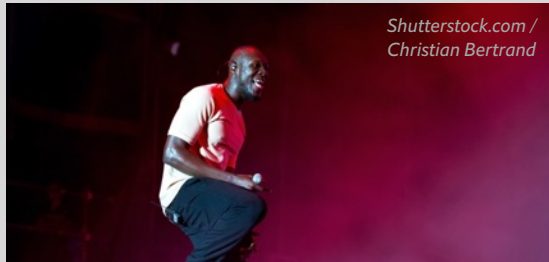
Child-led learning resource



# ABOUT

Talking about the news you see and hear is important...  
but how you start the conversation is up to you.

There are lots of creative ways to share your opinions about news stories.  
FOR EXAMPLE:



Stormzy  
writes songs



Banksy creates  
artwork



Darshan Singh Bhuller  
choreographs dance  
performances



George Orwell wrote  
books and articles

In this resource, you will activate your creativity and learn how to start a conversation about the news by following in George Orwell's footsteps.

**Are you ready? Let's go!**

Creative people can  
come up with ideas about  
what might be going on and  
what could be done about it.



# WHO WAS GEORGE ORWELL?

George Orwell was an author whose books, such as *Animal Farm*, are famous for starting conversations about the news. He wanted to get people thinking and talking:

“When I sit down to write a book, I do not say to myself, ‘**I am going to produce a work of art**’. I write it because there is some lie that I want to expose, some fact to which I want to draw attention, and my initial concern is to get a hearing.”

Orwell was inspired by news stories that mattered to him. He creatively weaved these stories with his own ideas to form his novels. For more information about George Orwell and his work, [look here](#).

## NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

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This is to certify that  
Mr. GEORGE ORWELL  
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is a member of the T. & P.  
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## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

- What does a journalist do?
- What does an author do?
- Was Orwell an author, a journalist or both? Why?



# NEWS CONCEPTS

George Orwell's books still inspire conversations about the news, even though they were written in the 1900s. But how?

Orwell's work related to key news concepts that are still found in news stories today:



**POWER**



**SCARCITY**



**JUSTICE**

Let's look at how Orwell combined his creativity with these to get people talking...



**Fancy something great to read?**

Look [here](#) for some recommendations!

# NEWS CONCEPTS

## POWER

Power is the ability of an individual or group to influence others or control their actions.

Some people have more power than others.

There are many different reasons for this.



George Orwell's great novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four (1984)* is all about power and the different ways power can be abused.

The novel takes place in a 'dystopia' - another word for a future that is frighteningly bad. The dictator 'Big Brother' and his government, 'the Party', have complete control over all aspects of society - including the news - and so they can even control what ordinary people think and do. The Party slogan was: "Who controls the past, controls the future: who controls the present controls the past."

Orwell wrote 1984 to warn about the dangers of pursuing power for its own sake.



### TWO-MINUTE CHALLENGE

List three news stories that involve power. Who has the power? Who doesn't?

# NEWS CONCEPTS

## POWER

### II PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

- Why do lots of news stories often involve power?
- In your own words, how does *1984* link to power? Does it remind you of anything in the news?
- Can you think of a different book that shows power?
- **Is there a story about power in the news that could inspire your own creative writing? Jot down some ideas!**



# NEWS CONCEPTS

## SCARCITY

Scarcity is when there isn't enough of something to meet demand.

For example, if every family in a town wants food but there is not enough for everyone, then food is scarce.



In the 1930s, George Orwell travelled to England's industrial heartlands in the north. Although the UK was (and is) one of the world's wealthiest countries, many working people at the time were experiencing great hardship.

In his book *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell described what he had seen and learnt about their lives, writing vividly about coal miners and their families.

Although he came from a comfortable background, he wanted to witness the effects of scarcity for himself.



### TWO-MINUTE CHALLENGE

List three news stories that involve scarcity. Explain why you have chosen them.

