



SESSION 16 - TEACHING NOTES - Equipment for a journey

Thursday 4th March 2020 9.30 – 10.30 am

It would be great for the forthcoming narrative sessions if you could read Vashti Hardy's book Brightstorm to the class or/then Cogheart by Peter Bunzl.

Creative Game

As usual, the show begins with a game for children to play. Make sure that they have their notebooks and pencils ready and listen carefully. The game does NOT involve using the padlet. Children at home either play with a sibling or parent or write ideas rapidly in their notebooks.

Today's Game – generating a list of ideas

This session prepares us for the final four sessions which are all built around creating a story in which the children are crew members on a skyship. From next week, we will write an extended story with a new section added each session. Our previous work on dragons and unicorns may well come in handy!

The challenge in the initial game is to think of items that might be useful to take in your rucksack if you were embarking on an adventure plus a reason why the chosen item would be handy. The simplest method is just to invent ideas.

However, you could try inventing an alphabet of useful things to take on an adventure plus a reason (causal language) as to why it would be useful. If the children cannot think of an idea for a letter, they can say 'pass' and move on, returning at the end, e.g.

A - axe for cutting trees down

B - pass

E - electronic SAT nav so that you know where you are and can plan your route

F -

G -

This could be played solo, in pairs or as a class together with the teacher scribing. The children will be given a set time limit to complete their list of imaginative ideas. David and Pie will model the game first bouncing ideas back and forth. **If it helps, supply children with an alphabet grid for them to fill in, if you want them to play the more challenging version.**

The Objective – to generate rapidly a list of creative ideas, listing items for a journey plus a reason + reinforcement of alphabetical order.

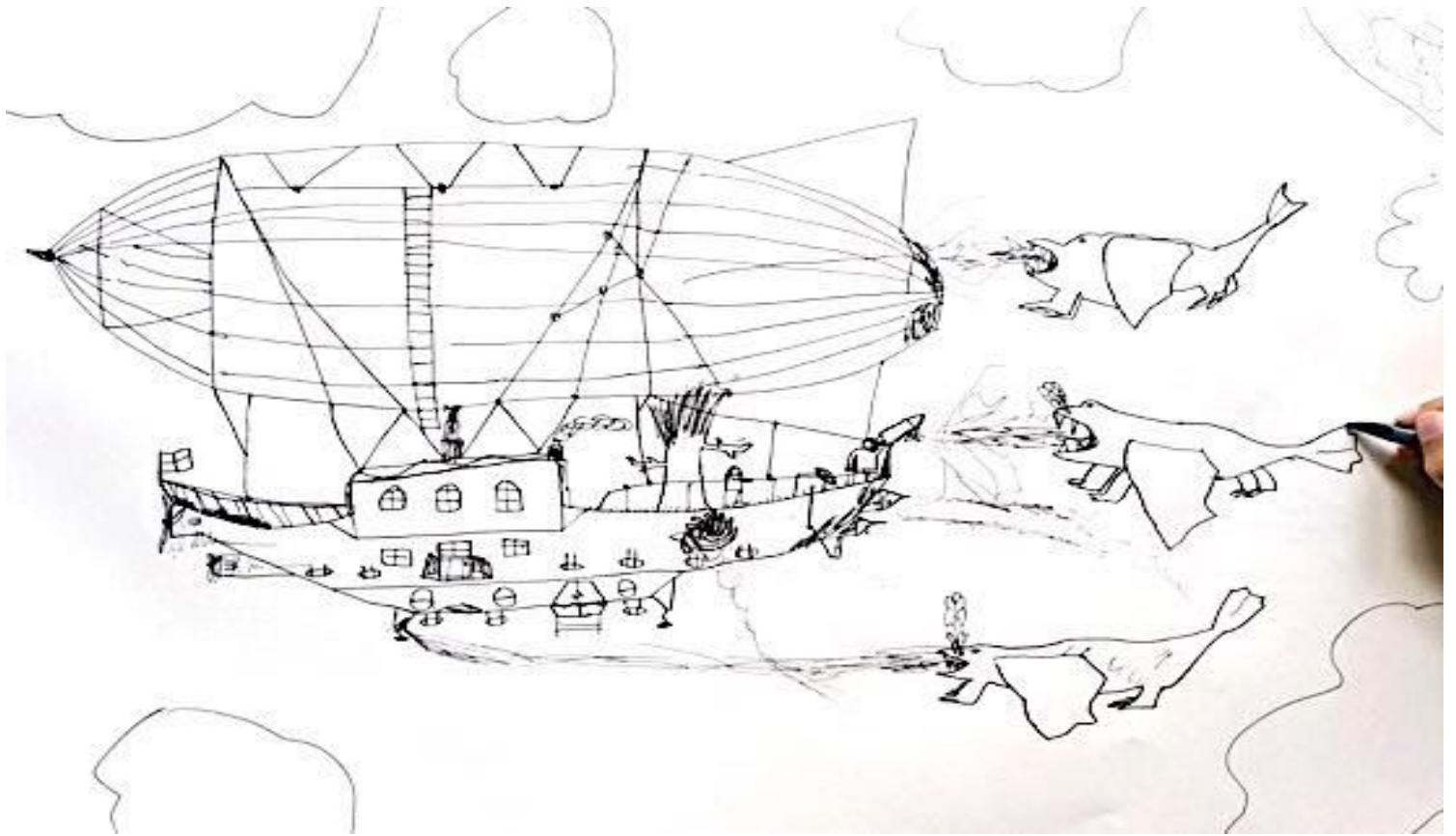
Children's Audio – encourage children to listen carefully to the reading as it was chosen because it was well written but also because it was read aloud effectively. Later on, get the class to discuss why they think the reading was chosen.

The Objective – to listen attentively, enjoy and reflect on what makes effective writing and performance.

