

TeachingLive | Season 13 | Grammar | Week 3 | February 4th | Teacher Notes | Poem – ‘The secret poem...’

Today’s Game – The Magical Factory

(The Objective – generate rapidly a list of imaginative ideas)

Warm up the imagination and get ideas buzzing with this initial game that will be played orally. The children will be given a set time limit to complete their ideas. David and Pie will model the game first, based on the following pattern in which you have to invent impossible ingredients that might be used in a magical factory where you can make anything you like out any ingredients. The challenge is to come up with impossible and unlikely ingredients but also extend the description.

Partner A – what would you make: ‘I would make a tree...’.

Partner B – invent 2 or 3 ingredients: ‘Out of silver wrapping paper, curious clouds and a giant’s sneeze!’

Padlet – Children have a few minutes to complete one or more ‘post it notes’ using the frame provided. The children can invent as they wish but should try to extend their ideas. Try to make the ordinary sound special. **The challenge is to select an abstract noun and write sentences about where you found it!**

Abstract nouns: kindness, imagination, courage, intelligence, loneliness, bravery, cowardice, embarrassment, joy, beauty, ugliness, confidence, luck, misfortune, mischief, bitterness, justice, injustice, grief, boredom, cheerfulness, love, dreams, hope, hate, fear, sadness, anger, greed, disappointment, excitement, jealousy, happiness

I found anger where the wind scuffs its shoes.

I found anger where the lone fox prowls dustbins and dumpsters, looking for left-over treats;

I found anger where a dictionary of disasters empties its definitions till it is vacant as a midnight car park.

I found anger where the toad squats like a rock’s fist.

found it: caged, trapped, captured, caught, snared, snagged, crouched, crumpled, imprisoned, sitting, waiting, lounging, whistling, whispering, running, dancing, chatting, hiding, etc

I found hope trapped on the edge of a lemon’s bite.

I found hope crouched tight in a crocus.

I found hope caged in a crisp packet, scrunched at the roadside.

I found hope crumpled and discarded like a wrecked car crash in a teacher’s desk.

The Objective – to write original ideas and elaborate.

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

Padlet 2 - This activity prepares the children for the blog post that they will write. The focus is on writing a series of creative ideas that explain what the abstract noun can do:

This secret can prise open hearts made of steel.

It can smooth the surreal sea flat.

It can cup the cat's purr in an empty palm.

It can break apart Mount Everest till it is powder trapped in a locket.

My trust can stop and stoop to pick up whatever has been lost.

It can hide in a constellation of frost on a night pavement.

It can mend a promise spoken.

It can be broken into a thousand shimmering petals.

It can whisper lullabies to lost babies.

It can build starfish that glitter in still pools.

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 sentence 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 – the ability to write imaginative ideas, playing with fresh imagery.

Gallery Challenge – a change this week – to prepare for session 4 (letter from an evacuee home) and the four following story sessions, work on the two short stories plus teaching notes that I provided last week. The stories are built around the research that I carried out locally into local evacuees. The local historical society was very useful plus local history books and google searches. For the letter in session 4, it would be handy for the children to have discovered some information that they might use imaginatively that relates to their local area – or use information from my short stories. The texts have not been copy edited but I hope they work for you and the class.

Blogging Activity – Create an abstract noun poem

Children should write a more extended poem using the following format or variations of it:

- a. Choose an abstract noun
- b. What is it made from?
- c. Where did you find it?
- d. What can it do?
- e. What happens if you lose it?

There are further examples given below. [It can help for the children to have a copy of Pie's poems below in their books.](#) [Remind them to all come up with their own, original TITLE.](#)

Objective – write an extended poem, playing with language and ideas, using alliteration, imagery, metaphor and word play – all based around an abstract noun, making the abstract concrete.

The red-throated heron

My secret is made from –
the fingertips of candy floss clouds,
the silent shroud between hospital heartbeats,
the hangman's cold greeting,
the stoat's winter coat,
and the red-throated heron.

I found it -
trapped on the edge of a lemon's bite,
crouched tight in a crocus,
caged in a crisp packet,
crumpled at the side of the road
where the toad squats like a rock's fist.

This secret can –
prise open hearts made of steel,
smooth the surreal sea flat,
cup the cat's purr
in an empty palm,
and break apart Mount Everest
till it is powder
in a locket.

If I lost this secret –
even the lonely goat left at the roadside
would bleat....

Pie Corbett

Creating Trust

My trust is made from –
sunlight,
napping like a marmalade cat;
Autumn leaves
scattered like
Christmas cards and a child's fist
closed tight as an ammonite's memory.

