

Freak the Mighty

Teacher's Booklet

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Introduction

Synopsis

Freak the Mighty explores the unlikely friendship between Max and Kevin. Both boys have to face their 'difference' from the rest of the world: Max because of his size, and the fact that everyone is scared of him because of his dad, and the events surrounding his mother's death; Kevin because of his size and his disabilities. During this fast-paced novel, both Max and Kevin have to confront and overcome challenges which would daunt even the strongest hero. It is through their friendship that they become 'Freak the Mighty' and discover that 'difference' doesn't have to mean weakness.

Teaching *Freak the Mighty* at Key Stage 3

The novel, which is both humorous and sad, explores the themes of friendship, being an outsider, and the power of language and education. Its setting is poor, urban America – not the standard view of American life. The families portrayed are unusual; we are shown different family set-ups – from single parents to families torn apart. The novel tackles serious subjects in a humorous way and shows clearly how we can find strength through friendship and unity.

There are sensitive issues within the novel that the teacher will need to face. The language used to describe disability is often uncompromising and the teacher will need to explore how our society often labels people who are different. However, the novel is uplifting and the reader, along with Max, learns the importance of seeing beyond disability.

Structure of this resource

This resource provides suggestions for activities which can be easily slotted into a scheme of work around the novel. It consists of two parts: the **overview of teaching and learning** and the **resources**.

The **overview of teaching and learning** aims to secure progression in learning, rather than just progression through the pages. It has been divided into eight natural sections. The overview for each section indicates:

- the chapters to be read
- the features of the text to be explored
- the learning aims for the section (including Assessment focuses)
- brief descriptions of the approaches to teaching.

The **resources** comprise:

- Pupil worksheets (which can be photocopied)
- Teacher support sheets/OHTs etc
- Assessment criteria, grids etc.