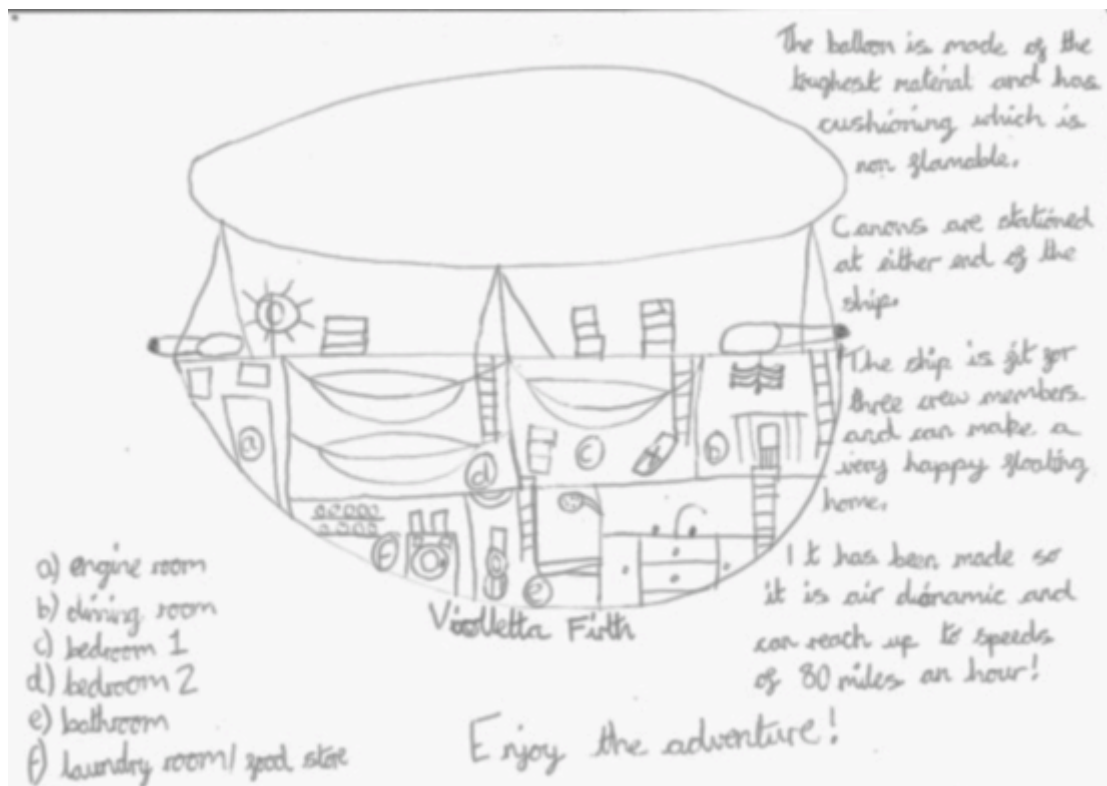
Gallery Challenge – the children have been chosen to travel in a skyship on an adventure. This week's art challenge is to draw, paint or make a skyship. Resources and ideas can be found on Vashti Hardy's website:

<https://www.vashtihardy.com/bookresources>

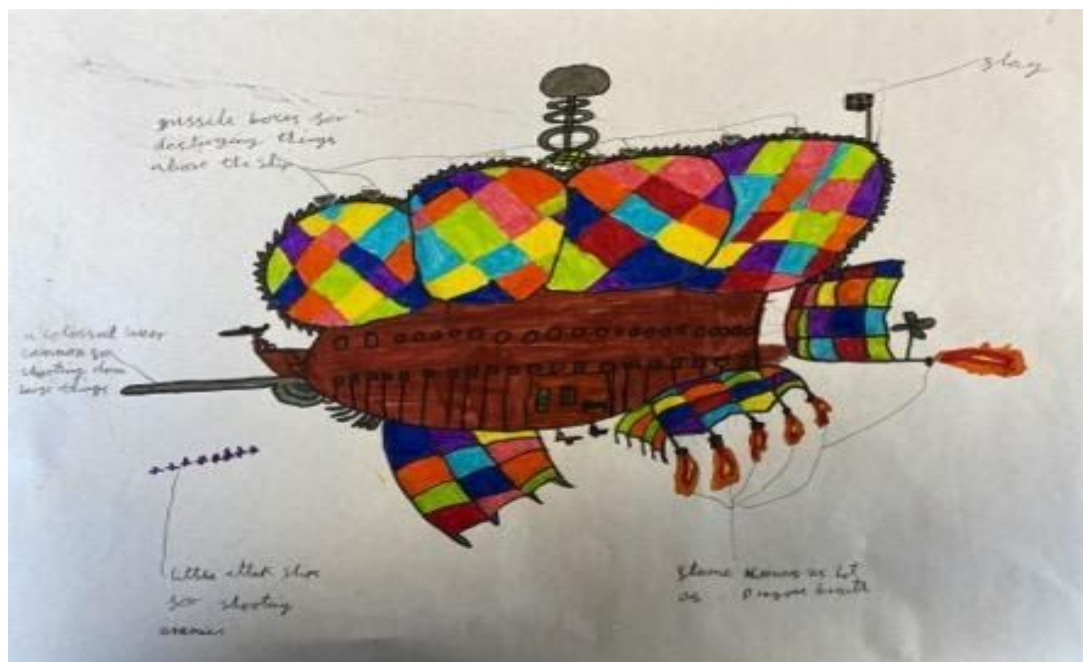
Below are examples posted on the afternoon group's gallery. First, this is a picture by Arlo, 8 years old, of a Skyship being attacked by sky dragons.



A good example of a labeled skyship drawing by Georgia.



Labeled and coloured carefully with an eye for a bold pattern by Ronnie.



A wonderful painting by George:



A model skyship by George:



Padlet – ‘Answering questions’

The challenge is to extend your ideas and make them very creative. What would you need to take with you in your rucksack or travel pack? You could copy the model below into the children’s books:

I would take a wasp’s sting to startle unwary skygoblins.

