

TeachingLive | Season 10 | Brighstorm | Week 4 | TEACHING NOTES | Skyship Adventure 1 | Tuesday 6th February 2024

Please read Vashti Hardy's book *Brightstorm* to the class over the next month. If they know this book, read the next in the series.

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. The games can be played in pairs or solo, as a group or class. Get everyone to make notes as Pie and David play the game. Then there will be a pause of a few minutes – a 'timer' will be onscreen giving a countdown. The teacher settles the class to having a go at playing the games. The idea of the games is to get everyone involved and buzzing with ideas, warming up the language and creative thought before going onto tucking into the main course! It is worth noting that sometimes the games can be written up later as whole pieces of writing. They should gather all their ideas in one notebook so that this becomes a store of language and ideas that can be drawn upon when writing. Children at home either play with a sibling or parent or write ideas rapidly in their notebooks.

Today's Game – word-by-word storytelling

Warm up the imagination and get ideas buzzing with this creative starter. The challenge is to invent a story opening word by word, bouncing it back and forth.

This could be played in solo, pairs or as a class together. The children will be given a set time limit to play the game. If they

dry up then they could start again. David and Pie will model the game first bouncing ideas back and forth.

There are various challenges you could introduce:

1. Invent a story word by word.
2. Invent a story sentence by sentence.
3. Invent a story as above but including randomly selected ingredients: a *random character, setting and object*.
4. Invent a story sentence by sentence scoring for inclusion of different ingredients, e.g. *adjectives, adverbials, relative clauses, name it, etc.*

The Objective – to practise inventing story openings.

Padlet 1 – Children have a few minutes to complete one or more ‘post it notes’ to inject excitement into various types opening sentence for a skyship adventure.

The challenge is to try using the most common types of opening on the grid below, or any others that the children know, to hook the reader – the grid could be displayed or available in the children’s books:

Opening line	Type
1. Brad stared at the skyship in disgust.	Name
2. No one ever travelled to Moravia because rumour had it that dragons lived there.	Place
3. To Mariana's surprise, the winged horse swooped down onto the skyship's deck.	To her surprise, horror, etc
4. To Ty's surprise, the cabin door opened and a rather chilly dragon stepped out.	To his surprise, horror, etc
5. Snow fell onto the skyship as she sailed on.	Weather
6. An African grey parrot tapped on the porthole.	Animal
7. "Jump!" the Captain yelled.	Speech
8. Gemma had never believed in goblins.	Dismissing a Fear
9. Usually, Faza enjoyed travelling by air.	Adverb

Remind children about what we have been learning so far. This might make a good poster:

- Accurate punctuation.
- Use concrete images – what you saw, heard, etc.
- Each word earns its place - no overwriting.
- Alliteration, similes and metaphors to build pictures.
- Personification to add atmosphere – the wind moans.
- Name it – 'Poodle' not 'dog'; 'Kings Street' not 'the road'.

The Objective – to write a variety of opening sentences that capture a reader's attention or set the scene.

Padlet 2 activity – Writing opening lines for a story - This activity prepares the children for writing an opening paragraph for their blog post. **The children's challenge is to write the next possible lines to introduce exciting action into Pie's story opening below which should be displayed or in children's books:**

Ty gripped the railings, his knuckles whitening. He gulped as the clouds engulfed the airship. He glanced at his twin sister Mariana who seemed to be enjoying it as the airship lurched from side to side. They had left the city behind about a week ago and should have been passing over the lowlands but this storm had blown them off course.

At that moment,
Suddenly,
Without warning,
Abruptly,
Out of the blue,

It might be worth jotting any useful writing tips down on the flipchart. For instance, *name it, think about how the character feels, show the feelings through what they do, describe the object so the reader can imagine it, reread to make an idea 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 – experiment with injecting action and dilemma early on into a story to create tension and hook the reader.

Blogging Activity – Write the opening for your skyship adventure.

Pie will read through and talk about the opening to his story start for 'Stargrazer'. The challenge is to use some of the techniques to write a story opening for a skyship adventure. Ideally, the children should have a copy of Pie's story so that they can see the way in which he structured his opening that foreshadows the events in the story. The text is below.

Objective – write an opening to a story, hooking the reader. Type of Writing – narrative openings.

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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Stargrazer

You've probably been on an airship when the skies are blue and the breeze just enough to give the engines a helping hand. **Remember how** it feels to have the wind blowing through your hair, to see the fields and towns far below and to feel totally free of everyday life.