Overview of teaching and learning

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|--|--|---|---|
| Pre-reading Resources Resource Sheet 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of the place of 'the quest' in literature. Show students that there are stages within a quest, and that heroes follow a journey. • Exploration of how writers use established structures to create new texts. | Learning focuses To be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand how texts fit within a literary heritage • explore how writers use and manipulate established story structures. Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF3: 7R6, 7R20 | Activity 1: Quest genre films <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about quest genre films with the pupils, e.g. <i>Star Wars</i>, <i>Harry Potter</i>, <i>Lord of the Rings</i>. Use Resource Sheet 1 to focus paired discussion of how their chosen film matches and/or departs from the quest structure. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those pupils who have completed Resource Sheet 1 should write down what they think are the established literary conventions for a hero, i.e. how do writers portray heroes? |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|---|--|---|--|
| Chapters 1-2 <i>Before Freak the Mighty</i> Resources Resource Sheet 2 Resource Sheet 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge assumptions about American society. Exploration of the notion of 'the hero' in literature. Explanation that there are literary conventions which writers use and adapt for their own means. Analysis of Max's origins and the reader's first impressions of him. How far does this meet the criteria of the hero? | Learning focuses To be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand that there are literary conventions for heroes. understand how writers establish our first impressions of a character. Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF6: 7R12, 7R20 | Activity 1: Analysing expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the class what their expectations are about family life in America. The brainstorm can be stored for later discussions. Activity 2: Exploring character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut out the grid of statements on Resource Sheet 2 and group them into positive and negative impressions of Max. Then on Resource Sheet 3 ask pupils to fill in the boxes with their thoughts about Max. This will help with a close reading of the text. Capture initial impressions of Max and align his portrayal with conventions of the hero and the hero's journey. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how Max's feelings about himself can be interpreted through the language he uses. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|---|---|--|--|
| Chapters 3–6 <i>Arrival of Freak the Mighty</i> Resources Resource Sheet 4 Resource Sheet 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A return to the quest structure and a matching of the features of the hero's journey with the events in the novel. Analysis of Max's thoughts and reactions to Kevin within these chapters. Establishing how his initial impressions change: how the writer achieves this. | <p>Learning focuses To be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand and identify how and why ideas are structured in a text by the writer. understand how writers convey character and understand how characters develop during the course of a novel. <p>Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF4: 7R7 Reading AF5: 7R12</p> | <p>Activity 1: Text structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After reading Chapters 3 to 6, hand out Resource Sheet 4 and establish the relevant stages of the hero's journey. Model how the call to adventure could match the growing idea of friendship between Max and Kevin. As a whole class, ask pupils to consider how Max's views of Kevin change through Chapters 3 to 6. Then, split the class into groups and allocate each group a separate chapter. They should look for textual evidence of the change in Max's views in their specific chapter. Individuals should record final ideas on Resource Sheet 5. They can then feed the information back to the class to formulate a joint answer. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Chapters 7–10 <i>Being Freak the Mighty</i></p> <p>Resources Resource Sheet 6 (OHT) Resource Sheet 7 Resource Sheet 8</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of the language used to describe Max and Kevin. Exploration of archetypes and the language of knightly deeds. | <p>Learning focuses To be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand how the writer uses language to convey character. <p>Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF5: 7R12</p> | <p>Activity 1: Text analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Resource Sheet 6 on the OHP to model annotation in order to show how Kevin uses language to describe Max as a horse. <p>Activity 2: Exploration of language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the passage at the end of Chapter 8 in which Kevin defines ‘archetype’. Explore with the class the idea of knights and what our concept and expectations of them are. <p>Activity 3: More exploration of language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split the class into groups and ask them to skim-read Chapters 7 to 10 to find language relating to knights and Arthurian legends. Hand out Resource Sheet 7; individual groups should discuss how Freak the Mighty can be seen as a knight. <p>Assessment Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be completed after reading Chapter 10. The purpose of this task is to assess AF3 and AF5 Reading using Speaking and Listening. The focus for this assessment is the question: How does Kevin’s language make him different? Pupils analyse the ways that the language Kevin uses in Chapters 1–10 helps to show how he is different from other people. Using a jigsaw technique for grouping, the class will discuss the question in their expert groups and then present their findings to their ‘home’ group as a formal presentation. Resource Sheet 8 can be used for the pupils to collect their ideas. See Resource Sheet 9 for details on how to execute this. The feedback to ‘home’ groups will enable a Speaking and Listening assessment of En2. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|---|---|--|--|
| Chapters 11–14 <i>Friends and Enemies</i> Resources Resource Sheet 10 Resource sheet 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language used to describe Iggy and Loretta Lee. How are they presented as villains? | Learning focuses To be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand that writers use language symbolically. understand that writers use setting to establish character. Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF5: 7R12, 7R14 | Activity 1: Positive and negative language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out Resource Sheet 10 and ask pupils to think about positive and negative language to give an impression of character. Pupils draw images of Iggy and Loretta based on the impression the writer has painted with words. After this they should group-read Chapter 11, adding to their initial responses to the characters. Activity 2: Text analysis: setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out Resource Sheet 11. Pupils review Chapter 11 and investigate the way in which the writer has used the setting of the Testaments and the interior of the Lees' apartment to build a sense that they are dangerous and will cause trouble for Freak and Max. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils who have completed the activities above easily should identify ways in which the writer hints that Loretta and Iggy are perhaps not as villainous as we might at first perceive. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|---|--|--|--|
| Chapters 15–20 <i>Return of the Father</i> Resources Resource Sheet 12 Resource Sheet 13 Resource Sheet 14 Resource Sheet 15 Resource Sheet 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation of the language used – what does it suggest about Max’s feelings and reactions? • Analysis of how the threat posed by Kenny Kane is conveyed to the reader through inference and deduction. • Investigation of the reader’s fears: will Max fail this test? | Learning focuses To be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the difference between surface meaning and hidden meaning • understand how the writer creates doubt in the reader’s mind • understand how Max’s feelings are suggested by the language of the text. Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF3: 7R8 Reading AF5: 7R8, 7R12, 7R14 | Activity 1: Sorting quotations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having read Chapter 16, pupils should sort the cards of quotations on Resource Sheet 12 into categories to facilitate discussion of the text and to focus attention on the effects of the language used by the writer. Create a spectrum of Max’s reactions based on the class’s findings to encourage critical response of the text. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils who have completed the task above should look at how the writer uses similes when Max expresses himself. This information could be fed back to the class later in the lesson. Activity 2: Use of language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils read Chapter 17 and then recap on Chapter 16 by analysing the ways in which Kenny Kane’s threat is conveyed by the writer, using Resource Sheet 13. Use this to model thinking. Activity 3: Hidden meanings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In groups, pupils read Chapter 17 looking for surface ‘goodness’ and inferred ‘threat’ and record details on Resource Sheet 14. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils who have completed the activities above should investigate how convincing Kenny Kane’s acting is and plot their findings on the graph on Resource Sheet 15 as they read. Activity 4: Max’s feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on Chapters 16 to 19 with the game on Resource Sheet 16. This focuses on details which lead the reader to worry that Max has been convinced by Kenny Kane and has failed his father’s ‘test’. Activity 5: Text analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils read Chapter 20 in groups of four. They should gather notes on the ways in which Max proves himself and ‘passes’ the test. Afterwards, they plan and show five moving snapshots that show Max proving himself, each lasting no more than three seconds. Activity 6: Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss whether pupils think that Max passes this test alone. Is he independent or is it Freak the Mighty who passes the test? Model and encourage the use of evidence from the text to support points made. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chapters 21–24 <i>A Death</i> Resources Resource Sheet 17 Resource Sheet 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max's growing independence from Freak. The ways in which the writer has hinted at Freak's death in Chapters 21–23. | Learning focuses To be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify how Max's independence grows. understand how the writer prepares us for Freak's death. Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF2: 7R12 Reading AF3: 7R12 Reading AF6: 7R15 | Activity 1: Character development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils split into reading groups to read Chapters 21 to 23. Using Resource Sheet 17, they investigate Max's growing independence from Freak and confidence in his own abilities. Each individual in each group is given a specific focus on which to become an 'expert', in preparation to explain their findings to a new group. Extension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a separate reading group, those pupils who have finished the activity above look at details which indicate that perhaps Max still hasn't finished growing and that he needs to develop further before he can stand alone without Kevin. They should present their findings to the class at the end of the lesson. Activity 2: Anticipating the ending <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After reading Chapter 24, pupils investigate how the writer prepares us for Freak's death in Chapters 21 to 23. See Resource Sheet 18. After this, they practise extracting relevant details from pages 138–39 in Chapter 24. |