I would take two leather-bound books. One titled, ‘Skyship navigation for beginners’ and the other,

'Wolves, Dragons and other Beasties - methods for their avoidance'.

I would take a purse of never-ending wishes, only to be used in an emergency.

I would take an atlas showing the ends of rainbows.

I would take a pair of twelve league boots, in case of crash landing.

I would take a fur-lined cape, the colour of rock, for keeping warm in the winter and using as camouflage if lost in mountains.

The task is for the children have a few minutes to complete one or more 'post it notes' to list what they would need on a Skyship adventure. They should be as inventive as you like but need **to explain (using causal language)** what they are taking and why.

- Remind them to extended ideas.

'I would take a magical frog'

becomes:

'I would take an emerald tree frog that can cast invisibility spells.'

- Remind them to use accurate punctuation.
- If you have a very young class or reluctant writers who lack confidence, ideas could be co-constructed in pairs or as a class and posted by the teacher.

The Objective – to begin writing extended, imaginative sentences that are correctly punctuated and that follows a set pattern, using a modal verb.

Jotcast activity – Writing an imaginative list - This activity prepares the children for the blog post that they will write. The

focus is on writing an imaginative list of possible items needed for a journey by skyship. To get everyone started, Pie will read aloud the model list poem that was written by four year 6 children (see below). There are also drawings of magical companions and a backpack. These could be stuck in their books prior to the session.

Six things found in a Dwarf's Knapsack

An invisibility cloak (made of storm-berries) to ensure that I can enter forbidden places without detection.

An eternal light, which stays alight forever, to guide me through mountain caves,
A talking magpie, that can speak all languages, which can steal from a dragon's treasure without protection.

A shadow-caster to darken bright spaces.

A goblin-net, that is made of fine steel, for trapping unwanted cave goblins.

A truth-teller, which is never wrong, so that no one can fool me with wicked lies as sharp as a nettle's sting.

Remind the children to draw on key writing techniques, e.g.

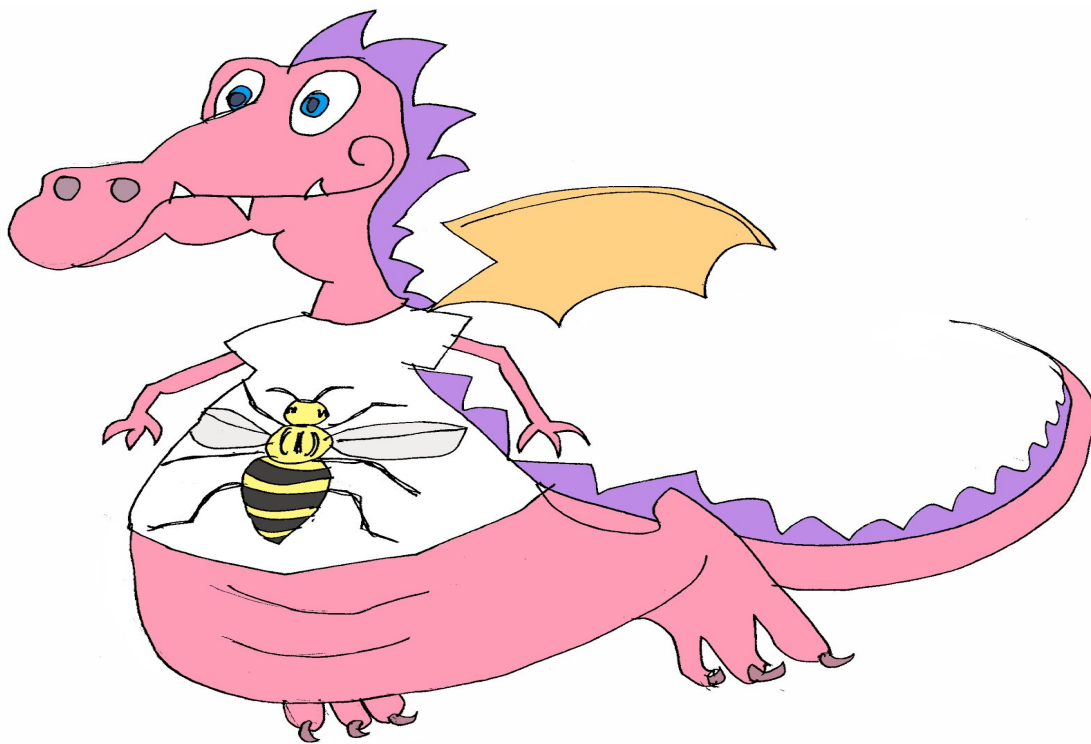
- **simile** - 'like' or 'as'
- **'name it'** – tarantula not spider
- **alliteration** – repeating similar sounds

- **add in or add on detail** – add extra information
- **causal language** - to explain their choices
- **drop in information** – with a relative clause or using brackets

Encourage the children to listen to any advice that Pie gives during this session and to act on it. It might be worth jotting any useful writing tips down on the flipchart. For instance, *name it, describe the object so the reader can imagine it, reread to make the ideas flow, create fresh images not clichés, say it aloud, choose words with care, avoid repeating words, reread to police your sentences, pretend you are your teacher....*

Writing tips could be made into writing posters or written in their journals.

Objective – develop a list of extended creative ideas based on a model, using relative



clauses or brackets to add information.



Blogging Activity – Create an extended list of items needed for a skyship journey.

Six things found in a Dwarf's Knapsack

An invisibility cloak (made of storm-berries) to ensure that I can enter forbidden places without detection.

An eternal light, which stays alight forever, to guide me through mountain caves,

A talking magpie, that can speak all languages, which can steal from a dragon's treasure without protection.

A shadow-caster to darken bright spaces.