I found it –
where the wind scuffs its shoes
and the lone fox prowls dustbins and dumpsters
for left-over treats;
where a dictionary of disasters
empties its definitions till it is vacant
as a midnight car park.

My trust can –
stop and stoop
to pick up
whatever has been lost...
a constellation of frost on a night pavement;
a promise spoken, broken
into a thousand petals.

If I lost my trust –
the world would shrink
to an eagle's single note, trapped
in its golden throat.

Pie Corbett

Fran

My secret is made from ~

The dark lust in a vampire's mind,
the gaping void of a black hole,
ready to swallow any living form.
The ripped curtains in the deserted mansion,
reaching towards the monster under the bed
The blood that pours from the screaming child

I found it ~

In the kraken's cave,
Skulls ~~blood~~ and bones scattered on the floor,
On the deck of a sunken ship,
blood ~~blood~~ of the crew still staining the sea.
On the edge of a giant claw of the beast
dead body.

This secret can ~

✓ Destroy all happiness of ^{defenceless} (little) children,
Tear apart the love of a happy couple,
Break apart the Devil's terror,
Compared to this secret it's nothing.
✓ It can make the dead rise from ^{ei} their graves.

If I lost this secret

✓ A terror beyond your
imagination will strike,
And even the dead will
forgive us for our sins.

Very good work in one session. You really understood
the idea and very effective last verse.

2/6/06

My secret is made of ^{stabbing} the panther's claws, ^{grabbing} deep into white, frightened ^{stare}, a child's ^{bad} dream caught by the soft,

feathery pillow,

perhaps change one of the melted

Creamy, brown ^{Sucky} melted chocolate as its being melted ^{over} a ^{burning} hot stove,

A waterfall flowing freely down over ^{jagged} rocks, trickling ^{over} as it falls.

I found it -

abandoned held in

in the hollow knot of a tree, || deep under my pillow, || in the heart of a cherry's ^{stone}, a ^{hairy} ^{single} coconut shell floating along the ^{cherry's} beautiful ocean of colourful coral, green ^{slimy} seaweed and ^{pearlised} (smooth) pebbles.

seaweed is usually green -

another adjective?

~~This secret is Gando - starts ice ages, erupt volcanor lava,~~

enemies

This secret can - Pull of open ^{rib} cages of clouds, || kill open-minded ^{enemies} before midnight, || ditch children unexpectedly with the suction of the spider's web, || rolling ^{confusingly} in web the sticky, substance.

If I lost this secret: || the sun's heart would stop beating || and ^{life would become} deceased.....

Theme:

My poem is about a secret

Images:

I have used - alliteration, verbs (powerful), Personification adjectives.

Structure:

My poem has free verse.

Layout:

different layouts for each verse.

Some wonderful ideas and really good changes. Fantastic.

Create a class version and brainstorm a range of ideas for each section. Below is an example by Eleanor (year 5) that might also be shared with the children.

MY SECRET

My secret is made of –
the steady beat of an Indian's drum,
and a deer's strong horn,
the velvet of a peach's skin,
and a past that has faded,
a panther's teeth like chopping knives,
and the end of a ruined world.

I found my secret –
dancing in the shadows by an abandoned railway,
riding a wild bull across the endless plains,
in a forgotten box in the creaking attic,
waiting to be freed,
within an Impressionist's painting at the London gallery,
and at the tip of the vorpal blade.

This secret can –
break out from Wormwood Scrubs,
make a new moon full,
decide the future for the human race,
climb a rainbow,
then with break-neck speed,
roller coast down the opposite side.

You see, if I lost my secret,
even the soldiers in the Second World War would pause . . .

My Curiosity

My curiosity is made from-
A dictionary of everything, spilling these words
unstoppably into my head
A vortex of intelligence, leaking mindfulness and
consideration inside my mind
A stone-grey cat, clumsily knocking plants off the
windowsill, annoying my mother
The fearfulness of a mouse, scampering away from a
marmalade kitten

You can find my curiosity-
Crouched stealthily in a litter of kittens, absorbing the
love and affection of the others
Stranded in the unknown contents of the universe,
observing the mysteries that surrounds it
scrapped in a junkyard, waiting patiently to be recycled,
like it has all the time in the world
washed up on an uncharted island, like a marauder
stranded with no ship to sail home with

My curiosity can-
construct unknown constellations into reality, like a
architect designing a mansion
cascade down a ravine like a hero rescuing a lost explorer
who has travelled miles until stopped
adventure into the unknown and discover the lost
continents of our lush, green planet

If I lost this curiosity-
the world would fall out of control
and even the birds on our roof
would change...

Rory sww

All about the Lie.