I bet you've enjoyed holiday flights across the bay, journeys to see distant relatives, knowing that once you have landed you will be able to relax for several weeks.

But you should also try a trip when the winter winds are as sharp as knives, with the clouds darkening, for that is another matter. **When the** thunder explodes like canon fire around you and a lightning strike would bring the airship down, **when the** rigging strains and the ship's engines falter, **that's when** an airship ride is not so much fun...

And some say, they've seen sky pirates, hiding in the clouds, waiting to strike. **You probably won't believe this but some say** that there are flying beasts with claws that can tear apart even the toughest dragon's skin balloon.

Ty gripped the railings, his knuckles whitening. He gulped as the clouds engulfed the airship. He glanced at his twin sister Mariana who seemed to be enjoying it as the airship lurched from side to side. They had left the city behind about a week ago and should have been passing over the Snow Hills but this storm had blown them off course.

At that moment, the sky dragons struck. Ty saw three of them streak out of a storm cloud and fire roared towards the Stargrazer. Captain O'Shea tugged the tiller to one side, just averting disaster and in one swift movement drove the engines as hard as she could.

For a moment, the dragons disappeared as she steered the airship into a huge storm cloud to hide. Thunder grumbled around them and electricity crackled. Ty glanced at Mariana who was staring into the telescopian but it showed nothing. The clouds blocked its view. "Hold tight! Prepare to land!" Captain O'Shea barked over the megascope.

A moment later, the Stargrazer dipped below the clouds as air seeped out of the balloon and the engines stilled. They drifted down, buffeted from side to side by the storm. Ty and Mariana stared up, searching for the dragons. Had they managed to evade to them?

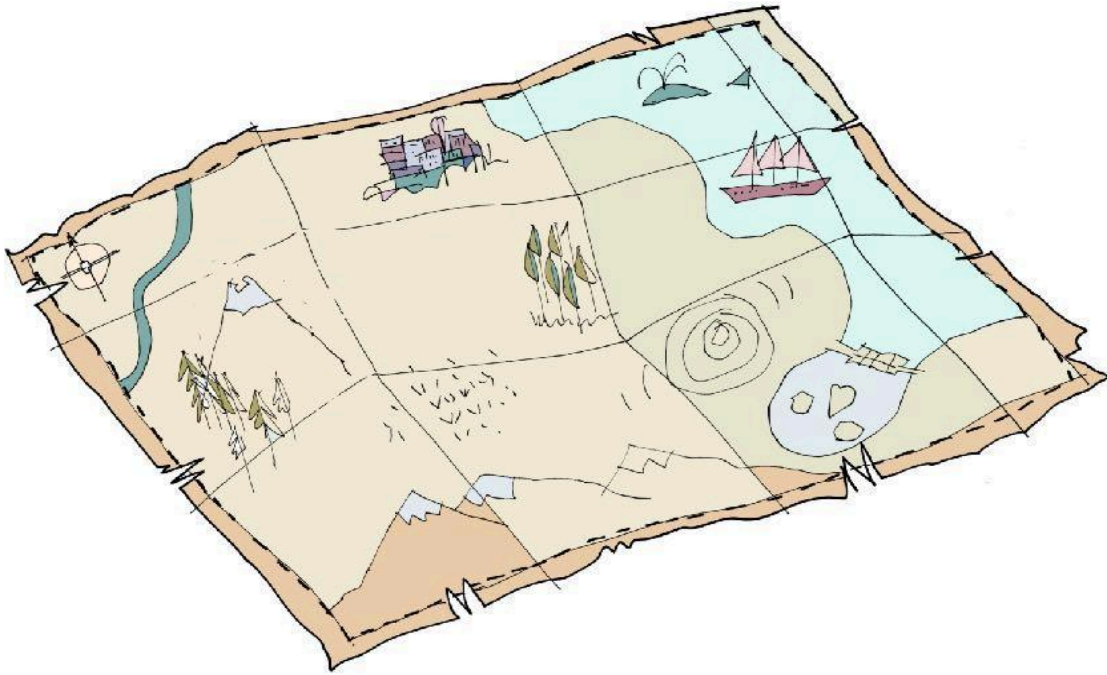
We interviewed Vashti Hardy on Radioblogging.net on the 27th March. The interview starts at 18.39 on the counter. She reads from Darkwhispers which starts at 42.59 on the counter:
https://soundcloud.com/russellprue/sets/radio-blogging?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Gallery Challenge – draw a map of where the journey will take the skyship