# NEWS CONCEPTS

## SCARCITY

### II PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

- Why do lots of news stories involve scarcity?
- In your own words, how does *The Road to Wigan Pier* link to scarcity? Does it remind you of anything in the news?
- Can you think of a different book that shows scarcity?
- **Is there a story about scarcity in the news that could inspire your own creative writing? Jot down some ideas!**





# NEWS CONCEPTS

## JUSTICE



Justice is doing something that makes a situation fair. For example, when someone is punished for committing a crime or given something to make up for unfair treatment.



Justice is an important concept in George Orwell's fable *Animal Farm*, first published in 1945.

A group of farmyard animals led by the wily pigs overthrow their master, the farmer Mr Jones, and set about creating a new, fair society. The animals even establish their own laws, taken from their philosophy known as 'Animalism'. When the pigs begin to act like they are above the law, the animals see that they have become no different to Mr Jones.

The story was inspired by the rule of Joseph Stalin, who was then dictator of the Soviet Union (Russia).



### TWO-MINUTE CHALLENGE

List three news stories that involve justice. How do they show fairness or unfairness?

# NEWS CONCEPTS

## JUSTICE

### II PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

- Why do lots of news stories involve justice?
- In your own words, how does *Animal Farm* link to justice? Does it remind you of anything in the news?
- Can you think of a different book that links to justice?
- **Is there a story about justice in the news that could inspire your own creative writing? Jot down some ideas!**





## OVER TO YOU

Your challenge is to create a piece of writing about something in the news which is important to you. It should spark a conversation, just like George Orwell's work.