| Section | Features to explore during reading | Learning targets | Activities |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Chapter 25 and Dictionary <i>After Freak</i></p> <p>Resources Resource Sheet 19 Resource Sheet 20 (Assessment) Resource Sheet 21 (Assessment) Resource Sheet 22 Resource Sheet 23</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of the meanings of the words in Kevin's dictionary. How do they relate to the rest of the story? Review of the structure of the novel, using the structure of a typical quest. | <p>Learning focuses To be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the journeys undertaken by Max in the novel. understand that the structure of the novel is similar to that of a typical hero's quest. <p>Assessment focuses and Framework objectives Reading AF4: 7R15 Reading AF5: 7R12, 7R15</p> | <p>Activity 1: Word work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Resource Sheet 19 and the dictionary, put the pupils into pairs and ask them to investigate links between the dictionary and the journeys Max has made through his relationship with Kevin. Discuss how the words relate to Max's different journeys. <p>Assessment Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be carried out after reading Chapter 25 and the dictionary. The purpose of this task is to analyse the ways that the language and ideas of Chapter 25 help to show that Max has developed as a character over the course of the novel. The investigation should be completed in pairs, using Resource Sheets 20 and 21. A further shaping of ideas, using Resource Sheet 22, will lead to a Speaking and Listening assessment of En2 as pupil pairs explain their ideas and findings to another pair. <p>Activity 2: Novel structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Resource Sheet 23 which describes the template of a typical quest structure, pupils discuss how the events of the novel relate to those of a typical hero's quest. |

Pupil Resource Sheet 1

Task

With a partner, think about films that follow a quest, e.g. *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* or *Lord of the Rings*. Use this sheet to discuss how your chosen film matches and/or departs from the quest structure.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| The ordinary world | The ordinary world is shown in order to provide a contrast with the 'new' world the hero is about to enter. |
| The call to adventure | The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure. As soon as they know about this call they can no longer be comfortable in the ordinary world. The hero's goal is made clear: to win the treasure; get revenge; right a wrong; confront a challenge or achieve a dream. |
| Refusal of the call | The hero becomes reluctant to take on the challenge and may start to think of turning back. Advice from a mentor or some other circumstance is needed to enable the hero to overcome this fear. |
| Mentor | The mentor helps the hero prepare for the adventure. He or she gives guidance and sometimes magical equipment. They can only travel part of the journey with the hero and at this point can give stern advice to the hero to get the adventure going. |
| Crossing the first threshold | The hero commits to the adventure, agrees to face the consequences of the challenge and enters the special world of the story. This is where the adventure starts. |
| Tests, allies and enemies | The hero begins to face the challenges of the new world. He or she meets new friends and enemies. Often the settings can be dark and dangerous and the hero's determination to complete the adventure is tested. |
| Approach to the inmost cave | The hero comes to the edge of a dangerous place where the object of the quest is hidden. When the place is entered, the hero crosses the second threshold. Often heroes pause at the gate to prepare and plan. |
| The supreme ordeal | The hero has to face his or her greatest fear. They will also face death and will battle with the enemy. |
| Reward | The hero wins the treasure. This treasure could be knowledge and reconciliation with the enemy. |
| The road back | The hero must face the consequences of the battle with the enemy. If there has been no reconciliation, the enemy may return to chase the hero as they make their way back to the ordinary world. |
| Resurrection | The hero must be re-born in order to return to the normal world. The hero faces another brush with death. The lessons learned from the supreme ordeal help the hero to win through. |

Pupil Resource Sheet 2

Task

Cut the grid into cards. Work in pairs to sort the statements about Max into the following categories:

- Statements which show Max **positively**
- Statements which show Max **negatively**
- Statements which could be **positive or negative**

| | |
|---|--|
| I never had a brain until Freak came along | I had a way of saying things with my fists |
| I knew what a rotten lie that hug stuff was | ...you don't even know yet how we got to be Freak the Mighty. Which was pretty cool... |
| Not that I <i>have</i> any ideas. My brain is vacant, okay? | Maybe it was those crutches kept me from lashing out at him... |
| For a long time I never saw Freak any more...and the next thing I remember I'm like in the third grade or something and I catch a glimpse of this yellow-haired kid scowling at me... | Gram and Grim, bless their pointed little heads |
| And for some reason little Kicker never got around to kicking little Freak. | ...do I complain about the crummy panelling... I do not. |

Pupil Resource Sheet 3

Impressions of where Max lives

(A hero may come from humble or disadvantaged origins)

Things Max says about himself

Max – a
hero?

How Max thinks other people see him

(A hero may have a weakness or a flaw in their character)

How does Max fit the 'hero' pattern?

Pupil Resource Sheet 4

Task

Think about the events in Chapters 3 to 6. How do they match the stages of the hero's journey? With a partner, discuss how they match and where you think the similarities and differences may be.

Consider the following questions:

- What is Max's call to adventure?
- How or why does he refuse that call?
- Who do you think the mentor might be?
- Could it be more than one person?