The lie is made out of
rusty mould from left-over food,
darkness from a black window
and a mysterious person.

The lie was found
on the tip of someone head
trapped there like a cage
kept tight to never leave.

This lie can open
up the heaviest heart deleting
the happiness,
show its power
show people its horror
make the devil awaken.

If I lost this lie
although it would take a
while to vanish the devil inside would
never be forgotten.

Gracie sww

Promise for Life

Promises are made from-
long lost lies and troublesome truths,
awaiting popularity,
to take the stage,
and secret scales from a fierce snake wanting prey and
preparing to pounce,
and a sample of a cotton cloud hovering elegantly,
through the sapphire sky.

Promises can be found-
in the deepest of caves looming in the victorious rock,
and they can be crouched in the forever ending space of
the onyx abyss,
buried in the sad soil, screeching for pure help.

Promises can-
pause time and control planets,
in the wrong hands they can shatter hearts made of gold,
they can freeze secret silent soles and defy magic,
whispering to stars is their comfort and the stars can
shout to the moon.

If any promise will be lost it can either save dying hearts
or crush hopeful soles,
either way,
a promise cannot be broken.

Harry SWW

Preparing to write about evacuees – some of my research. Read and annotate where facts or information might be useful for creating a story – then read the two stories.

However, many evacuees settled within the community, mixing and playing with local children. A whole class of thirty children from Clacton were taught at Oakridge school. One villager remembers that when they all played down Strawberry Banks, they used to run very, very fast. The children were billeted in houses round the village where there was room. Miss Hill, who ran a smallholding from the house now known as Winsley Cottage, had six boys at a time and used to get them working hard helping her with the chores when they were not in school. Miss Long, who lived in Piper's Cottage, had the Baker family to stay. In this case, the mother came with her four children, but all were accommodated in the one-up-one-down cottage. When the danger was past, some families were sorry to see the evacuees leave. Evacuees have returned to visit Oakridge since the war years, for example, Queenie Gardiner, who was postman for Sapperton during the war years, had two evacuees from London, one a distant relation, and both have since kept in sporadic contact with



Evacuees

Evacuees from Birmingham, Clacton and London came to the village. Irene Hunt and Iris Hunt recollected a story told by their father Thomas Henry Restall who was a ganger on the railway. His job entailed walking through the long and short Sapperton railway tunnels inspecting the line each day. One day he was amazed to find a small lad who had walked some distance into the long tunnel trying to get back home. He was an evacuee staying in Chalford and had become so homesick that he thought, as he had come down the line a few days before, he might find his way back home. An upsetting experience, when one thought what might have happened, the boy having no

The children who were in school at the time of the crash did not forget this event. Grace Cooke and Robin Gardiner recall how Mr Weston told them all to get under their desks as the planes came down overhead. Some villagers recall that the German bomber scraped the bell tower on the school as it came down (thus beginning the process of collapse that led to the dismantling of the bell tower after further damage by storms) but others do not think the plane itself can have damaged the bell tower. The children then saw Mr Weston grab the wooden window pole and rush outside with it to capture the airman in Mrs Le Bailly's garden, leaving them in the charge of the other teachers. When Mr Weston returned he had the revolver belt of the German, and showed the children the Luger from it. Sid Gardiner, Robin's father, who was working nights and was therefore at home that afternoon, captured one of the Germans near Waterlane crossroads. Sid took a rifle, though he had no ammunition, and arrested the man with no trouble and kept him until the Aston Down staff arrived.

The number of poor people was quite surprising and there were large families, several of which were in excess of 12 or 13 members and their clothes were handed down from one to the other. Often arriving at school wet through, due to the absence of warm protective clothing, quite a common sight were children with a thick sack draped around their shoulders. Shoes/hob-nail boots were generally poor or 'hand downs' often with two or three insoles cut from cardboard. The shoe/bootlaces were string or baler twine and if you were fortunate enough, you were able to black the string with boot polish, but bootlaces again cost money, and with large families,

*Class 3, Oakridge school,
1939. Many of the
children seen here live in
the village today*
Back row
Miss Tombs (teacher),
second right,
Arthur Rowles.
Middle row
second right, Beryl
Gardiner, fourth right,
Rosemary Burroughs
Front row
centre, Alan Weaver



This crash 'put Oakridge on the map' and drew visitors for quite some time afterwards. The public flocked to see the wrecked plane, reputedly in their thousands. Sally Hornby recounted that Mr Weston, the schoolmaster, 'with great acumen, posted somebody at the gate to the field, not only to show people the way but to collect money for comforts for the troops'. In an interview, Sam Gardiner remembered that within half an hour of the crash people were coming down the lane and across the fields to look at the spectacle. He went on Sunday with a crowd including lots of lads from Oakridge and spotted George Juggins in the throng, dressed up and sporting his silver-knobbed cane. For many local children in

