

Dancing in the library

When we generate writing ideas, our minds will try to reach for the nearest and easiest connections to make. Often, this can lead to stereotyped characters and predictable events. But when we trick (or coax, or *force*) our brains into making new connections, we often produce our best work – writing that surprises us, that wakes us up, that takes us to unexpected places.

The exercise that follows is designed to help you do just that. It works using high contrast – in this case, contrast of location with activity. You can use it to generate ideas for prose, poetry, drama, or any kind of writing you care to play with.

Below are twelve locations, and the activities associated with them. Using two dice (or a random number generator, or the close-your-eyes-and-point method) select one row from each column. If you end up with two items from the same row, re-roll. This is the setting of your piece, and the activity that will happen there.

Aaaand... write!

1	Doctor's surgery	1	Treating the sick
2	Place of worship	2	Praying
3	Laundrette	3	Washing laundry
4	Bakery	4	Baking
5	Theatre	5	Putting on a play
6	Greenhouse	6	Planting tomatoes
7	Boat	7	Catching fish
8	Library	8	Reading
9	Dance studio	9	Dancing
10	Boxing club	10	Boxing
11	Radio studio	11	Making a radio broadcast
12	Hairdresser's	12	Cutting hair