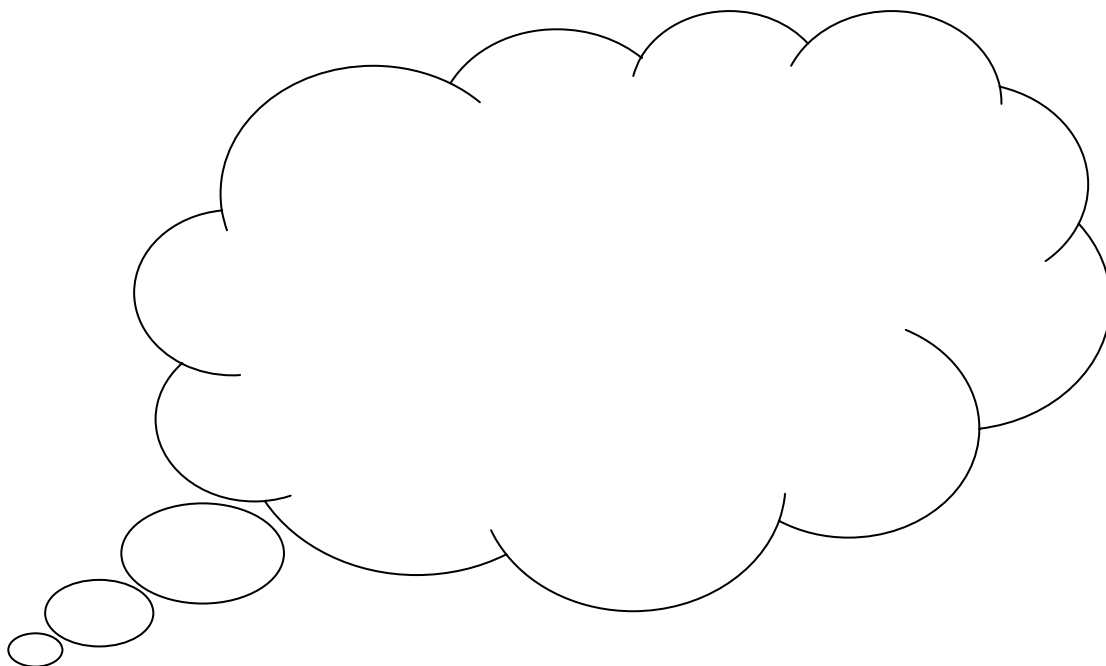
| Analysing the structure in Chapters 3 to 6 | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Stages of the hero's journey | Events from the novel |
| The call to adventure The hero is presented with a problem, challenge, or adventure to undertake. As soon as they know about this call they can no longer be comfortable in the ordinary world. The hero's goal is made clear: to win treasure, get revenge, right a wrong, confront a challenge, or achieve a dream. | |
| Refusal of the call The hero becomes reluctant to take on the challenge and may start thinking of turning back. Advice from the mentor or some other circumstance is needed to enable the hero to overcome fear. | |
| Mentor The mentor helps the hero prepare for the adventure. He or she gives guidance and sometimes magical equipment. They can only travel part of the journey with the hero and at this point can give stern advice to the hero to get the adventure going. | |
| Similarities | |
| Differences | |

Pupil Resource Sheet 5

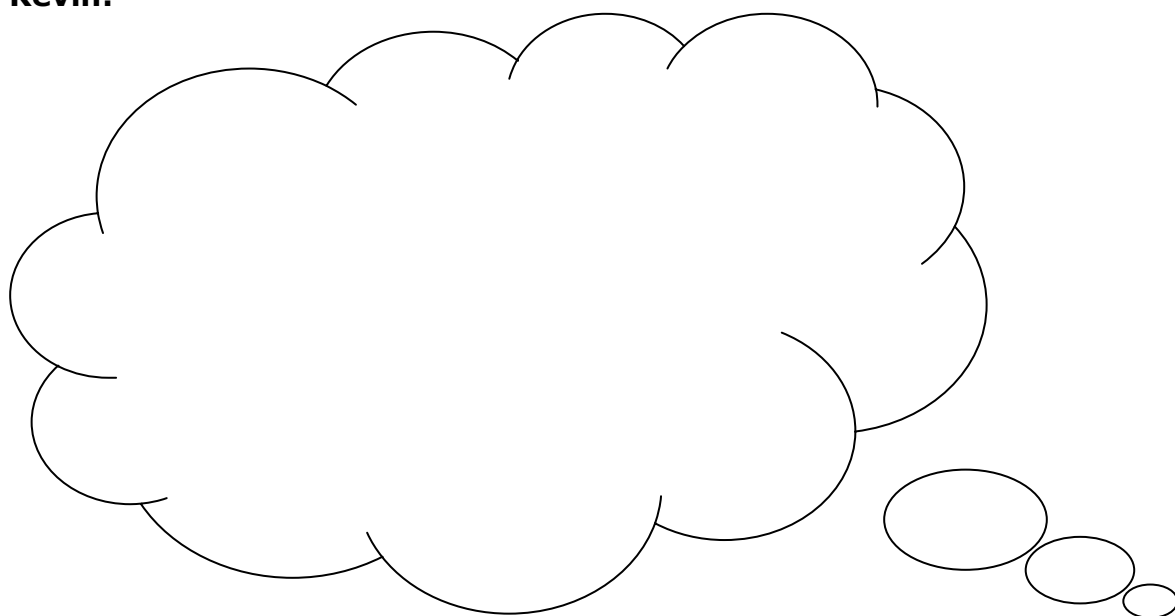
Task

In Chapters 3 to 6, Max's views of Kevin change many times. Using the thought bubbles below, map how his thoughts and feelings change. Remember to explain **why** you had that idea and back up your ideas with evidence from the text.