According to reports in the local press, one airman landed in the grounds of Major and Mrs Le Bailly. Mrs Le Bailly and her maid Mavis Young and Mavis' brother Roy went to him and offered the shaken man a drink. Mr Weston, the schoolmaster and leader of the local Home Guard, came across from the school and took charge until the police and other members of the Home Guard were called. Margaret Weston, 14-year-old daughter of the schoolmaster, later to become Dame Margaret Weston, recalls running across to one of the German airmen. In an interview she said, 'I was standing outside my house when I saw two men jump out of a plane. One came down on the lawn, and I ran up and asked him if he were OK and he answered me in German. I then realised he was an enemy airman, so I called my father. He came over and the German immediately took out his revolver and handed it to him.' The commander of Aston Down Aerodrome arrived to arrest the first German prisoners to be captured in Gloucestershire.

Sally Hornby wrote that her sister Anna saw the battle overhead as she was walking back from painting down in Chalford valley. 'On getting home, she was astonished to find the ARP warden, having received the yellow alert, waiting for the red which never came, and quite

garments -
Very few children were late, you could see them running from all directions in response to the ringing of the school bell from 5 minutes to 9. It was considered a crime to be late, no excuses were given or accepted irrespective.

School dinners as we know them today were non-existent, you ate what you took, either in a satchel or pockets. People recall seeing children clambering over the walls from the common into the fields of 'roots', that is turnip, swede, mangold. These children (boys and girls) would pull up the vegetables, wash them in puddles at the side of the road, wipe them in the tufted grass, then peel them with their teeth. With a second one in the pocket or tucked inside a jacket or jersey, this was lunch 1930-style.

Bread and dripping or lard was the diet of the better off, with beetroot sandwiches as a treat. A large 'nobby' from the cottage loaf with a hunk of cheese and half a raw onion was also common with the 'big' boys. There were some big boys— all still in short trousers. The knees of both boys and girls were red and 'spreased' through getting wet and from wind exposure walking to and from school. Ragged behinds and patched clothes were common.

Ken B... master if

Sally Hornby recalled: 'During the war, my father was head ARP Warden for the village. There were a number of wardens, and a group of boys who acted as 'runners'. One of the latter slept at Iles Green each night, but none of them ever had to run with a message.' Robin Gardiner was one of these messenger boys, along with his brother George, Gordon Smith and Douglas Hunt. He confirmed that, for one week a month, each boy slept in the library at the Hornby's home where there was one of the very few phones, so that they could answer the phone if it rang, give the message to Mr Hornby and then run to the other wardens in the village with details if required. He thought it was a great treat to be able to read books from the library and go to sleep late, though it was not so easy then to wake the next morning.

The Tunnel

Henry had always hated the dark.

At night, Miss Hill put up the blackout curtains. When the light was off, the gloom descended and you couldn't see a thing. He had to learn to feel his way to bed. The stairs were unfamiliar, so too, the creaking boards and the smell of lye soap from the metal tub that was dragged out on a Saturday for his bath.

Oakridge Lynch village was nothing like the grimy London tenement block where Henry had spent his first ten years. Here, the valleys were a lush green: not a single street lamp and, at night, the darkness was full of owls, badgers digging for worms and foxes yelping. Every morning, Henry woke to the sound of a cockerel. At home, the streets had been packed with people rushing to work, cars and buses trundling by and the air was full of street cries. Here, chickens scratched in the backyard, rows of vegetables sprouted in gardens and only the odd cart and donkey passed the little cottage.

Most exciting of all was Gertie, the pig that Miss Hill kept in a small, stone shed by the garden gate. "We're fattening her up, you and I," proclaimed Miss Hill, as she poured potato peelings and scraps into the trough. Henry scratched Gertie's back and tried not to think what hidden fate awaited the pig.