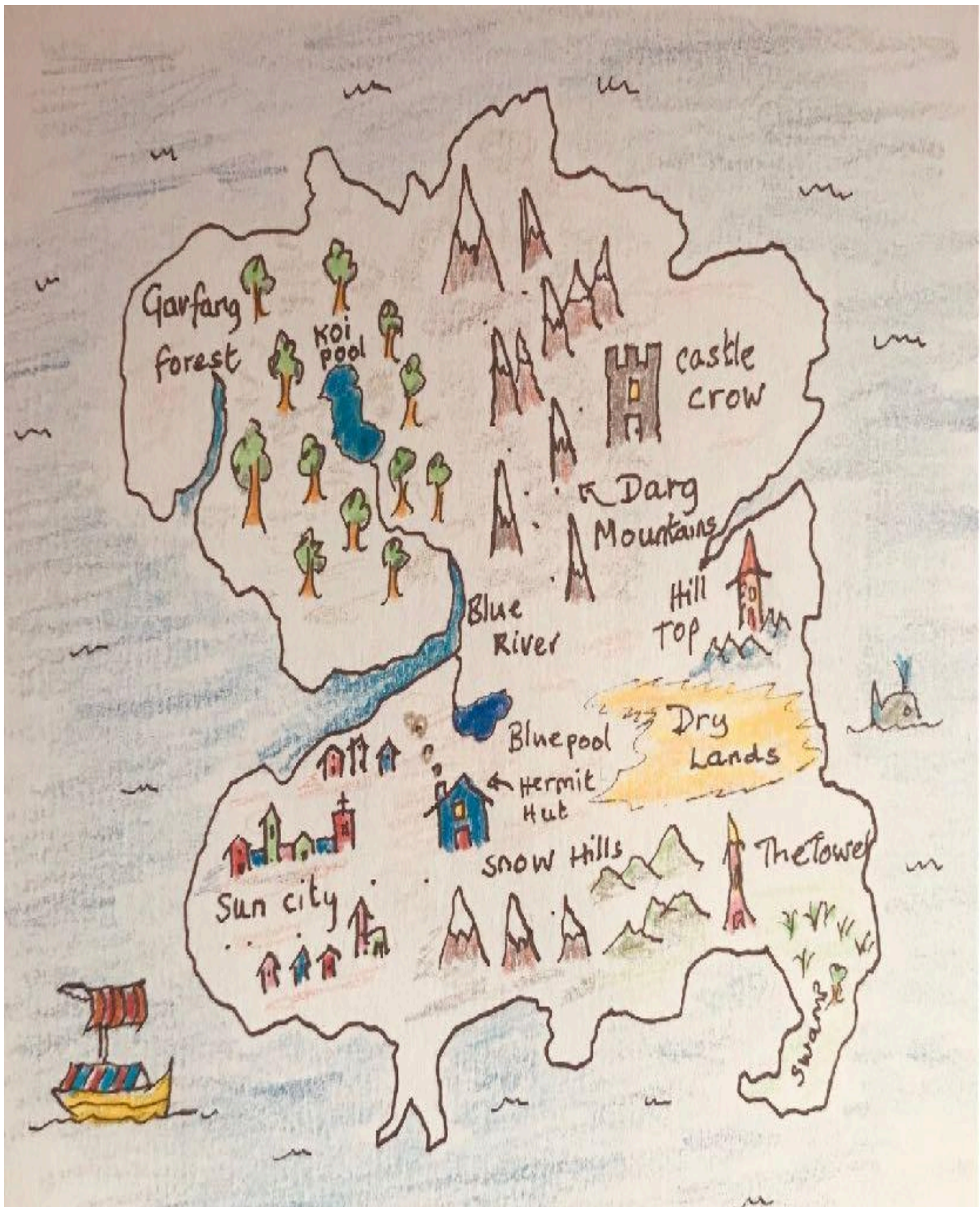
One of my favourite things about reading children’s books is when you find a map right at the beginning showing the landscape of the story. I thought it would be a great idea for the children to design and draw their own map showing the journey of the skyship and where it lands. Check out on the internet to see how Kieran Larwood, author of *Podkin One-Ear*, draws maps of his story worlds:
<https://www.kmlarwood.com/resources/>

- ★ **Step 1: draw the outline of your map , showing where the skyship will travel during its journey and where it lands.**
- ★ **Step 2: fill in the landmarks: trees, rivers, boulders, mountains, volcano, cities, sea, swamps**
- ★ **Step 3: make up names for the different areas of your map**
- ★ **Step 4: stain the map to make it look old by using a used (and cool) tea bag to turn the paper brown. You don’t need to get it that wet for it to change colour**

★ Step 5: When it is dry, cut or rip the edges of the paper to



make it look old and worn.