Max's first thoughts about Kevin:



Max's later thoughts about Kevin:



Teacher Resource Sheet 6 (OHT)

Chapter 7, pages 31–32

“Left!” Freak says, and he kicks me with his little foot, like he’s digging into a horse and it clicks in my head. Go that way! Follow the feet! “Faster,” Freak is saying, and he’s urging me on, it’s lucky for me the little dude doesn’t have any spurs, but I don’t care, I just want to get clear of Blade.

“Warp factor nine!” Freak is shouting. “More speed, o mighty beast!”

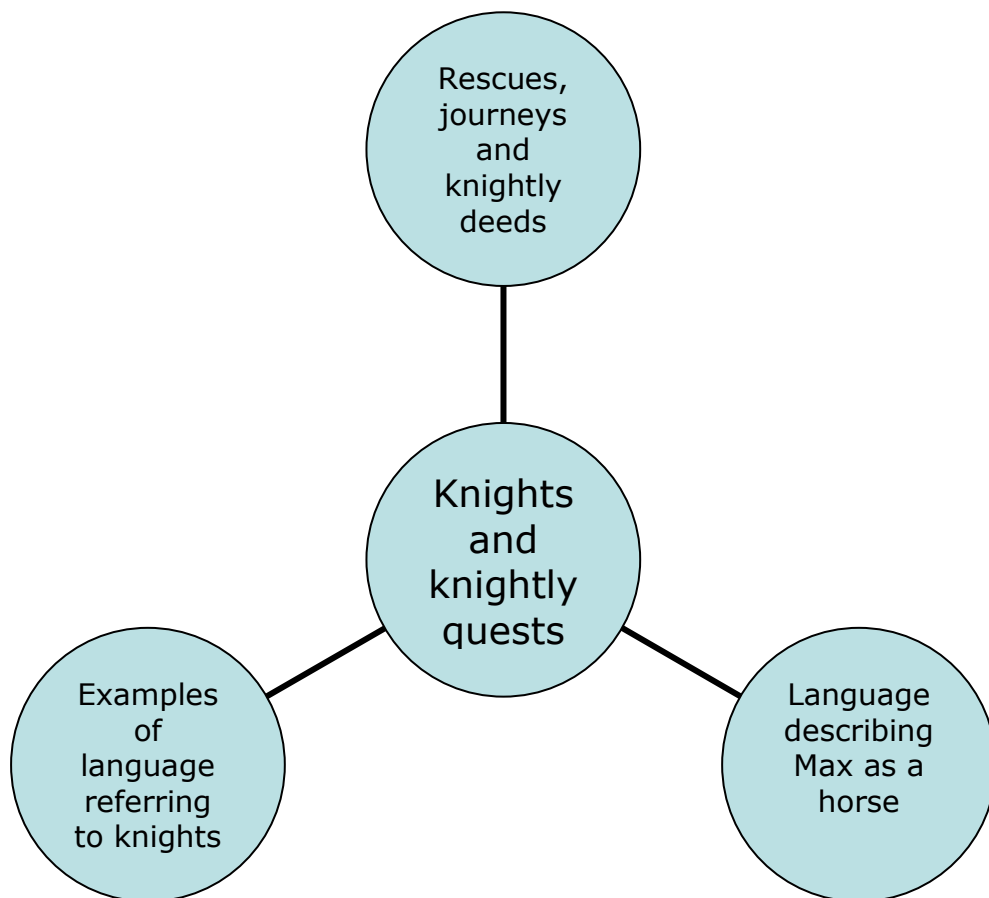
Now I’m running at a full gallop, weaving through the crowd, and I don’t even need to look back, all I have to do is follow the way Freak is kicking his feet, steering me. I’m pretty sure we’re getting away until this punk comes out of nowhere, he’s one of Blade’s gang and he’s got this big ugly grin.