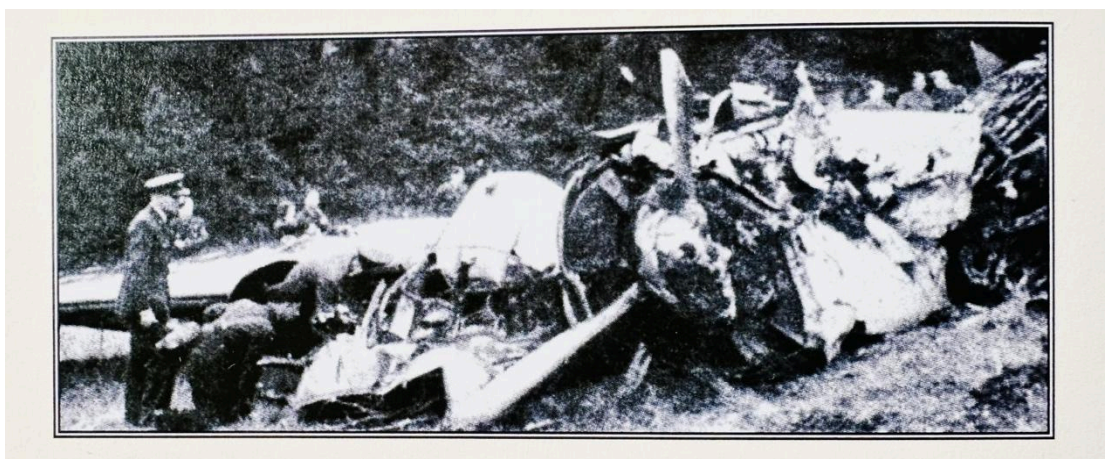
That misty morning, the 15th July 1940, Miss Hill checked that Henry had his gas mask packed and walked him up the lane to the village school. There they sang a hymn, prayed for the country and Henry sat squeezed onto a bench at the back of the schoolroom, clutching his copybook. Later, at lunchtime, he sat on the grass outside and ate his bread and dripping sandwich.

Miss Hill had tucked in a slice of beetroot as a treat. Some of the boys munched on turnips that they had dug up on the way to school, washed in a puddle and dried on the tufted grass at the side of the road.

The afternoon stretched ahead; Henry's pen scratched as he tried his hand at copperplate. The schoolroom was silent as everyone worked. In the distance, they could hear planes and the sound grew closer until everyone stopped and looked up at the ceiling; the approaching engines roared and spluttered. Mr. Weston yelled, "Under your desks!"

High above in the clouds, a Spitfire from Aston Down and a Hurricane from Kemble fought with a German bomber - a Junkers 88. Henry squeezed under a wooden desk next to Grace, closed his eyes and began to count. He had learned that trick in London when they sheltered in the underground. Counting backwards from a thousand kept your mind busy.

With engines screaming, the bomber shuddered overhead, scraping the school's bell tower. Mr. Weston grabbed the wooden window pole and rushed outside to help capture the airman in Mrs. Le Bailly's garden. Later, they heard that three of the airmen had managed to parachute down and had been taken willingly but the pilot had stayed in the plane for too long, trying to guide it clear of the village. Miss Hill stated that the school had been missed: 'by a wing and a prayer'.



Over the next few weeks, what had been an obscure village became famous and people travelled for miles to see the wreckage. In London, bombings had been nightly but here in the sleepy valleys, dogfights were a rare sight. Mr. Weston posted Henry at the gate to Strawberry Banks where the wreckage lay, to collect money for the troops. It was there, in early August, that Henry, full of longing and loneliness, decided to head for home, back to London.

He had been standing by the gate all afternoon but no one had come to view the wreckage. A skylark fluttered up and a warm wind swept down the valley, ruffling the grass and calling to him. He daydreamed, remembering his Mum standing on Paddington station, her thin coat flapping as the train steamed out carrying Henry and his gas mask away from everything he knew and loved.

In the valley, below the village, ran the railway. Half an hour later, Henry walked along the tracks, his mind fixed on home. He could hear trains coming a long way off. The rails seemed to buzz a warning so that he could scramble up the bank and hide. The plan worked well enough until he came to Sapperton. Here, the train tracks disappeared into the dark mouth of the tunnel.

Henry stopped. To go back meant terrible trouble. School had ended a long time ago. Miss Hill would be fretting. At first, Henry didn't feel too bad. Behind him, he had the light from the tunnel's opening but, half way down, the tunnel curved: increasingly, the dark and cold closed round him like a poacher's steel trap. He pulled his piece of sacking cloth to him, stood and listened: his breathing echoed, his heart thumped and, somewhere ahead, water dripped and something scuttled. Suddenly it hit him, and it all seemed too much: the bomber screaming overhead, the school shuddering as it scraped the bell tower, the tangled, smoking wreckage and the strangeness

of trees and green fields. He sat down and waited, rocking as he cried.

Thomas Restall, a railway ganger, found the little boy, crouched in the darkness. Henry had tried to walk home but his shoes, resoled with an old tyre, had worn thin and, besides, the darkness had held him fast in its shadows.

