



Historical Association  
The voice for history

# The Historical Association Historical Fiction Prize

This poster includes an extract from one of the winners of our The Historical Association Historical Fiction Prize. Esther Kerr has written a story called 'Save the Books' detailing the effects on a bombing raid in World War II. The rest of her story and the other winning stories can be found here:

[www.history.org.uk/go/HistoricalFiction2019](http://www.history.org.uk/go/HistoricalFiction2019)

The association plans to run this competition in future years. Details are likely to be published in December. Before starting, it can be useful if children read some good historical fiction first.



Use a specific event, period or individual as a focus. It is often helpful if it is linked to a topic or period that the class are studying. The examples used, however, show that it is not always essential to use popular teaching topics. Be careful to ensure that the topic is age appropriate. A visit such as to a museum or an historic building can help create ideas.



It is often better if the chosen theme reflects some big themes such as loss and celebration, life and death, winning and losing, kindness and cruelty or fighting injustice.



Use historical description, terminology and vocabulary to build up the sense of period hopefully bringing a three dimensional feel for the topic – through describing the setting, colours, smells, sounds, noises, food and so on.



Why not look for a more unusual setting rather than opting for World War II or the Tudors. Could you make an ancient civilisation come to life?



Remember the techniques of good story-writing – building a strong central character, creating empathy with the reader, using descriptive adjectives. One's aim should be for the reader always to want to know what happens next.



Humour is often useful, as is adding dilemmas, different viewpoints or tension. It can all help add colour.