**STEP 1: Decide on a topic**

**STEP 2: Start small**

**STEP 3: Make connections**

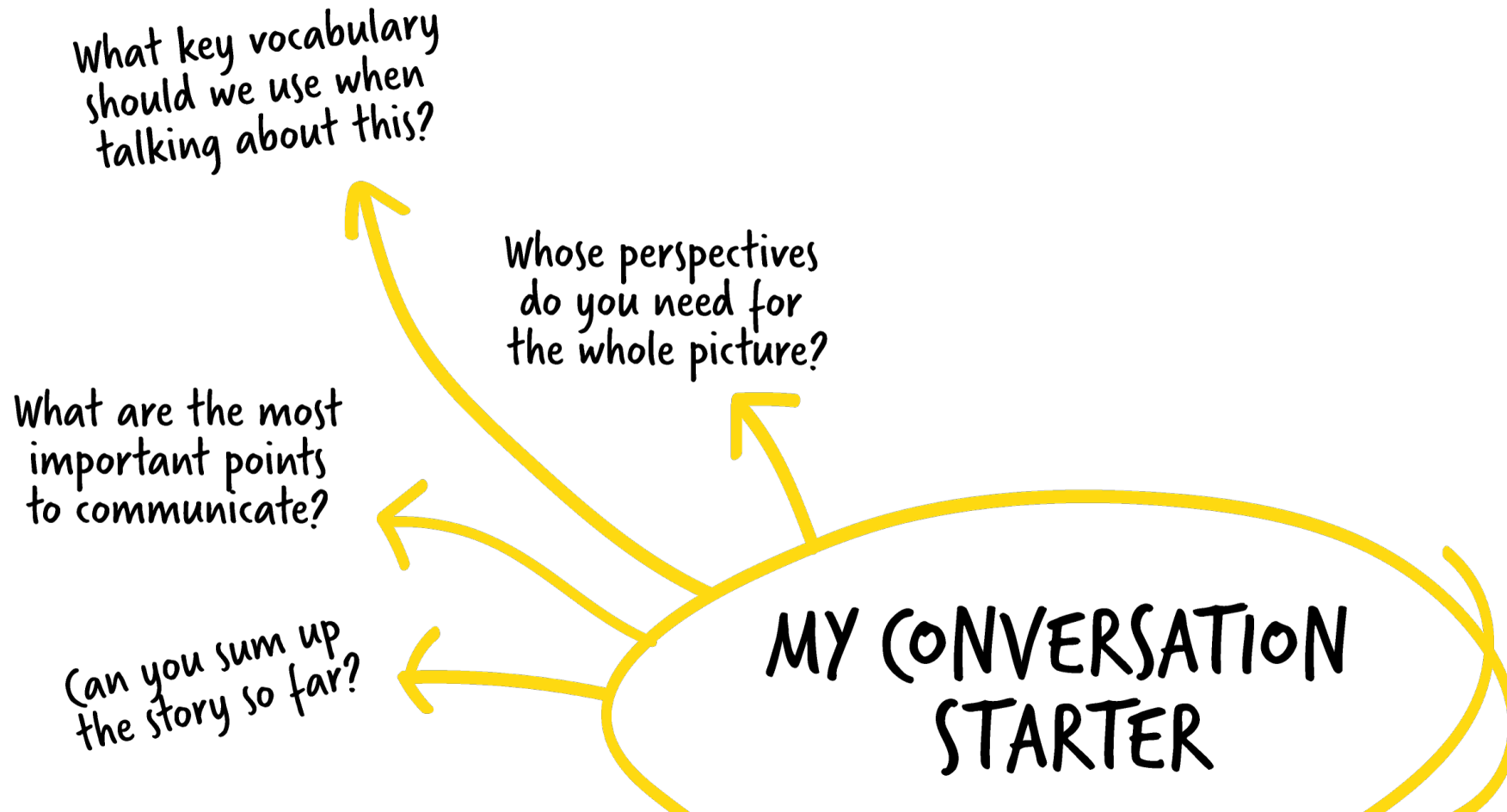
**STEP 4: Add some creativity**

**STEP 5: Put your words onto paper**

# STEP 1: DECIDE ON A TOPIC

Think of a news story that is important to you. Write the headline into the middle of a mind-map. Then follow the steps and add the answers to the questions around the outside.

Want to take the conversation further? [Download our question cards by clicking here!](#)

