

Level 4 History - Choose your own Adventure Story

PEEL in Practice: 1300 ideas for quality teaching

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Another fantastic use of PowerPoint is the "Choose Your Own Adventure Story".

The whole idea is that students write a story with pathways. At the end of each segment of the story the reader has to choose which path to follow next. Do you want the main character to be saved from the shark or eaten? Should he find gold or fall down a mineshaft?

It is easiest if the story is mapped out in hard copy first. That way, children are able to keep track of where they are up to and where they need to go next. Paths are given using hyperlinks that take you to the chosen slide. (I find it easiest to use the "train the trainer" approach to teaching the use of hyperlinks. Teach one child who teaches the next. There's no better way of clarifying what you know than to teach it.)

It is a method of story writing that pushes students past the straight and easy. It is difficult and complicated to make it work. Students who really need extending just love it.

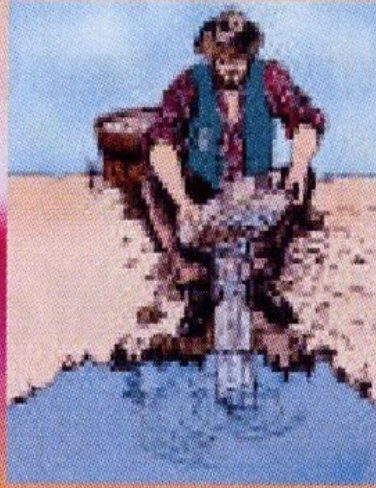
My Year 5 class has recently studied the topic of Gold. As a part of this, we were researching 'Life on the Goldfields'. In my class I have a group of children who are very capable. I decided to challenge them to create a "Choose Your Own Adventure Story" on this topic. They created a group of characters, set the scene and wrote of their fortune or misfortune on the goldfields in Ballarat in the 1850s. The challenge was that while the story was fictional, it had to be factually based. The characters had to be from a country where diggers really originated. They had to provide options at each path of the story that were all possible and also likely. They also had to blend in as much factual information as possible, including dates and places as appropriate.

These children really had to think. It is easy to read and rewrite information but far more challenging to use it in this way. Children had to make independent choices and decisions. They had to look further into the material, looking more at the "big picture". To write about how a character felt, they needed to really step into their shoes. I found that it was a great activity for this group. They worked collaboratively to create their product. They researched thoroughly and repeatedly. They browsed Internet sites and spent lots of time in the library. They really thought about it. And they were delighted with the finished product especially when their classmates read and enjoyed it.

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Page from a Choose Your Own Adventure follows:

BOB'S GOLD RUSH



A carriage for Bob!

Bob had no luck in finding a wife, but had more luck with a carriage for 30 pounds. He was soon packing his bags to travel into the Ballarat goldfields of Victoria.

Attack!!

Arrives in
Ballarat