Pupil Resource Sheet 7

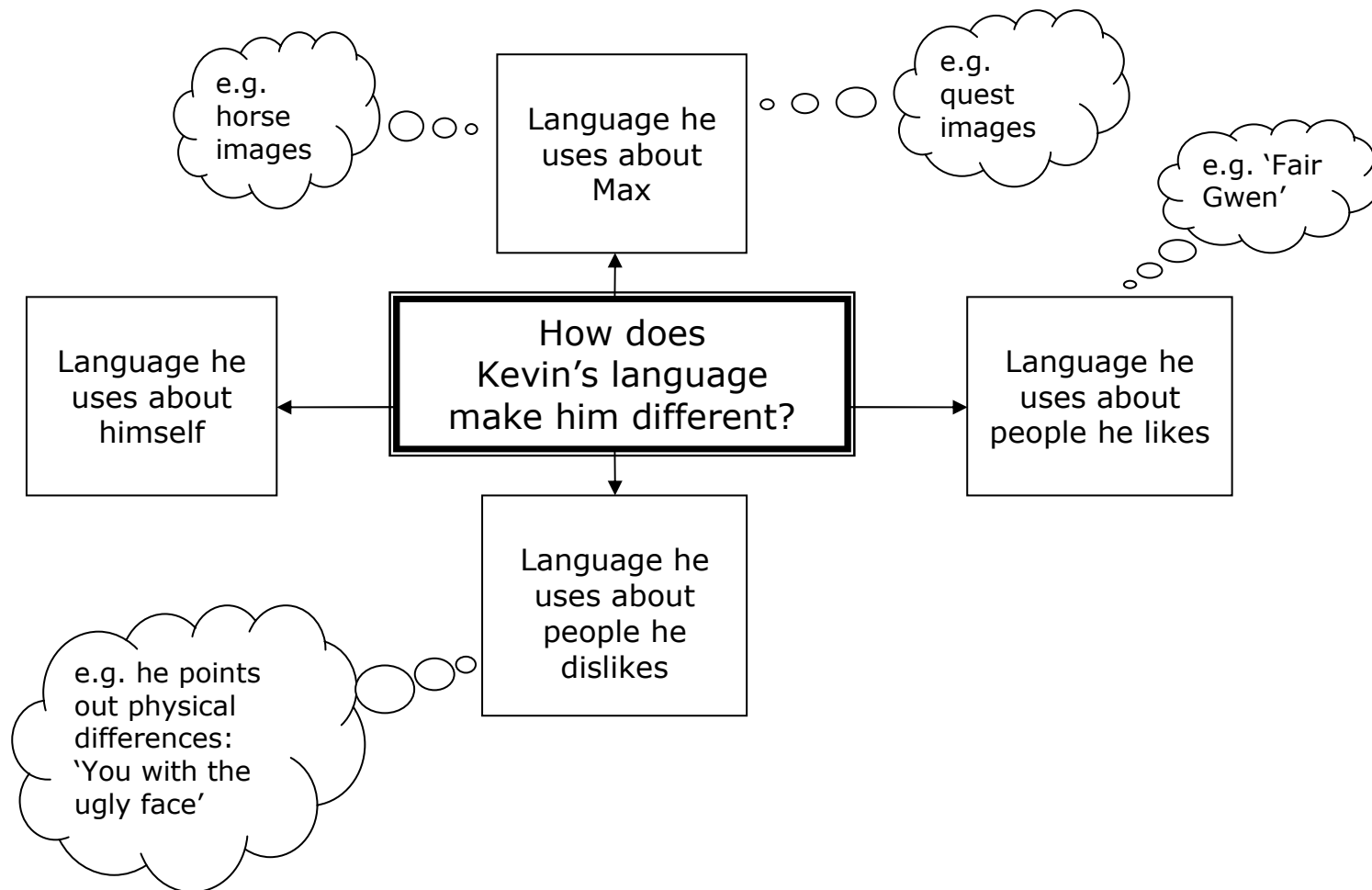
Task

In Chapters 7 to 10, Kevin uses language which refers to knights and their quests. In these chapters there are events which cause the reader to think of rescues, journeys and knightly deeds.

Skim-read the chapters to find examples of these events and use the organiser below to record your ideas.



Pupil Resource Sheet 8



Teacher Resource Sheet 9

Assessment Exercise

To be completed after reading Chapter 10. The purpose of this task is to assess AF3 and AF5 Reading using Speaking and Listening. The focus for this assessment is the question:

How does Kevin's language make him different?

Pupils analyse the ways that the language Kevin uses in Chapters 1 to 10 helps to show how he is different from other people.

Using a jigsaw technique for grouping (see below), the class discuss their area of focus in their 'expert' groups and then present their findings to their 'home' group ready to formulate a group response to the question.

Resource Sheet 8 can be used for the pupils to collect their ideas. The feedback to home groups will enable a Speaking and Listening assessment of En2.

How to organise the jigsaw grouping

Establish groups of five. Each member of each group should label themselves A, B, C, D or E. The question is divided into sections (see below). In their home groups of four or five, pupils allocate a section each, and then regroup into expert groups, e.g.

A = How Kevin uses language to show his scorn for people

B = How Kevin uses language to say the things that other people think but don't say

C = How Kevin uses language referring to disability which could be seen as offensive

D = How Kevin shows his knowledge through the language he uses

E = How Kevin uses images from his reading about King Arthur and his love of *Star Trek*

In these groups, experts work together on their chosen area, then return to their original home groups to report back on their area of expertise. The home group then formulates a joint answer to the question:

How does Kevin's language make him different?

This task requires pupils to use the different areas of expertise for a joint outcome.

This assessment will require advance planning of the grouping, but is a very effective Speaking and Listening strategy because it ensures the participation of all pupils.