A goblin-net, that is made of fine steel, for trapping unwanted cave goblins.

A truth-teller, which is never wrong, so that no one can fool me with wicked lies as sharp as a nettle's sting.

Most of this part of the session will be focused on getting children to respond to each other's blogs.

Objective – write a creative list of items for a magical journey with reasons. Type of Writing – creative list.

Audio Challenge – If children want to record their own blog ensure that they have read it aloud a number of times. They should read it slowly and clearly with expression. This could be worked on in pairs or threes so that children can develop their performance.

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16 things in a dwarf's knapsack

I developed this idea with Brian Moses about 38 years ago. In those days, we had our children writing lists along the lines of '*5 things you'd find in Margaret Thatcher's handbag*'. This is the version that I wrote at the time to use as a model for children. Ian McMillan has also written several similar list poems.

Six things found in a Dwarf's Knapsack

An invisibility cloak (made of storm-berries) to ensure that I can enter forbidden places without detection.

An eternal light, which stays alight forever, to guide me through mountain caves,

A talking magpie, that can speak all languages, which can steal from a dragon's treasure without protection.

A shadow-caster to darken bright spaces.

A goblin-net, that is made of fine steel, for trapping unwanted cave goblins.

A truth-teller, which is never wrong, so that no one can fool me with wicked lies as sharp as a nettle's sting.

Read the model through and discuss the ideas. Then brainstorm a quick list of other possibilities. With most classes, I jot these down on the flipchart as a support. Having made a collection of ideas, I use shared writing to jot up a few lines on the flipchart so anyone who lacks confidence can see how to approach the writing. Most children can just go off on their own to write their sentences down. This might only take about ten minutes

or so. I try to inject a sense of urgency, to get everyone concentrating.

The children share their ideas in pairs, polishing their ideas and language. Then everyone double checks the basics - that they have used a capital letter and full stop, with 'commas for a list' if they have used one. We then hear examples. If they have produced some creative ideas, we will copy these up for display or to make a little booklet, once I have marked, checking for quality and accuracy.

Year 6 Rapid class brainstorm of possibilities: *a hammer forged from underground mines; a dagger for dragon attack; oat cake or seed cake; a small block of hardened cheese; a flagon of water for rehydration; a clarinet, reed pipe or recorder; flint and steel; a map of The Misty Mountains; a quill and slate for writing runes, communication or sending a message; a silver pen for writing which can only be read by the light of the moon; a diamond for bargaining; a sack for treasure; an invisibility cloak and some pork pie.*

Year 6 shared writing of a few lines:

A silver pen for secret statements concealed safely beneath a moonless night.

An enchanted reed pipe to fool your advancing foe by summoning a slither of moonlight.

Of course, the lists could be about what you would find in a troll's rucksack, a giant's suitcase or a goblin's backpack! **Here is a year 6 group piece of writing – you could provide this for the children as a model:**

Sixteen things found in a Hobbit's Knapsack

Two fire-flies in a jam jar to light in your way.

A book of myths and legend truths.

A quill of wise words that will shine like starlight.

A silver pen that can only be used by Gandalf's pocket-watch when it is full of starlight.

An enchanted reed pipe for playing music to guide you in the night.

A charmed recorder for fooling the enemy.

A cauldron of wishes at the bottom of the sea.

Homely, hard cheese for a filling snack.

A flagon of never-ending water.

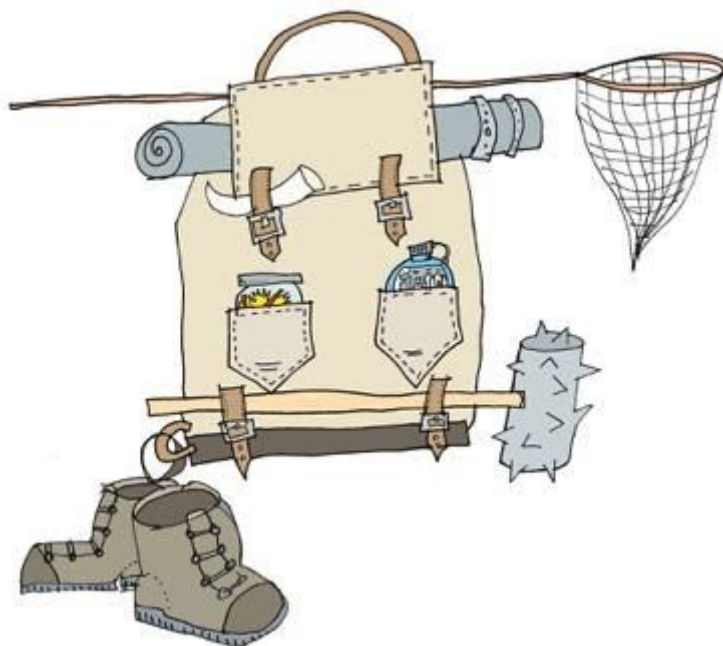
A golden feather, plucked from the finest eagle and a strip of slate forged in goblin mines to contact the nearest village, using an ancient map of The Misty Mountains.

The fang of a dragon to slay fleeing foe.

A completely crystal dagger, able to pierce through any armour and wound even the deadliest of creatures.

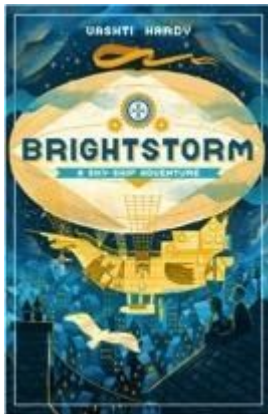
A pair of relatively light boots which can endure months of crossing rivers, navigating woods and stumbling through seemingly endless caves and caverns.

A steel-lined cape to protect you from fire, piercing blades and the strongest of incantations.