Early in the evening dusk, as the stars started to freckle the sky, Thomas brought Henry back to Winsley Cottage. To his surprise, Miss Hill drew him close and whispered, "Oh Henry," as she gently stroked his hair. Inside, the kitchen lamp glowed.

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Teaching Notes

Introduction

Writing a story set in the past means that the writer has to do some research. This story is about an evacuee and almost of the tale is true. I had to use my imagination to describe Miss Hall and I invented Henry but just about everything else is based on fact. The plot pattern hangs around the simple idea of a character having to face something that they fear. The opening line gives the main theme away, '*Henry had always hated the dark*'. The reader immediately knows that Henry will have to face the darkness! In these sorts of stories, the main character often defeats or overcomes their fear. In my one, there is light at the end of the tunnel for Henry, even if only in a small way when he gets back to the village.

Hook

This story will be better appreciated if it is tied into some historical work on the evacuees so that children know what happened. Many schools will also have children whose families have moved to find a better life; some may have left members of their families behind. Excellent novels to read alongside this would be 'Friend or Foe' by Michael Morpurgo, Carrie's War by Nina Dawden, Fireweed by Jill Paton Walsh or Blitzcat by Robert Westall who also collected letters from evacuees in 'Children of the Blitz'. Film clips that provide the context are easily available through the internet, e.g.

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/topics/ztvckqt/resources/1>

Vocabulary

Read the story through, underline difficult vocabulary and discuss any words or expressions that might present a barrier to understanding. Some of the words and phrases will be related to historical information whilst other will be turns of phrase that are still currently used.

Historical	Current
<i>blackout curtains, lye soap, metal tub, tenement block, street lamps, cart and donkey, gas mask, copybook, bread and dripping, copperplate, dogfight, sacking cloth, railway ganger, poacher's steel trap.</i>	<i>grimy, lush, cockerel, badgers, owls, foxes, yelping, trundle, sprout, trough, fate, beetroot, treat, turnip, the underground, pilot, skylark, ruffle, obscure, longing, fret, echo, scuttle, resoled, tire, freckle.</i>

Children will also be interested in knowing about the 3 types of plane mentioned and time could be spent with maps as well as using 'google earth' to locate the different places.

Oral comprehension

Read the story through and explore it by taking initial responses. What do they like or not like about the story? What interests or surprises them? What questions does it suggest? Then read it through again, ensuring that the vocabulary is in place and that everyone can read the text. Try repeating any tricky lines, using expression and have the children copy how you read aloud. Tease away at developing and deepening understanding through questioning:

- Give two reasons why can't Henry see a thing and has to 'feel his way to bed'?
- Explain what the reader learns from being told that the stairs were 'unfamiliar'.
- Use a chart to compare life in the tenement block and life in the village. Which would you prefer and why? Are there clues that suggest what Henry thinks?
- What were the possible benefits for an evacuee and what might be the disadvantages?
- What 'fate' awaited the pig and why did most families keep one?
- Find 3 clues that suggest how Miss Hall treated Henry.

- Why during the afternoon lesson did everyone look at the ceiling?
- Explain Henry's trick and why he used it?
- Explain what the expression 'a wing and a prayer' might mean.
- Why did the crash make the village famous?
- Give three reasons why Henry decided to run away.
- What does the phrase 'thin coat' suggest about Henry's mum?
- Why do you think his dad had not been there to say goodbye?
- Why did Henry need to hide from the trains?
- Why did he pull a piece of sacking cloth to himself?
- Search for any references to 'darkness', in any form, and discuss the theme of dark and light.
- Explain the final two lines.
- Why do you think the story is called 'The Tunnel'?

Explore the Story through Drama

- Write a letter from Henry to his mother describing his new life.
- In role as a journalist, interview Mr Watson and Grace about what happened and then write a newspaper article about the plane crash. The pilot was buried with full military honours, possibly recognising his attempt to steer the plane clear of the village.
- In role as Thomas Restall tell the story of how you found Henry in the tunnel.
- Role play the moment when Thomas brought Henry back to Winsley Cottage.
- Miss Hall took on six children to help her run a smallholding. In role as Henry, what would you say, or write in a letter, to any new child coming to stay.
- In role as children in the playground, gossip about what Henry did.

- What would Miss Hall say to Henry's mother in a phone conversation?

Research for Writing

This makes an ideal history based project as there may be older members of the community who are willing to share memories of being evacuated or discussing their memories of the evacuees. A ten year-old child who was alive at the time of the evacuation would now be about 88 years old. Many had a wonderful time but there were also many children who were treated badly and were miserable.