Pupil Resource Sheet 10

Task

Writers can use language symbolically, to paint images in the reader's mind. If the writer wants to give a positive impression of a character, positive language will be used. However, if the writer wants to warn the reader that a character is going to be trouble, negative language might be used.

The quotations below are used by the writer to give impressions of Iggy and Loretta Lee.

- 1 Draw the image that these quotations bring to your mind and then try to explain underneath how the language leads you to your expectations of the character.

| | |
|---|--|
| Loretta Lee: "this hand comes <u>snaking</u> out and reaches for the mail box" | Iggy Lee: "and he's got a beard which looks like it's made out of red <u>barbed wire</u> ." |
| Draw your image here: | Draw your image here: |
| <p>What does this image lead us to expect of Loretta? What might it symbolise about her?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • | <p>What does this image lead us to expect of Iggy? What might it symbolise about him?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • |

- 2 In a group, you are now going to read Chapter 11. As you read, look for other details in the chapter which seem to support your ideas about Loretta and Iggy Lee. Prepare to share them with the rest of the class.

Task

1 Skim-read and scan back through Chapter 11, looking for any description of the setting that helps to suggest that Iggy and Loretta are dangerous and will cause trouble for Max and Freak. Sketch a map of the Testaments and the Lees' flat in the space below and label it with the quotations you find.

- Freak the Mighty Pupil Resource Sheet 11
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Teacher Resource Sheet 12

Copy and cut out the cards for pupils to discuss in pairs and sort into the following categories (in bold on the cards):

- Max feels **afraid**
- Max feels **overwhelmed**
- Max is **in shock**
- Max feels **powerless**

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| 'it feels like my heart has stopped beating' (page 90) | 'I'm paralysed and my head is empty and all there is in the world is that big hand and this cool breath like the wind' (page 91) | 'looking at those eyes is <i>asking</i> to have a bad dream" (page 93) | 'I'm thinking this weird thought: <i>He doesn't need a suit of armour</i> ' (page 94) |
| 'Somehow I always knew this would happen, that he would come for me' (page 92) | 'I'm so weak, I can hardly put my shoes on' (page 92) | 'That's what I feel like all over – numb and prickly and as light as a balloon' (page 92) | 'but tonight the pond is empty as the moon, as empty as my head' (page 94) |
| 'He's everything all rolled into one, and no one can ever beat him, not even the brave Lancelot' (page 94) | 'it's like a dead voice in my head or something' (page 93) | 'I can tell how cold the air is, but I can't feel it' (page 92) | 'I'm thinking: <i>The stars clicked off</i> and I don't even know why I'm thinking that' (page 93) |
| 'the funny thing is, even though I'm not cold, my teeth are chattering, so it's like the rest of me is freezing but my head hasn't noticed' (page 95) | 'The cold doesn't matter. Nothing does, really, not Grim and Gram or the old stars in the sky, or Freak and the Fair Gwen. They're all just make-believe' (page 92) | 'Once a car goes by real slow around the pond, and I've got this strange feeling there's no one at the wheel' (page 94) | |
| Max feels OVERWHELMED | Max is IN SHOCK | Max feels POWERLESS | Max feels AFRAID |

Teaching sequence:

- Draw attention first to the four categories of Max's reactions and ensure that pupils understand 'overwhelmed' and 'powerless'.
- Model aloud and show on the board the thought process of placing a quotation within a category. Try to convey the importance of identifying, by underlining, the key words of the quotation. *Which of the words helps me to decide how Max is reacting?* Model also what happens when a quotation can be placed in two of the categories: choosing the 'best fit' and explaining how that decision was arrived at.
- Organise pupils into pairs to begin with, to card-sort the quotations from Chapter 16, discussing the language, categorising the quotation and identifying the key word(s).
- Pairs of pupils join to make groups of four and to explain how they have categorised their quotations. The groups of four should circle in colour any of the quotations about which they strongly disagree.
- As a class, discuss some of the quotations that were most hard to categorise. Re-model on the board the exercise of focusing on the key word in these quotations, to reinforce the importance of this process. Draw out that sometimes the language of a text can be interpreted in different ways or in **more than one** way.
- Ask for four volunteers to stand at the front of the room and give each of them one of the following quotations, blown up onto A3 paper, so that they are visible from the back of the room:

| |
|--|
| 'I'm thinking this weird thought: <i>He doesn't need a suit of armour.</i>' |
| 'I'm so weak, I can hardly put my shoes on.' |
| 'He's everything all rolled into one, and no one can ever beat him, not even the brave Lancelot.' |
| 'Somehow I always knew that this would happen, that he would come for me.' |

- Explain to pupils that all of these quotations suggest Max's feelings of being powerless, but some more than others. Which order should they be in? Label one end of the room 'Powerful' and the other end 'Powerless'. The rest of the class make suggestions about where each of the quotations should be placed on this spectrum and why. Encourage higher attaining pupils to explain by referring to a single key word in the quotation.

Pupil Resource Sheet 13

Task

The following are all quotations from Chapter 16. Some of these details show that **on the surface** the character Kenny Kane is being gentle. On the other side of the table, however, are details which suggest that there are many **hidden threats**.