Please find below an article written by Bec Beddoes on teaching using Brightstorm by Vashti Hardy. We interviewed Vashti on Radioblogging.net on the 27th March. The interview starts at 18.39 on the counter. She reads from Darkwhispers which starts at 42.59 on the counter:

<https://radioblogging.net/index.php/2020/03/26/friday-27th-march/>



TalkforWriting

Reading into Writing Teaching Brightstorm by Bec Beddoes

We all know that the best writers are readers. They have the bank of ideas, the control over their writing and the flair, which often leaves you feeling you are reading the work of someone much older. However, in order for children to become writers who draw upon their reading, they need to be explicitly taught how to raid quality texts! It is not enough to get children to read and hope that osmosis takes care of the rest. After all, you don't suddenly start writing like Tolkien after reading *The Hobbit*! Children need to be taught to identify the writerly tools used to create a particular effect. Furthermore, they need to have the grammatical knowledge to be able to use the tools accurately and an inner writerly judge to analyse and critique the effectiveness of their language choices.



The Ridge Primary @RidgePrimary · 29 Jul 2018

This book has everything: explorers, mysteries to solve, a race to win, a world you'll want to visit, magical creatures, personal tragedy and an array of characters to love (and hate). The thought-wolves and Felicity were my favourites!

@vashti_hardy 🐾

In July 2018, I tweeted about the book *Brightstorm* by Vashti Hardy. It went as follows:

This book has everything: explorers, mysteries to solve, a race to win, a world you'll want to visit, magical creatures, personal tragedy and an array of characters to love (and hate).

When reading a book, I always read as a reader in the first instance (as opposed to a writer) and enjoy the book for what it

is. However, I always know when I have come across a part that I want to use to support writing as it packs a punch and stays with me. I'll post it note the page, keep reading, and then return later to unpick the writerly tools that the author has used to achieve a particular effect. I then have a bank of extracts and use them accordingly, depending on what my focus for a unit of work is.

Brightstorm has fantastic examples of characterisation, suspense and action which can be used to support the teaching of writing. When choosing extracts, I look for ones which demonstrate a particular writing tool that I want to develop with the children – e.g. how to create a really effective character or setting. It can be tempting to try and fix everything all in one unit, e.g. characterisation, suspense, openings, endings etc. However, rather than do everything and not do it properly, it is important to focus on a key aspect and do it well, pass ownership of it to the children and then see it transferred to their own writing - beyond the one you are currently working on. This is when a long term whole school overview is crucial so that it is clearly mapped who will be doing what and when.

In Brightstorm, my favourite creations were the thought-wolves who are introduced to us properly in Chapter 20. Wolves are in many great stories but I loved that Arthur, one of the main characters, could communicate with the wolves through thoughts. It was a fresh and original idea and I could see that the description of the thought-wolves would be fantastic to share with Key Stage 2 classes to inspire them and develop them as writers.

Context

The Door.

Marty ran past the bike sheds, round the corner and onto the school allotment. He could just hear the other boys running after him. Blinking back his tears, Marty dashed towards the rickety, allotment shed. He opened the door and stepped in. It seemed like a good place to hide.

At first, he saw the wooden bench with cobwebs dangling down and dust settling. But then.... as the door closed behind him, he found that he was standing in a brightly lit room. High above him yellow parrots flew round stone pillars and on the floor was a scarlet carpet. In front of him stood a boy of about his age, dressed in a long cloak. Wherever he was, Marty knew that was no longer in the allotment shed!

"Quick," yelled the boy, grabbing Marty by the arm. The two of them ran down the great hall and dived under a wooden table. Something was moving towards them. Marty could hear its feet thudding like drumbeats. To his horror, an enormous, green dragon appeared. Its tongue flickered and smoke billowed from its slimy nostrils. "Stare it down," hissed the other boy. "It's a coward!"

A moment later, Marty found himself standing in front of the mighty beast, staring into its eyes. He glared deep into the dragon's gaze with the fierceness and fury of fire but his legs were trembling. However, it only took a few seconds before the dragon blinked, turned and scuttled away. Marty and the boy chased after it, shouting with joy at their triumph.

As Marty dashed through the great hall doorway, he stumbled and found himself.... back on the allotment. The gang was standing right in front of him, still shouting. Marty halted. He stood upright and fixed them with a glare. It was a glare that had only recently halted a dragon. It took a few seconds before the other boys stepped back, turned and ran. Behind them, they could hear Marty laughing....

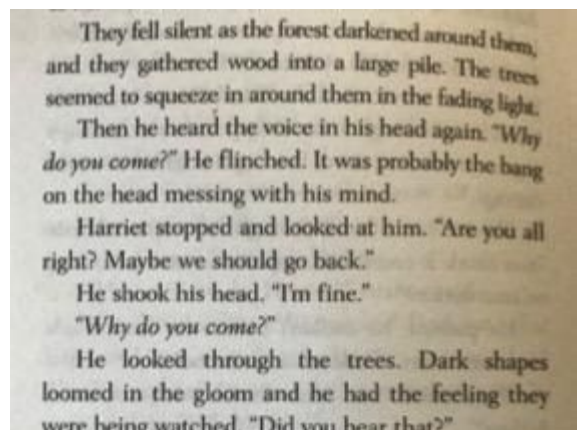
The model that I used as a basis for this unit of work was *The Door* by Pie Corbett (see below). *The Door* was chosen due to the freedom it allowed for. Talk for Writing is used from Nursery through to Year 6 at The Ridge, meaning that by Years 5 and 6, children spend more time raiding their reading to support their writing than learning the model text like other year groups. The whole school overview ensures there is a

coverage of story types. These are embedded by Years 5 and 6 so that rather than focusing on one plot structure e.g. rags to riches, children produce stories which are hybrids, e.g. a portal story with a warning at the start and a monster which must be overcome. Confident writers shake hands with the model and very quickly make the decision to wave goodbye to it. Although for less confident writers, the model acts as a skeleton on which to hang their own story.