Story games

Tell a story one word at a time

Once/ upon/ a / time/ there/ was....

Tell a story chunk by chunk

This could be sentence by sentence.

Unfortunately/luckily

This is the old game where things rapidly go wrong and then right again.

The googly game

Your partner provides a word to include that is totally unsuitable.

The 5 sentence story

Line 5 volunteers up. Their task is to spontaneously invent a story in 5 sentences, using the following frame:

Once upon a time there was (name of main character) who lived (name of place).

One day (the main character does something).

Unfortunately, (something goes wrong).

Luckily, (it gets resolved).

Finally, (the end).

The Salty Umbrella

Taking an interest in words and their power is crucial not just to building vocabulary, but also to becoming a writer. Each word has to be chosen with care in order to create an effect. Of course, one word on its own can do much, but the real excitement begins when you put two words together. Worlds of sound, meaning, memory, connotation and association clash together to create a new effect.

Many words become associated together and are often found in speech and writing. Take, for instance, the words *Once upon a time*, they flow comfortably into each other, giving the reader a moment to settle down in expectation. However, we can ambush the reader by creating a new combination, *Once upon a truth* or even more unexpected, *Once upon a Cabbage*.

It is often the moment when words come together that do not normally combine that the unexpected collision of meaning and rhythm forces the words out of their old habits into fresh possibilities. Experiment with new word combinations by asking the children to work in pairs. Partner A makes a list of nouns and so too does Partner B. Then they put the words together in the exact order that they were written down. This is important because it is the random combination that is often most powerful. So if A writes, *ballet, jealousy* and *harp* and B writes *moon, Paris* and *rust*, when they are combined they end up with *ballet moon, jealousy Paris* and *harp rust*. Provide the list of prepositions to help the children link their ideas. For instance:

- *The harp of rust.*
- *The harp with rust.*
- *The harp in the rust.*

Now let's stretch each idea out into some sort of story, to begin to make some sort of sense from it:

- *The harp of rust lay in the corner. Tania picked it up and wondered whether it would still work. She blew the cobwebs from it and plucked one string. Even though the metal frame had rusted, its sound was still pure.*
- *The harp with rusty strings lay unused for many years.*

- *In the corner lay a pile of ancient, rusty objects. However, one item caught her eye. It was a harp... and it was not rusty.*

Now ask Partner A to write a list of objects and Partner B to write a list of places. Let us imagine that Partner A writes *clock*, *mirror* and *key* and B writes *palace*, *lake* and *star*. We end up with the following combinations: *clock palace*, *mirror lake*, and *key star*. Now use the list of prepositions below to link the pairs, bearing in mind that the words can be combined either way round:

- *The clock of palaces or The palace of clocks.*
- *The mirror beside the lake.*
- *The key on the star.*

Now the pairs of children can take the ideas and turn them into a mini story or image:

- *Once there was a palace which had a thousand clocks ... in every room. Wherever you went, you could not escape the ticking of time. The ceilings and walls were all made of clocks. Even the floors were paved with clocks.*
- *Beside the lake lay a mirror. It was the same shape as the lake. Tania picked it up and stared into it. What she saw was quite unexpected.*
- *"But how can I open the tower and set Tania free?" asked the boy. The old man pointed up towards a distant star. "The key is on that star," he whispered, shaking his head, sadly.*

What is amazing about this idea is that with very little thought, I have begun to bring into being some interesting stories. Maybe at the moment they are just fragments, but the collision of unexpected and random ideas generates creative possibilities.

Variation:

- Try a different version in which Partner A generates a list of characters and Partner B generates a list of containers. So, Partner A might write down *prince*, *thief* and *cat* and Partner B could have *jar*, *sack* and *prison*. This would lead to the following combinations: *prince jar*, *thief sack* and *cat prison*. Now the children can use the photocopyable list of prepositions to combine these. Then invent a mini story:
 - *The prince in the jar.*
 - *The sack of thieves.*
 - *The cat outside the prison.*

Preposition List

on	into	out of
with	next to	back of
of	by	back down
in	from	to
inside	against	against
under	without	among
beside	up	between
below	upon	made of
on top of	over	made from
beyond	until	different to
behind	around	near
at	for	far
before	down	along
with	past	in front of
about	across	through
close to	off	
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The Story Restaurant

In this game the children ping pong a story but have to invent a new one. This could be just left to chance and what pops into the head at that moment. However, it may be helpful to some children to have banks of possibilities to select from.