To set about writing a story set in your locality begin by using a search engine to find local information. The local library or historical group should be able to provide you with books of local history. Facts need to be listed and drawn upon to bring a story alive. I was lucky to find the story of the boy who was found trying to make his way home. The skill is to weave the information into the story. As well as looking for memories about evacuees coming to the village, I made lists of any facts that I could find about the school, home life, what people wore and ate. I then wrote 'tale of fear', weaving the facts in to provide detail that might make the story seem real.

@ Pie Corbett 2018

Owl

Sometimes, I still think about it. Sometimes, I can see myself on the platform. A small, pale, insignificant figure waiting, with my Ma and the loudspeaker blaring, "All passengers on train number 352, please climb aboard for departure!"

I remember holding tightly onto all that I had: a brown paper bag with a hot potato and my gas mask. I clambered onto the train and squeezed into a seat by several of my school friends. As the engine gradually began to move, pounding steam, I stared out of the window and saw Ma in the crowd, waving. I pressed my face against the cold glass and watched as the platform diminished until, Birmingham, my old life and my mother had gone. "I hope you're ok, Dad," I whispered. It had been weeks since he'd left and we still hadn't heard.

All I'd ever known was the back of Sherborne Street. As the train left the city, fields and farms swept past. My life until then had been back-to-back houses. It seemed an age before the train arrived in a green valley. I stood with the others on the platform at Chalford and waited. One by one, people came and took the others away until in the end, there was just me. Perhaps it was because of the shoes. I hadn't got any and my feet were black with grime.

Mrs Hill soon sorted that! Every Saturday, the metal tub was dragged outside and water pulled from the well so that I could be scrubbed. The soap made my eyes water and the brush she used was harsh on my skin. I had a little room in the attic. I'd lie in bed and stare out of the window, astounded by the stars as I listened to the nightingales in Farm Lane. I remembered what Ma had taught me and, every night, I prayed for my Dad and my Ma and the King.

That winter, the village became locked in by snow. One Saturday, I woke to hear what sounded like gunfire. I peered out of the window expecting to see Mr Hitler and his army but the lane was white and everything seemed quite still. Until, another crack and bang! Then I saw it. The ice on the branches weighed too much and broke with the weight, some splitting the trunks

right open. I tugged on my clothes and ran downstairs to check whether the rabbits had survived the cold. That was one of my jobs. I made sure to collect grass, dandelions and greens to feed them. Mrs Hill had warned me not to get too fond of them and to make sure that I fattened them up...

Probably the most exciting thing that had happened since I'd arrived had been the plane crash landing on Strawberry Banks. We'd been in the little village school, heard it screech overhead, just missing the bell tower and land in the fields. Old Mrs Bailey's maid found one German parachutist in the garden and fetched him a glass of sherry while the authorities came. Bob Gardiner's Dad was the warden and had stood guard with his gun. What the pilot didn't know was that he had no ammunition!

After that, Mr Gardiner organised for four of us to take it in turns to sleep over at the Hornby's house in Isles Green. It was the only local house with a phone and he reckoned that if there was an invasion then we could carry messages around the village.

So it was that the day after the snow had gripped the village, frozen the water in the Holy well and blocked some of the lanes, I left school on the dot and trudged up the hill towards Isles Green. Mrs Hill had made me some shoes out of an old tyre and some scraps of leather and material. They were better than nothing but by the time I got to the Hornbys' my feet were red and raw with the cold. Icicles hung from the roof like jagged teeth.

Mrs Hornby took me to the room where us lads always slept. It was a library, each wall covered in shelves of books. I loved it there. The library was the place where my world grew. Until I came to the village, I had not been able to read. But once again, Mrs Hill had sorted that. She had made me read every night and gradually over the first few months it began to make sense. And once I was away, once I had cracked reading, then I read everything that I could and the Hornby's library was my

favourite place. I read about Robinson Crusoe alone on an Island and I read too of Captain Hawkins and Long John Silver. I learned to lose myself in stories. I even learned to love the smell of books, the feel of their covers and the crisp pages. A fire smouldered in the grate. Mrs Hornby had left out a blanket, an apple, a piece of meat pie and two squares of chocolate. I pulled the blanket round me, took a cushion from a chair and as the darkness crept in, I snuggled down in front of the glowing embers and gently blew on them. It was too dark to read, so I lay there and wondered where my Dad was. How was Ma? I seemed a very long way from Sherborne Street. Mrs Hill was fine enough but it wasn't like being at home.

Then I heard it. A scratch at the window. A whisper, perhaps. Then a tapping. I imagined it might be some poor soul, lost on the roads and in need of shelter. Perhaps it was a soldier lost in the snow. Then it occurred to me, ridiculous as it may sound, that perhaps it was my father trying to find me! For a while, the fear paralysed me. I could not move but in the end, I plucked up enough courage.