For this particular unit of work, I combined the hook with the cold task as children had completed a lot of writing previously during invention week, and had recently been involved in writer conference where they were able to meet and chat with either myself or a highly skilled teaching assistant to discuss their writing and their next steps.

Teaching and Learning

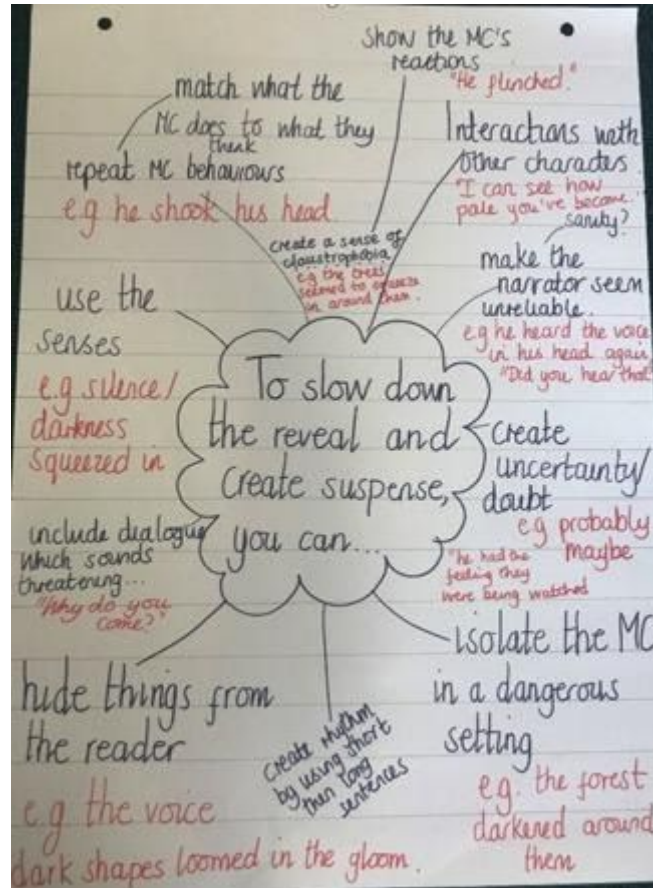
For the hook, I took the class outside to the school shed and they acted out being chased and having to rush inside. I explained that things weren't as they



seemed and there was something or someone inside the shed! At that point, we returned to the classroom and children completed an ink waster style activity where they wrote about who or what they had encountered. I made sure to write at the same time so that they could see me doing what writers do – pausing at times, re-reading to check the tune of the text, proof reading, crossing out words (and sometimes whole paragraphs), putting dots underneath great words which were tricky to spell etc. It gets a bit competitive as children are desperate to do a better job than you! However, it's very useful to do as it highlights any potential stumbling blocks that children may encounter. If you as a competent writer find something a challenge, then it is more than likely the children will too!

Next, I revealed the rest of the model to the children so that they could see who Marty had come into contact with. I then set the children the challenge of creating their own creature. Following a brief synopsis of Brightstorm, I then shared an extract with them.

This page was purposely chosen because of the way Vashti Hardy creates suspense and slows down the reveal of the thought-wolves - the children were tending to jump straight in and reveal everything and then finding they had left themselves with very little to explore. I shared the extract with the children line by line. This infuriated them – in a good way! They were desperate to know who or what was out there! The line by line strategy ensured that they were monitoring their own comprehension but were also appreciating the way that the reveal was being slowed down and recognising the impact this had on them as readers. As soon as children had read to the end of the page ...*Arthur glancing over his shoulder every few moments...* I discussed with the children how Vashti Hardy had achieved this and together we co-constructed the writerly tools they could identify which created suspense.



Once we had established what tools had been used by the author, we used the grammatical names where appropriate. It's not necessary to establish the word class of each word on the page but it is important to give the grammar a context and prepare them for the demands of the end of Key Stage 2 GPS tests. For example, in this extract, the use of the adverbs to indicate possibility, 'It was **probably** the bang on the head...' and '**Maybe** we should go back.' are important to point out as they show the characters' uncertainty.

After co-constructing the tools with the children, I then used shared writing to show children how to transfer these tools to their own writing. In preparation for the shared writing, GPS warm up games and activities were used, based on my AfL and pitched to ensure personal targets and ARE were met. The brief was to slow down the reveal and create suspense. Instead of

Arthur from Brightstorm, I used Marty from The Door. The shared writing should be pitched so that it challenges the very highest attaining writers and should be planned in advance so that the teaching is clear. I make sure I know in advance which bits I want to slow down and linger on and which parts I can afford to crack on with. Having said that, it is important to remember to trust the children to have the words and not stick too closely to what you have planned (thanks Kathryn Pennington for those wise words). Equally as important is the need to film yourself, reflect and refine accordingly. If you aren't modelling writing you aren't teaching writing (you wouldn't teach long division without ever modelling it!) so it is incredibly important to get it right!

Inside the shed, the darkness was suffocating. Something was wrong. "What's going on? What's happened to the light?" Maudie breathed. It was more than just a lack of light in that was the temperature in the shed had to have dropped so low that Marty could feel cold on his insides. There was a chill from somewhere, or was it? Marty couldn't tell. He tried opening his eyes wider.

Marty felt Maudie trembling beside him. As his eyes grew accustomed to the light, he could see how pale she was. "Come on, Maudie," Marty urged. "Let's get out of here." He glanced over his shoulder and headed in the direction of where he knew the door should be. He couldn't help feeling that he wasn't alone in there. He saw it: shadows moving towards him, twisting and writhing their way through the gloom. Marty gulped. He had sworn that the shadows had been gone. It was probably just his eyes playing tricks on him. He reached the door, pushed the handle and slammed it shut behind them before the shadows had a chance to chase after them. He shook his head and his eyes wider. The faces were

This was followed up immediately by the children writing

independently. They went back to their cold/ink waster tasks and edited and improved those pieces of work using the Brightstorm extract and the associated tools they had acquired from it. In

Joe was in a dimly lit cellar with a flickering lightbulb hanging from the ceiling. The room was large and had many scratch marks on the concrete floor. It was cold and decomposed flesh - he nearly gagged at the stench. Everything was silent. Then, he heard a slow whirring sound coming from behind him. He froze. Slowly, he turned around. In front of him was pitch-black darkness where the weak glow of the lightbulb could not reach.

