

The Stuart Hall Archives: Who and What Are Behind the Writing?

This is a resource for year 5-6 children that looks into Stuart Hall's archive. It explores what an archive is and why it is important that such a tool exists. It also looks at Stuart Hall himself and his interest in British culture and what his work can reveal about the process of writing.



Stuart Hall (1932-2014) was a Jamaican-British writer and academic best known for his work around culture and the arts which includes things like writing, music, and media. A lot of Stuart Hall's work and documents from his life have been collected to form an archive that is available at the University of Birmingham.

Key Words

1. Drafting = The first version of something (for example a form of writing) before it undergoes editing
2. Archives = A collection of historical documents or records that provides information about a place, an institution, a person or group of people
3. References = Where you have sourced information e.g. a book or article
4. Diaspora = A population that is spread across regions and is separate from its geographic place of origin e.g. Africa and its diaspora (Africa is the place of origin)
5. Co-written = Something that is written with another person or people
6. Popular culture = Things such as art and media that is popular among a group of people e.g. television, literature, paintings, video games
7. Plagiarism = Presenting work or ideas that are not your own, without the knowledge and permission of the original author / person

Through a sample of pictures from the **archive**, I want to show the process behind writing and what it involves. The archive is a key tool in allowing us to do this, as it gives insight into how authors write. It lets us in behind the curtain.

Stuart Hall's interest in culture and how it is produced and circulated makes him a perfect example to see all the steps that go into producing a final piece of work. As you read through the process have a think about how this process is the same or different from other forms of work e.g. music or a television programme.

Brainstorming

Stuart Hall's planning

As you can see from the image the bullet points and marginal notes, shows how writing takes a lot of planning and brainstorming before anything can be written, even if this later appears illegible to others!

When was the last time you made a detailed plan before writing? How did it affect your writing?

Sharing Ideas

Letters sent to Stuart Hall about his writing for 'People and Politics'.

This letter highlights how planning can be very long and difficult. In this letter Hall shares his concerns that 'it will have to be sorted out a great deal before it can be written'. It also shows how sharing thoughts can be helpful in developing ideas.

Can you think of some advice you took after sharing initial ideas?

Research

A list of references from Hall's work on Africa and its **Diaspora**

Whilst appearing at the end of a piece of work, this list of **references** show the extent of research that happens before a first draft can be written.

Can you name some places you may look for information before writing? e.g. newspaper articles

Drafting

Draft of Hall's paper on Africa and its Diaspora

Think about a time you have edited your work after writing it. How did you change it?

Hall's draft paper is key in showing how writing is a process. As you can see from the image, large sections have been removed, added too and improved.

Feedback

Letters sent to Stuart Hall about his writing for 'People and Politics'.

These envelopes do not reveal what Hall is writing about, but it does show how writing is not just an individual task, but involves speaking to different people. This could be when something is **co-written**, written for someone else like a magazine or paper, or getting feedback from peers.

Can you think of any examples where this might become an issue e.g. plagiarism?

Further work

A letter asking Hall if he would like to write a piece of work in the BBC journal 'The Listener'

This letter highlights how the writing process goes beyond one finished product. It can be part of a bigger picture in the sense that a writer becomes known for their writing style or topics instead of one piece of work.

Is there a specific author you admire? What do you like about them?

GETTING PUBLISHED

Stuart Hall's archives are a key resource in highlighting how there is much more to writing than just the final piece of work. But it leads to the question of why should we be interested in Stuart Hall?

This becomes clear when you look at how extensive the archive is and the range of material in it. Not only does it contain his own pieces of work, but his engagement with **popular culture**, specifically black culture at the time. This is very important, as Stuart Hall was a part of the Windrush generation of those who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1973. As you can see from the collage below, Hall was inspired and dedicated his work to people with black and asian origins. What is important to notice is that it wasn't only other scholars and authors that inspired his work, but he gained inspiration from more unconventional sources like artists and singers. Ultimately it highlights Hall's concerns with tracing the space black culture occupied within Britain, the impact it had and how it affected people's lives. In this sense the archive again is a key tool in allowing us to find out not only about Hall as an individual but wider society and influences. For example I was able to create the collage below by looking through the archive and seeing where Hall had written notes about other people's work and referenced them within his own work.



So, if you had to create a collage of people that inspire you and influence what you like to write about, what would it look like? What sort of people would be there? How do they inspire you? Is there a common theme like Stuart Hall's?

Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham, US121 Box 19