INFO SHEET:
Using 'Where Do Stories Come From?' with Students (ages 16+)

'Where Do Stories Come From?' is an interactive web-based tool developed by the University of East Anglia (UEA) and created with the award-winning author Tash Aw. Using immersive technology and archival material, get students thinking about the ways a published writer constructs characters and have them participate in writing their own.
It works as either a standalone experience via the website or can be used as an exercise within a creative writing or IT lesson.

Where to go:
 Visit https://wheredostoriescomefrom.net/ when you're ready to start.

Overview:
 Tash Aw leads you through five sections of his O. Henry Prize (2013) selected short story, 'Sail'. At the end of each section, he asks you to write your own response or direction into a box on the web page, prompted by a question. It follows the character of Yanzu, who lives in Hong Kong and dreams of buying an expensive yacht. You're invited to question his motives and contribute to his storyline as he navigates his loneliness with an affair, all while surrounded by ambient soundscapes and postcard images of the setting manipulated by machine learning.

Skills and Outcomes:
- Attention to careful characterisation
- Writing creatively to prompts and stimuli
- Adaptability to changing storylines
- Thinking about how technology interacts with literature and how it might in the future
- Sharing thoughts and responses in a group setting, reflecting on experience.

Setting Up:

Tech Scenario	Action
Computers for each student (w/ headphones)	None
Computers for each student (NO headphones)	Ensure that audio turned off on CW experience (to avoid noise distraction for students)
Computer shared by group of students	Ensure that audio turned off on CW experience, students taking it in turns to respond to prompts
Computers available BUT trouble with 'Where Do Stories Come From?' site	Check 'Troubleshooting Tech' list below OR/AND run-through prompts on slides overhead
NO computer access, projector available	Distribute printed paper copies of 'Writing Prompts' (provided in pack) to students and pens/pencils. Project either a demo of the website overhead or prompts from the slides

IDEALLY, <u>students will need</u>:

- 15-20 minutes of quiet writing time, with a 15-minute introduction to the materials and a 15-minute discussion and feedback session at the end
- Access to a computer (one per person if possible)
  - A mobile device like a tablet can be used as an alternative but some of the immersive aspects of the experience (multimedia) will be missing or pared down
- Ideally a Chrome Web browser installed (or any updated browser)
- Ideally a pair of headphones for the immersive audio experience
- Access to the web and this site: https://wheredostoriescomefrom.net
- *Optional:* an email address to receive a copy of their written work and a digital artwork (their address is deleted once the responses have been moderated and sent to comply with data protection regulations)
  - They can try the experience again in their own time and submit as many times as they wish.

ALTERNATIVELY, <u>students working in groups will need:</u>

- A shared device, with audio turned off (as each device won't be synchronised to start at exactly the same time and it could get distracting)
- Each student to take it in turns to respond to the prompts
  - If they discuss each prompt as a team to reach a consensus, it will take too long; discussion can come later when we're back together.

OTHERWISE... <u>If there is no chance for computer access</u> (either individually used by students or in groups), just projector access:

- Students will follow the workshop introduction on an overhead projector as usual
- You could run a demo of the website – to encourage the students to explore it and submit in their own time when they have access to a computer
- Distribute paper copies of the writing prompts (included in this pack), which will also be shared on-screen over the projector as slides, for the students to work on individually
- After 20 minutes of writing time, regroup to discuss and feedback. Students can be encouraged to see this experience as a practice, and to take advantage of the immersive online experience in their own time to submit to the online gallery and receive their digital postcard by email.

How will the two elements work together – the workshop and the interactive creative writing tool, 'Where Do Stories Come From?'

1. The tutor will introduce the students to the creative writing experience by using the presentation slides on an overhead projector.
2. After an introduction to the interactive experience, the students will be encouraged to use their computers or tablets and a Chrome browser to enter the interactive website https://wheredostoriescomefrom.net where they are guided through the process of writing and submitting their work using on screen prompts.
3. There is some audio throughout. It can be turned off if the student doesn't have headphones to avoid distracting others and the text on-screen will work to guide them.
4. After 20 minutes or so, finished or not, they will be called back to re-engage in the group discussion session. There they will be encouraged to feedback on their experience – with warm and friendly prompts.

5. Please ask them to try it again at home and enter their writing into our online gallery and receiving a digital postcard by email.

Troubleshooting tech:

Page not loading? Maximise web browser window, or alternatively give the browser a few minutes to load the rich multimedia. If it still doesn't work, check you are using an up-to-date version of the web browser. Ideally, that's Google Chrome (version 87 and above), but also can be accessed on Safari (13 and above), Firefox (86 and above), Edge (89 and above). Devices used should be on systems Windows 10+ or MacOS 13+.

Postcards blocking the screen? Click and drag the postcards to rearrange them so that they gather around the white page. If you find them distracting rather than helpful, they can be silenced or closed using the buttons on their corners.

Web page looking a little different? If you're using the mobile version, the web page will be presented differently to support the features. Don't worry, you'll still be able to access all the writing parts just the same.

Can't get to the next page after the introductory narration? With your cursor on the white page at the centre of the website, scroll down to the bottom and click on the black arrow. This will take you to the next part.

If all else fails, use the on-screen prompts and those in the pack as printed pages.

Additional Questions for Discussion:

→ 'Were the prompts Tash gave you helpful? Sometimes it can be freeing to have some constraints or directions to your writing.'
→ 'Did you find yourself responding to the sounds, or images, as well as Tash's story?'
→ 'Do you notice a difference between writing onto a computer, rather than by hand? If it's new to you – how did this change or affect your writing, if at all?'
→ 'What did you think of the characters? Were they a good starting point for your writing? Were they different to characters that you would have created if you'd had no prompts?'
→ 'Were there any elements of this experience that you might include in your writing practice?'

Useful links:

Launch the writing experience:
https://www.wheredostoriescomefrom.net/

About 'Where Do Stories Come From?':
https://futureandform.net/works/where-do-stories-come-from/

View the gallery of written responses:
https://gallery.wheredostoriescomefrom.net/

Submit feedback:
http://uk.culturecounts.cc/s/6toyeC/