Whirrr! The sound came again and it was in front of him this time. He gulped.

order to test out the effectiveness of their writing, children worked with a learning partner, put one book on top of the other and then read as a reader considering questions such as:
How does it sound when read aloud?

What am I picturing in my head when reading it?

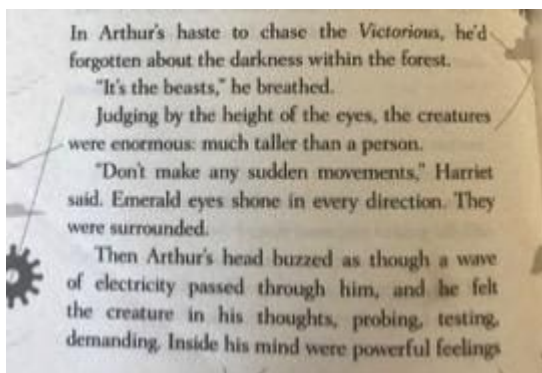
What do I like and dislike? Is there anything that puzzles me?

What effect is this having on me as a reader?

Then, using the toolkit for guidance, children read again but as writers, discussing the tools and techniques that were used.

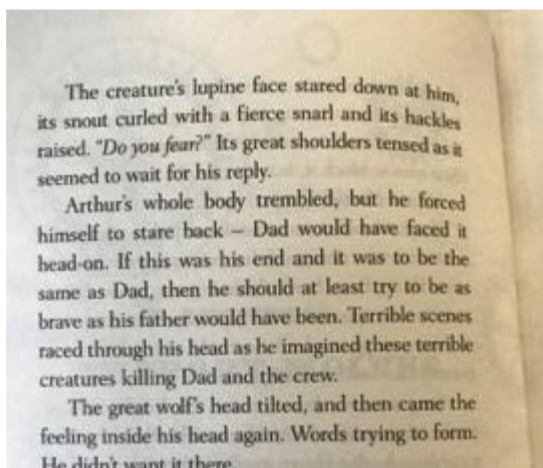
The co-construction of the toolkit gave them a structure to discuss their own writing. Any changes or revisions were decided upon by the child whose work was being looked at.

Now with the build up to the reveal addressed, it was time to share another extract from *Brightstorm*, this time where the thought-wolves are revealed.



Again, comprehension was the first priority. Children used the Aidan Chambers' Book Talk headings as a basis for discussion. We always start with likes and dislikes then move on to puzzles and patterns and connections.

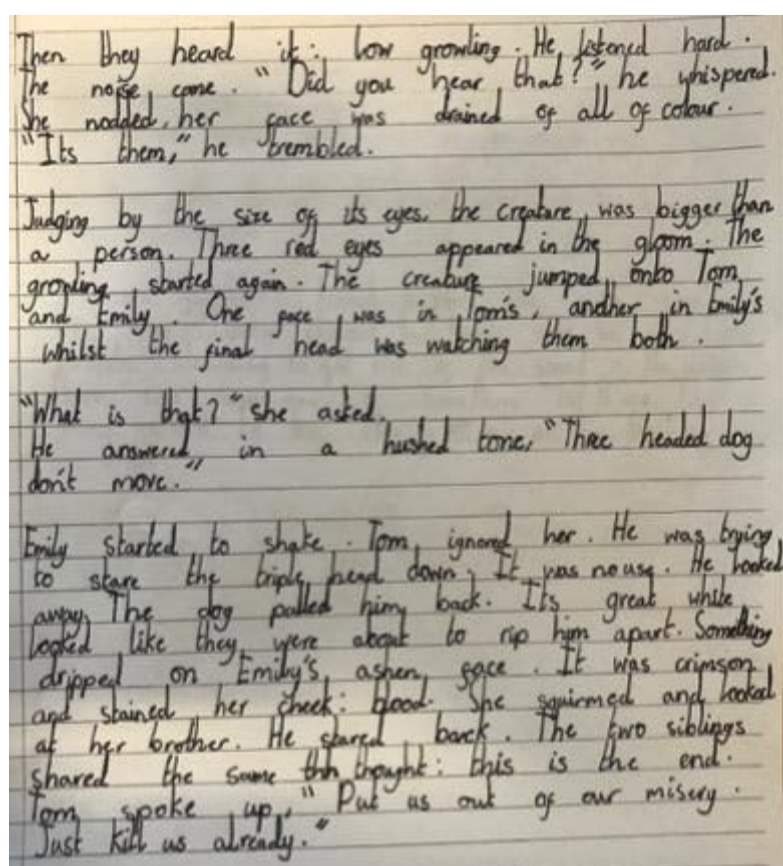
However, over time, and very much led by the children, we use point of view when referring to likes and dislikes as it reminds everyone to consider the point of view of the author – what do they think? What do they want the



reader to think? We have also tagged possibilities to puzzles so that when puzzles are raised children are challenged to consider possible answers to their puzzles. Dependent on the discussion, children might also talk about 'Picture' which is a bit of a catch all. In regards to picture we discuss with children what they are picturing in their head but also use picture as in, what is the big theme/idea/message?' Book Talk is used from Nursery to Year 6 so the quality of Book Talk at upper Key Stage 2 is very good and a joy to observe.