Use lists of characters, settings and problems that the children can draw upon. Ideally, these could be invented with the children making suggestions. However, to help you with this the next few pages include lists that may be photocopied and turned into story menu cards. The idea is that the children use the menus to select what ingredients they would like for their stories – hence the story restaurant!

This game makes a useful way to start a session or sequence of teaching in which the children are going to write their own story. There are different things that can happen in the game. At first the children play around and just have fun. However, it is also worth focussing on them creating a story that hangs together and flows in a logical sequence. This is harder. It can help if they begin by sketching a story map or board with a basic story. Then they use this to steadily make up their joint tale – section by section.

Variation

When the children choose their ingredients, it is worth making sure that they do not just choose randomly. It might be worth starting by defining the 'genre', e.g. sci-fi, fantasy, traditional, thriller, ghost, action, adventure, domestic, school. Then they might consider the 'type' of story, e.g. warning, beating the baddie, wishing, rags to riches, problem/resolution, journey or quest. Having made these decisions, they then choose ingredients that are appropriate. Having said that, sometimes random choice leads to a more interesting and creative tale.

CHARACTERS	SETTINGS	OBJECTS	ANIMALS
Ogre	Forest	Needle	Cat
Giant	Beach	Spinning wheel	Dog
Goblin	Mountain	Thread	Snake
Dwarf	Cave	Rope	Hamster
Elf	River	Ball	Rabbit
Fairy	Stream	Knife	Hare
Heroine	Palace	Axe	Spider
Hero	House	Comb	Tiger
Villain	Factory	Handkerchief	Lion
Bandit	Bus station	Tablecloth	Fox
Robber	Playground	Basket	Wolf
Thief	Park	Bag	Eagle
Soldier	Motorway	Sack	Robin
Sailor	Classroom	Box	Stork
Teacher	Shopping centre	Lamp	Pelican
Girl	Market	Coin	Shark
Boy	Alleyway	Purse	Whale
Mum	Chip shop	Ring	Salmon
Dad	Deserted house	Cloak	Flea
Sister	Caves	Hat	Bird of paradise
Brother	Railway station	Chair	Elephant
Granddad	Distant star	Car	Giraffe
Grandma	Gran's house	Cart	Donkey
Friend	Kitchen	Apple	Horse
Traveller	Shed	Mirror	Cow
Shop-keeper	Tower	Key	Mouse
Wizard	Swamp	Shoes	Rat
Farmer	Underground	Boots	Sheep
Tailor	mine	Bottle	Badger

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STORY MENU CARDS - EVENTS

A computer breaks down

The road is blocked

Someone breaks in

A villain appears

A beanstalk appears

A secret place is
discovered

A strange gift arrives

Something precious is
found

A wish is granted

Something valuable is
lost/ you lose your way

An intruder appears

A secret is discovered

Someone is afraid of
something that then
happens

Something precious is
stolen

An nosy relative visits

Someone sets off to find
something

Someone has to carry
something precious

A warning is broken

Transformed into an
animal

Dared to be dangerous

Bullies gang up

A hiding place is
discovered

An alien needs
protection

Someone is pushed

An unexpected visitor

A new comer

A nasty teacher

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Ping Pong Connectives

There are two basic ways to play this game.

- a. Ping pong the story or non-fiction text back and forth, word by word.
- b. Ping pong the text back and forth sentence-by-sentence.

In this version of the game, the children are given specific connectives to use. I would start with simple connectives and gradually over time add in more and more. If the children have English as a new language or find using a range of connectives difficult model using a new connective in a sentence with the children repeating the sentence and making up a few new similar ones.

Let us suppose that you were introducing the word 'meanwhile'. You might say, *"Let's try this one, 'meanwhile'. It means 'at the same time'. I'll try and sentence up and then we can make up some similar ones."*

'Meanwhile, the old man ran home.'

'Meanwhile, the tiger ate the dog's dinner.'

'Meanwhile, the teacher marked everyone's work.'

Now you have a go at making some up in your pairs."

On the next page is a list of connectives that you could photocopy and use.

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STORY CONNECTIVES

Once upon a time

One day/ morning/ evening/ night

Early one morning/ late one evening

First

Next

After

After a while

Before

But

At that moment

Suddenly

Immediately

Without warning

In an instant

Out of the blue

Although

However

Later

So

Soon

As / As soon as

Then

While/ Meanwhile/

When/ Whenever Eventually/ Finally/

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