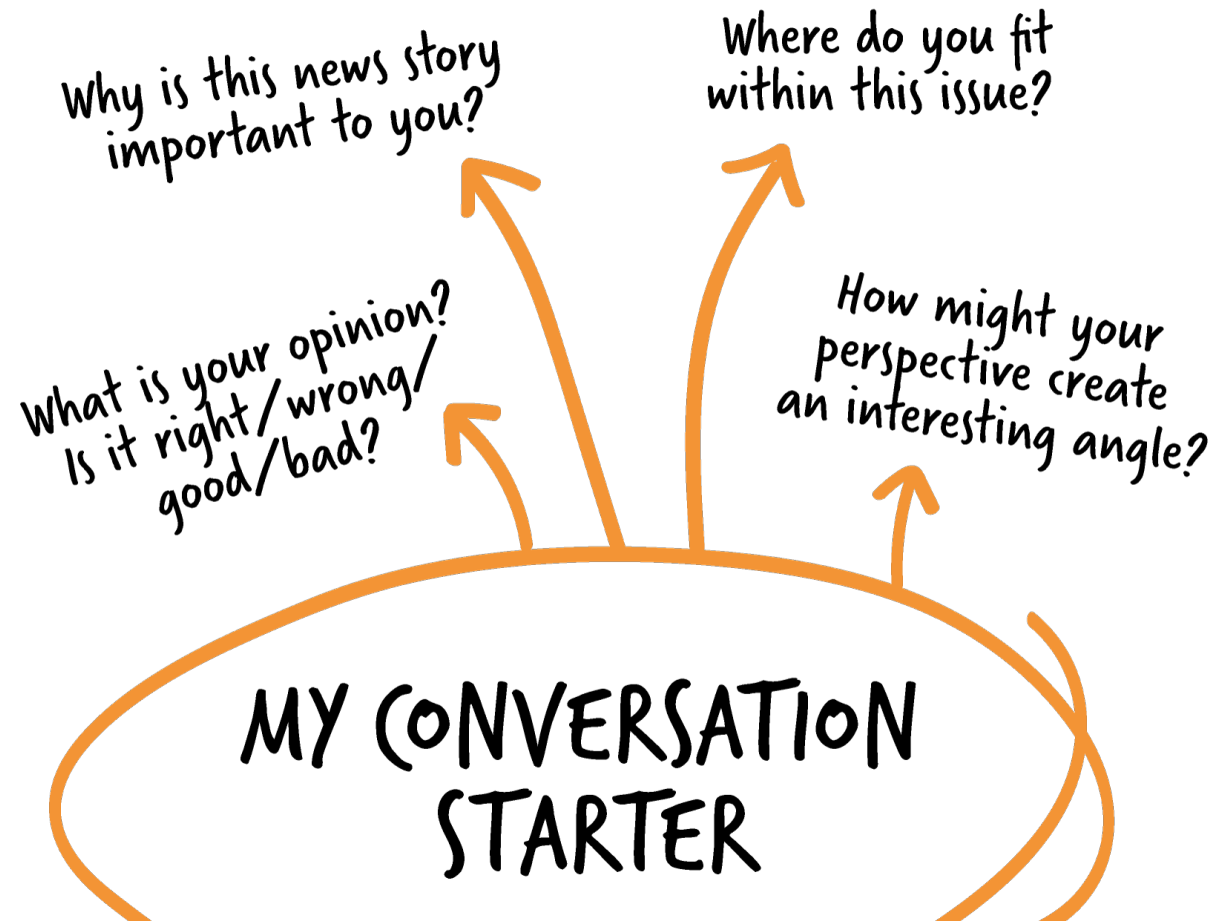


## STEP 2: START SMALL