Following Book Talk, dependent on AfL, I will either complete some Isabel Beck style vocabulary work (I may have done this before the Book Talk too) and will use active comprehension approaches to deepen understanding. I also give either specific domain or mixed domain sets of questions, dependent on my focus in reading. These may be oral or written but are an organic way of using the language of the SATs tests in lessons. If there are children who struggle with word reading, they will have some extra sessions, which focus on developing fluency of the extract.

Once I was confident that children had achieved comprehension of this particular extract, we began looking at it as a writer. Again, we co-constructed the tools that had been used to create the characters. Children then began to plan their own creatures.



Then they heard it: low growling. He listened hard. The noise came. "Did you hear that?" he whispered. She nodded, her face was drained of all of colour. "It's them," he trembled.

Judging by the size of its eyes, the creature was bigger than a person. Three red eyes appeared in the gloom. The growling started again. The creature jumped onto Tom and Emily. One paw was in Tom's, another in Emily's whilst the final head was watching them both.

"What is that?" she asked. He answered, in a hushed tone, "Three headed dog don't move."

Emily started to shake. Tom ignored her. He was trying to stare the triple head down. It was no use. He looked away. The dog pulled him back. Its great white teeth looked like they were about to rip him apart. Something dripped on Emily's, ashen, face. It was crimson and stained her cheek: blood. She squirmed and looked at her brother. He stared back. The two siblings shared the same thought: this is the end. Tom spoke up, "Put us out of our misery. Just kill us already."

I then used shared writing again to model how to use the tools we had raided from Brightstorm to our own writing. Children followed this up immediately by writing independently.

Spoiler alert: the thought-wolves are not baddies, totally the opposite in fact! I didn't share this with children until after they had created and written about their own creatures. On reflection, I will share this with future classes as I really like the way Vashti Hardy lulls you into thinking that the main characters were in danger and played on the stereotypes of wolves before actually turning things around and making them heroes – another magpieable idea that can be taken from Brightstorm. I think it would really challenge writers who are able to confidently move away from the model text and have a different ending to their stories: a fake baddy that the reader thinks the main characters have to overcome but in actual fact challenges stereotypes and helps them overcome the real baddies, would be a great tool to add to their writing repertoire!

On reflection...

This work was produced by my Year 5 class last year and as soon as the unit was completed, Brightstorm went into the class library and was always out on loan. It worked really well and demonstrated clear progress, which was transferred to other units of work. It was a pleasure to read the writing they produced.

I would still use the same extracts with other Key Stage 2 classes but would be aware of the potential need to spend longer lingering on the text by planning in more drama and vocabulary work to ensure children have achieved comprehension of the extract before unpicking the writing tools. Unless children fully understand what they have read, the tools will not be understood, and therefore owned by the children and won't be applied to their writing.

The children whose work is included in this article are in Year 6 now. As a result of being exposed to quality texts such as Brightstorm in both reading and writing lessons, they are a class of readers and are adept at identifying extracts from the books they are reading independently, which they can then raid and use in their own writing. In fact, their Year 6 teacher now tells them the focus (most recently they have done suspense and action because they can have more than one toolkit focus now) and alongside the extracts she shares with them, sets them the task of finding their own with the best ones being shared with the class as a whole. The use of quality texts to supplement and support a Talk for Writing unit of work has resulted in truly independent writers who draw upon their reading and have a clear idea in their head of what they want to achieve with their writing and how they can do it.

What next?

In the story, we find out that the wolves have had contact with Eudora Vain (the villainess of the piece). However, we don't get to read those scenes. Therefore, children could write an extra chapter for the story where the wolves and Eudora Vain meet. Similarly, children could write the chapter again but instead switch and write from the wolves' perspectives rather than the children's. Maybe, inspired by Fox Girl and the White Gazelle, get children to split this section up so that it switches between the wolves and children's perspectives. Children could also look at how wolves are depicted in other stories and compare these to the thought-wolves. Use the Wolves of Willoughby Chase, Eye of the Wolf, Wolves in the Walls or even get them listening to Peter and the Wolf.

In regards to non-fiction writing, the obvious choice would be to write an information text about wolves – check out The Ways of the Wolf by Smriti Prasadam-Halls. However, they could also write about famous expeditions, design and write about their own sky-ship, write the newspaper report about

the expedition or write biographies about famous explorers. With a quality book like Brightstorm, the ideas for how to use it to inspire and support writing are endless!

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The Ridge Primary School**

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The Door.

Marty ran past the bike sheds, round the corner and onto the school allotment. He could just hear the other boys running after him. Blinking back his tears, Marty dashed towards the rickety, allotment shed. He opened the door and stepped in. It seemed like a good place to hide.

At first, he saw the wooden bench with cobwebs dangling down and dust settling. But then.... as the door closed behind him, he found that he was standing in a brightly lit room. High above him yellow parrots flew round stone pillars and on the floor was a scarlet carpet. In front of him stood a boy of about his age, dressed in a long cloak. Wherever he was, Marty knew that was no longer in the allotment shed!

“Quick,” yelled the boy, grabbing Marty by the arm. The two of them ran down the great hall and dived under a wooden table. Something was moving towards them. Marty could hear its feet thudding like drumbeats. To his horror, an enormous, green dragon appeared. Its tongue flickered and smoke billowed from its slimy nostrils. “Stare it down,” hissed the other boy. “It’s a coward!”

A moment later, Marty found himself standing in front of the mighty beast, staring into its eyes. He glared deep into the dragon’s gaze with the fierceness and fury of fire but his legs were trembling. However, it only took a few seconds before the dragon blinked, turned and scuttled away. Marty and the boy chased after it, shouting with joy at their triumph.

As Marty dashed through the great hall doorway, he stumbled and found himself.... back on the allotment. The gang was standing right in front of him, still shouting. Marty halted. He stood upright and fixed them with a glare. It was a glare that had only recently halted a dragon. It took a few seconds before the other boys stepped back, turned and ran. Behind them, they could hear Marty laughing....

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