

## Interactive Fiction Masterclass

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<b>Dates</b>	Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 February 2020
<b>Times</b>	10.30 – 17.00
<b>Location</b>	Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre
<b>Level</b>	All levels
<b>Class size</b>	Maximum 16 participants

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### Course description

This two-day course on interactive fiction is inspired by our exhibition, *Marvellous and Mischievous: Literature's Young Rebels*. Led by digital artist, writer and British Library resident Rob Sherman, this adult course will help you create your own interactive digital narrative for children.

You will learn both timeless lessons from the canon of children's literature and the latest programming and game design techniques, bringing them together to produce a work of your own that both adults and children will love.

Like other forms before it, digital technology has created new means to tell stories. From choose-your-own-adventure books to the latest videogames, the playful and interactive nature of these narratives are well-suited to a child's love of exploration and adventure; allowing them to play the heroine or the rebel, and find their own way through the fantastical lands in which these stories take place.

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### Saturday

The course will begin by exploring our own early relationships with storytelling, and the sharing of favourite examples from our childhoods. Through writing exercises and a complimentary visit to the Library's exhibition, *Marvellous and Mischievous: Literature's Young Rebels*, we will define some of the tenets of children's literature. Understanding why and how children's literature is so uniquely evocative will provide the seeds for our own narratives, which we will work on throughout the weekend.

After lunch, we will begin to combine some of these tenets with the opportunities provided by digital technology. We will look at games, interactive fiction and other digital art forms, and consider how they complement and are informed by the timeless lessons of the children's canon. By the end of the day you will already have the beginnings of your own interactive narrative.

### Sunday

On Sunday we will develop your work into a more complete piece. We will explore more advanced programming techniques, colour, video and images to engage young audiences. These sessions will

also involve one-on-one expert tuition and critique, identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses of your piece and helping you to improve your practice.

The course will end with refreshments and a chance to play through each other's work, swap tips and insights, and think about how to build on what you have learnt this weekend. If you are in need of particularly harsh critics, you are welcome to invite your own children or grandchildren (who must be accompanied by a parent or guardian) for the final hour of the day (4pm – 5pm).

Finally, you will have the opportunity to publish your work online, so that any child around the world will be able to experience your work for themselves.

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### **Tutor**

This course is led by **Rob Sherman**, a writer, games designer and digital artist. Rob creates interactive stories, games, interactive installations and exhibitions, and has worked with the Woodland Trust, Random House UK, the National Justice Museum and the National Museum of Wales.

He is a Visiting Lecturer in Digital Narrative at the Royal College of Art, a British Library Digital Research Fellow, and frequently teaches children (big and small alike) the power of storytelling and programming through courses and workshops, such as this one.

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### **Required Reading**

The only reading to do before the workshop is to reacquaint yourself with a favourite book from your childhood. If you can, bring a copy with you on Saturday.

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### **Required Equipment**

You need to bring a laptop or tablet device that can connect to the Internet wirelessly. Everything else will be provided.

Please let us know if you would like to borrow a laptop by emailing [adultlearning@bl.uk](mailto:adultlearning@bl.uk)

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### **Previous skills, knowledge or experience**

Participants are only required to enjoy writing creatively and have basic computer literacy, including using the Internet through a browser. All other skills will be taught during the course. A willingness to participate in group discussion, to tell stories, and to learn exciting new digital skills, will help you get the most from this course.

### **Facilities and refreshments**

Please note that the Learning Centre will open to participants 15 minutes before the stated course start time. Tea and coffee will be served at the beginning of each day. Participants will need to make their own arrangements for lunch.

On Sunday please meet at Gate 5 on Midland Road at 10.15 to be escorted in the Library. Further instructions about Sunday entry will be provided on Saturday.

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