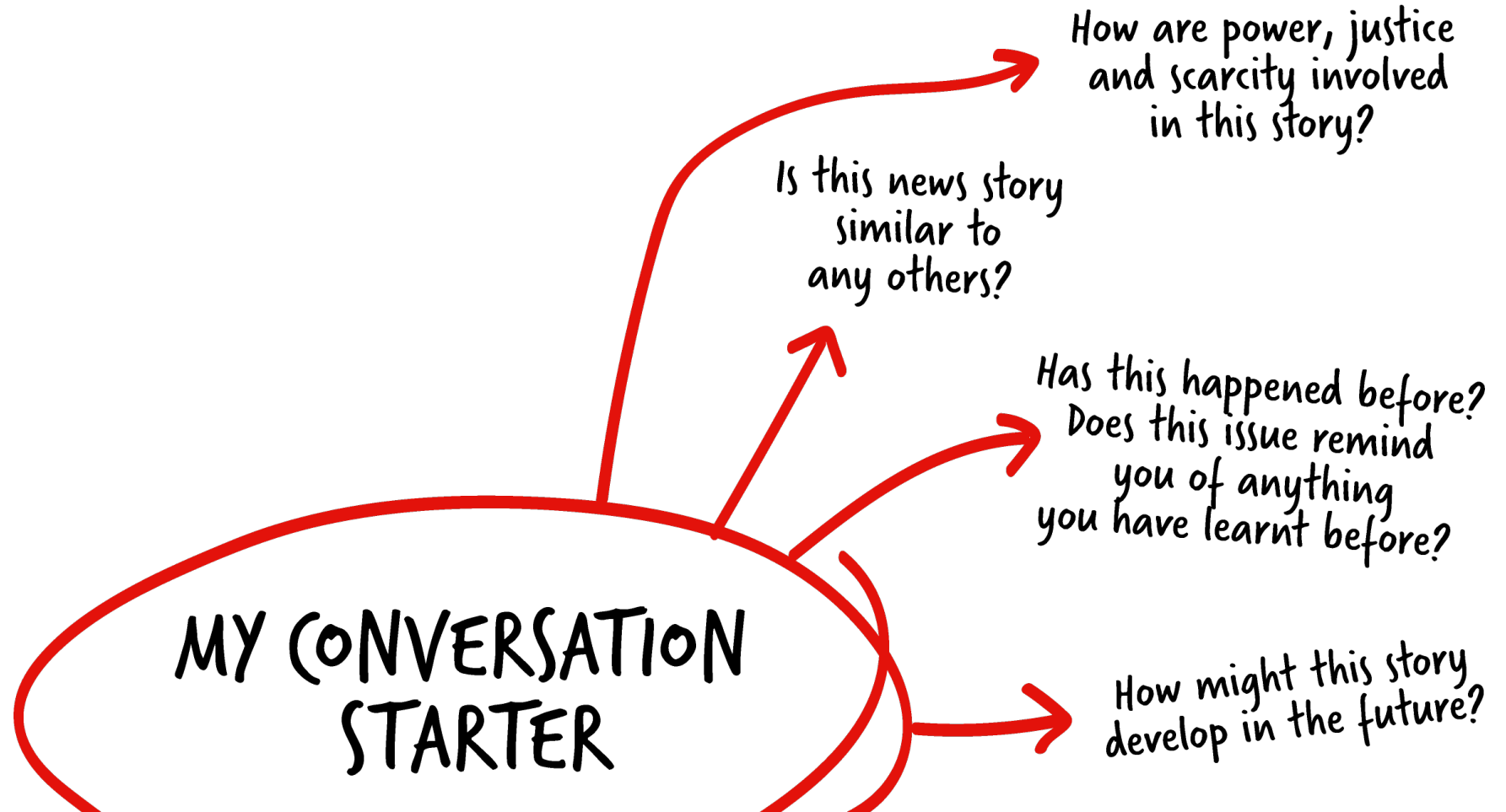
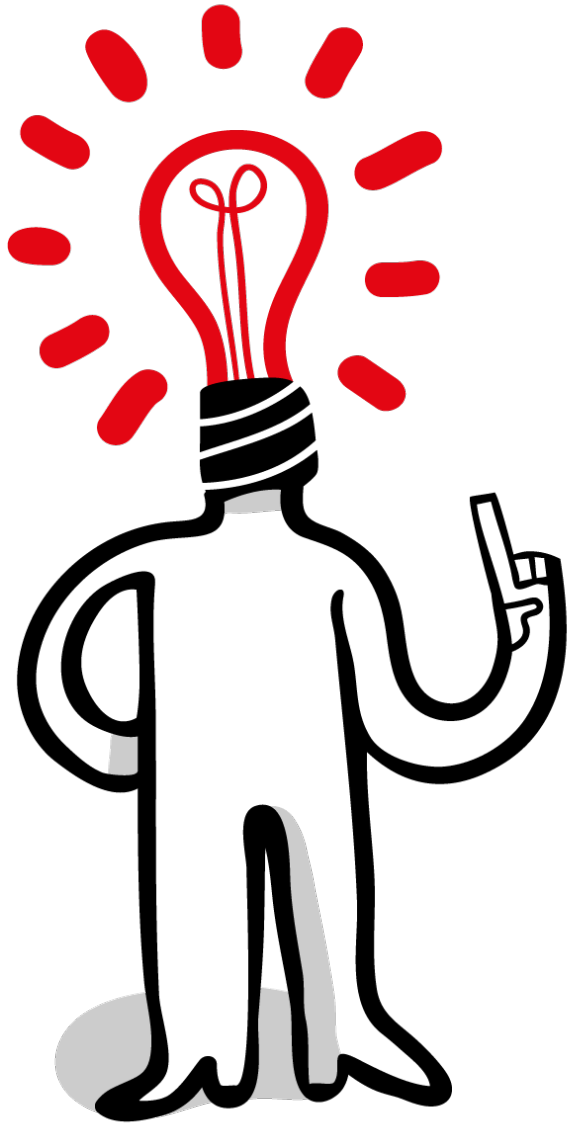