The windows were covered with a thick cloth so that no light escaped. I tugged at the edge and peered out. A pale, heart-shaped face with huge amber eyes stared back at me. I laughed with relief. Then stifled it, in case I woke someone up. It wasn't a lost soldier or a man of the road. It wasn't my father's ghost, wandering the cold fields. It was a barn owl. It just sat there and wouldn't move even when I tried to shush it away from the window ledge. Stubbornly, it ruffled its feathers and looked at me with the deepest, soulful eyes.

So, I shredded the meat pie and fed it scraps. It gulped them down and then looked to me for more. It finished the pie and then it even took a slice of apple. Once it had eaten, it swivelled its head to look across the garden towards the woods. With a sudden rush of feathers, it took off and like a ghost flew into the darkness.

And when I walked back to Mrs Hill's the next day, I scanned the trees hoping to see my owl but there was nothing, just the wind whipping the snow into drifts. Bisley Road was almost full of snow so I kept to the fields, tracking where a fox had stalked the night before. As I walked down Farm Lane, I could see a lantern at Mrs Hill's, casting a golden shaft across the snowy vegetable patch that had once been a lawn. She was up early. There was wood smoke coming from the chimney and I could smell porridge. I stepped into the kitchen full of my story about the owl. Mrs Hall was waiting for me. And behind her, out of the shadows, somebody stood and, into the early morning lantern light, stepped my father, his face pale and his eyes staring at me.

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Evacuee - Teaching Notes

Introduction

All writers do research before writing. Michelle Paver has visited wolves and the Northern landscape to help her write the wonderful 'Wolf Brother' series . Fran Cottrell Boyce researched robotics before writing Runaway Robot. The genesis of this story lies in researching World War 2 locally.

Research for Writing

To find out about the evacuees, try using a research engine as a starter, contact the local historical society or library. I took a number of different accounts of local life plus an interview with

someone who had been evacuated from Birmingham and wove them together. This is the second story I have written about evacuees in my local area. The first was called, 'The Tunnel' and is available through the Teach Wire website at:

<https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/the-tunnel-pie-corbett-original-wwii-model-text-and-lesson-plan-for-ks2-literacy>

Novels

Excellent novels to read alongside this would be 'Friend or Foe' by Michael Morpurgo, 'Carrie's War' by Nina Bawden, 'When the sky falls' by Phil Earle, 'Fireweed' by Jill Paton Walsh or 'Blitzcat' by Robert Westall who also collected letters from evacuees in 'Children of the Blitz'. Film clips that provide the context are easily available through the internet, e.g.

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/topics/ztvckqt/resources/1>

Oral comprehension

Read the story through and explore it by taking initial responses. What do they like or not like about the story? What interests or surprises them? What questions does it suggest? Then read it through again, ensuring that the vocabulary is in place and that everyone can read the text. Try repeating any tricky lines, using expression and have the children copy how you read aloud. Tease away at developing and deepening understanding through questioning:

- Explain why the author used three adjectives at the start to describe the main character, '*A small, pale, insignificant figure*'.
- What did the main character hold his belongings 'tightly'?
- Contrast the 2 main settings, in Birmingham and then the countryside.
- How do the first few paragraphs set up the ending?

- What do you think Mrs Hill's first impressions might have been?
- How do you think Mrs Hill felt about the main character by the end and what is your evidence?
- Why do you think the author used the word 'astounded'?
- Explain why Mrs Hill didn't want him to get too fond of the rabbits.
- What is the effect of the icicles hanging 'like jagged teeth'?
- Why do you think he enjoyed reading so much?
- From the evidence, what can we tell about Mrs Hornsby?
- Why had Mrs Hill got rid of the lawn?
- In the story, in what way is the owl significant?
- Why do you think the author didn't let us know the main character's name?
- What is the effect of there being no name?

Explore the Story through Drama

- In role as the main character, write a letter from to his mother describing his new life.
- In role as a journalist, interview Miss Hill about the experience of looking after an evacuee.
- Role play the moment when
- In role as children in the playground, gossip about the new arrival.
- What would Miss Hill say to the main character's mother in a phone conversation?
- Create a timeline for the main character of emotions, labeling with quotes and then hot seat the character to explore his emotions and thoughts.
- Write the main character's diary at the end of the story.

Research for Writing

This topic makes a wonderful bridge between historical work, where the children can use different sources and decide what we know for certain, what the sources suggest and what we cannot tell from the sources. Almost all the facts in this story are accurate though how people behaved or felt are obviously invented.

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