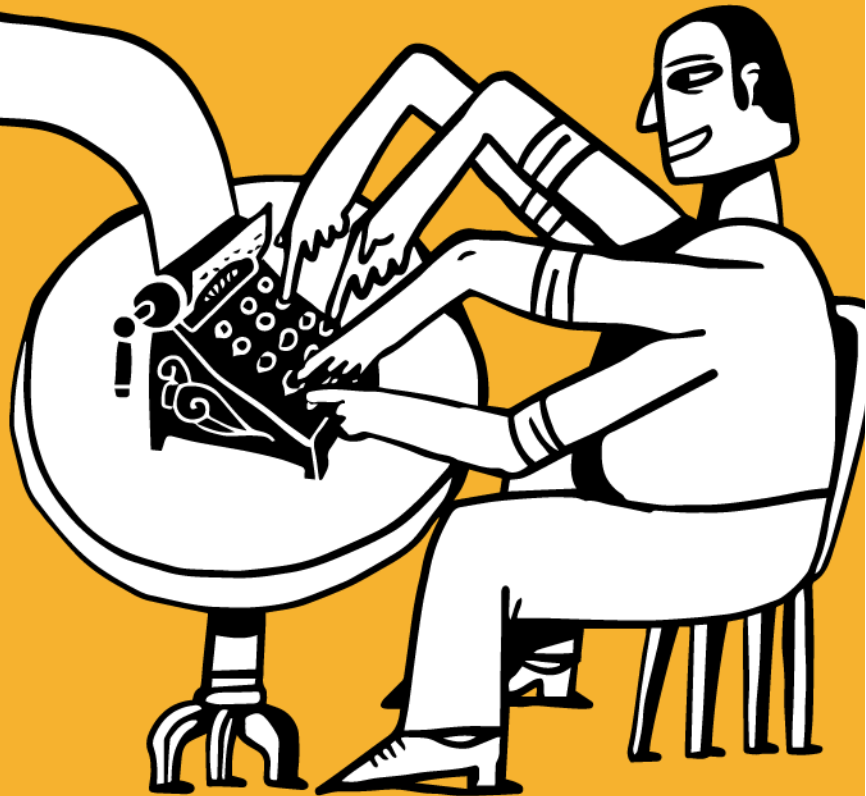
### PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Is sharing your experience of the news through writing the same as sharing your ideas on social media? Why / why not?



# STEP 3: MAKE CONNECTIONS





## STEP 4: ADD SOME CREATIVITY

- Is there an analogy that you could use to explain your story? For example, Orwell used animals taking over a farm to share what he thought about power.
- How can you include yourself in your writing?
- What could you do to hook your reader in?

## STEP 5: PUT YOUR WORDS ONTO PAPER



Choose the text type that will suit your ideas best:

**POEM**

**DIARY ENTRY**

**REPORT**

**STORY**

**SPEECH**

**SOMETHING ELSE**

Find more information about different genres and picking the best one for your idea [here](#). Then...

- Make a list of any key vocabulary you want to include
- Talk through your thoughts out loud first
- Highlight your best ideas so you don't forget them

Finally...grab a pen, find a comfortable spot and get writing!



# EXTRA CHALLENGE: Orwell Youth Prize



If you're in years 8-13 and have enjoyed completing this activity, why not enter the 2021 [Orwell Youth Prize](#)?

The theme for 2021 is '[A New Direction: Starting Small](#)' - judges want to read writing inspired by your local area. As previous Orwell Youth Prize judge Caitlin Moran wrote, "a small story tells a bigger story".

Students from across the UK are invited to write on social justice and politics in any genre. For reading lists, prompts and ideas to get you started, take a look at the Orwell Youth Prize website. Or read previous winners' work [here](#).

The final deadline for entries is May 17th 2021. But, if you submit your writing by April 12th, you will receive personalised feedback.  
**Good luck!**