- 1 With a partner, use the spaces to make notes about what the quotations **suggest** about Kenny Kane and his intentions.

| Surface gentleness? | Hidden threat? |
|---|--|
| 'It's time I got to know my own son.' (page 91) | 'Rule number one, don't sass your old man.' (page 95) |
| 'and he reaches out and touches my face real gentle.' (page 93) | 'He hooks his finger in my shirt collar and makes me duck down until the car goes by.' (page 95) |
| 'He touches me real soft on the back of the neck.' (page 95) | 'Iggy gives this nervous heh heh heh.' (page 97) |
| | '"Bring me and my boy some food," my father says.' (page 97) |

- 2 Use the connective phrases below to express ideas about how Kenny Kane seems different on the surface from how he is underneath. Have a look at the example to get you started!

Even though Kenny seems to want to get to know Max like a loving father, he lays down rules that suggest that he is angry with Max.

Although...
In spite of the fact...

Even though...
Despite...

Pupil Resource Sheet 14

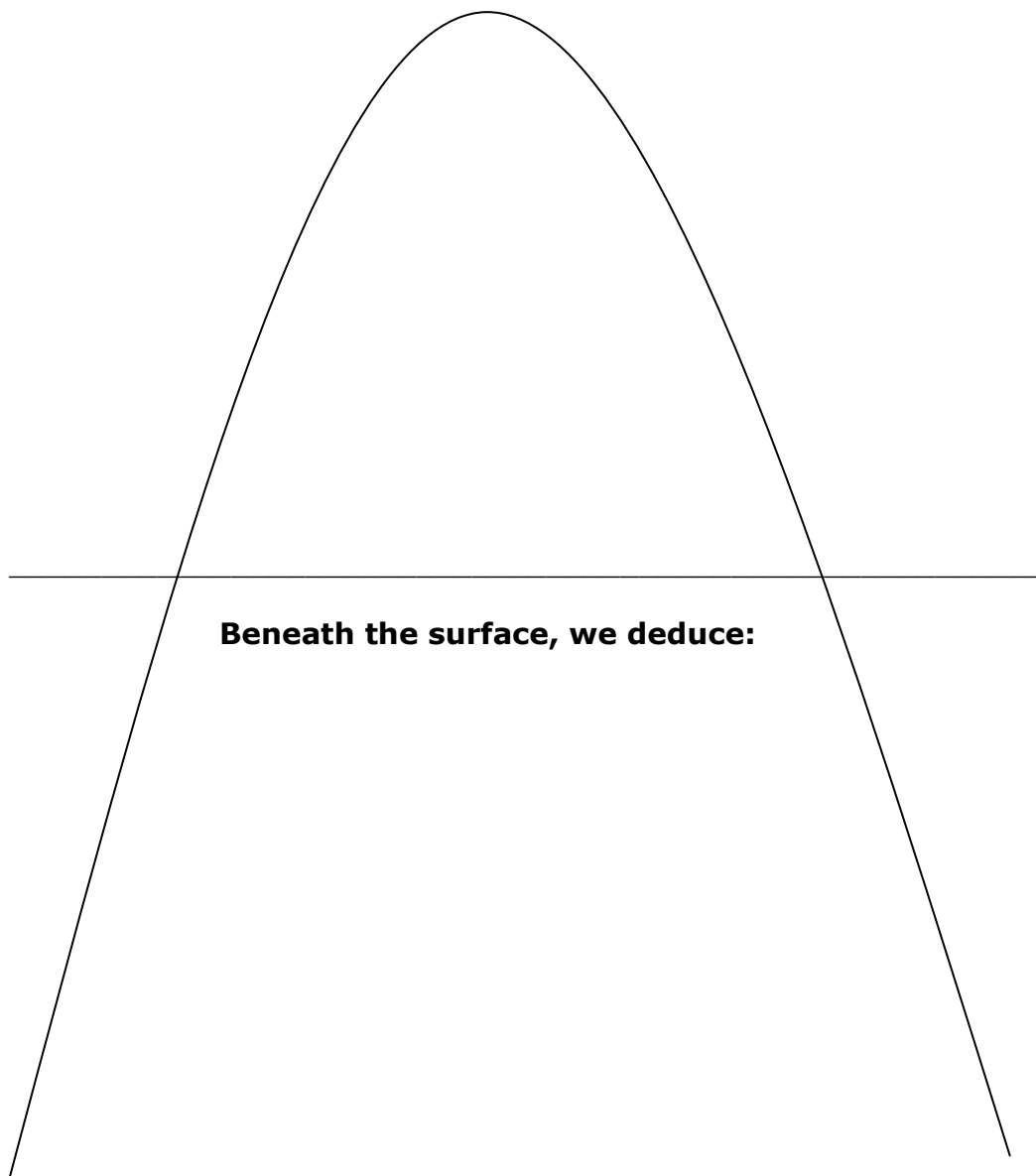
Task

Meaning is just like an iceberg: some of it is highly visible on the surface but much of it is hidden beneath the surface.

In Chapter 17, Kenny Kane *seems* gentle on the surface but underneath there are a lot of hidden threats.

As you read, find examples of Kenny's gentleness and his hidden threats and record them on the iceberg below.

On the surface, we observe:

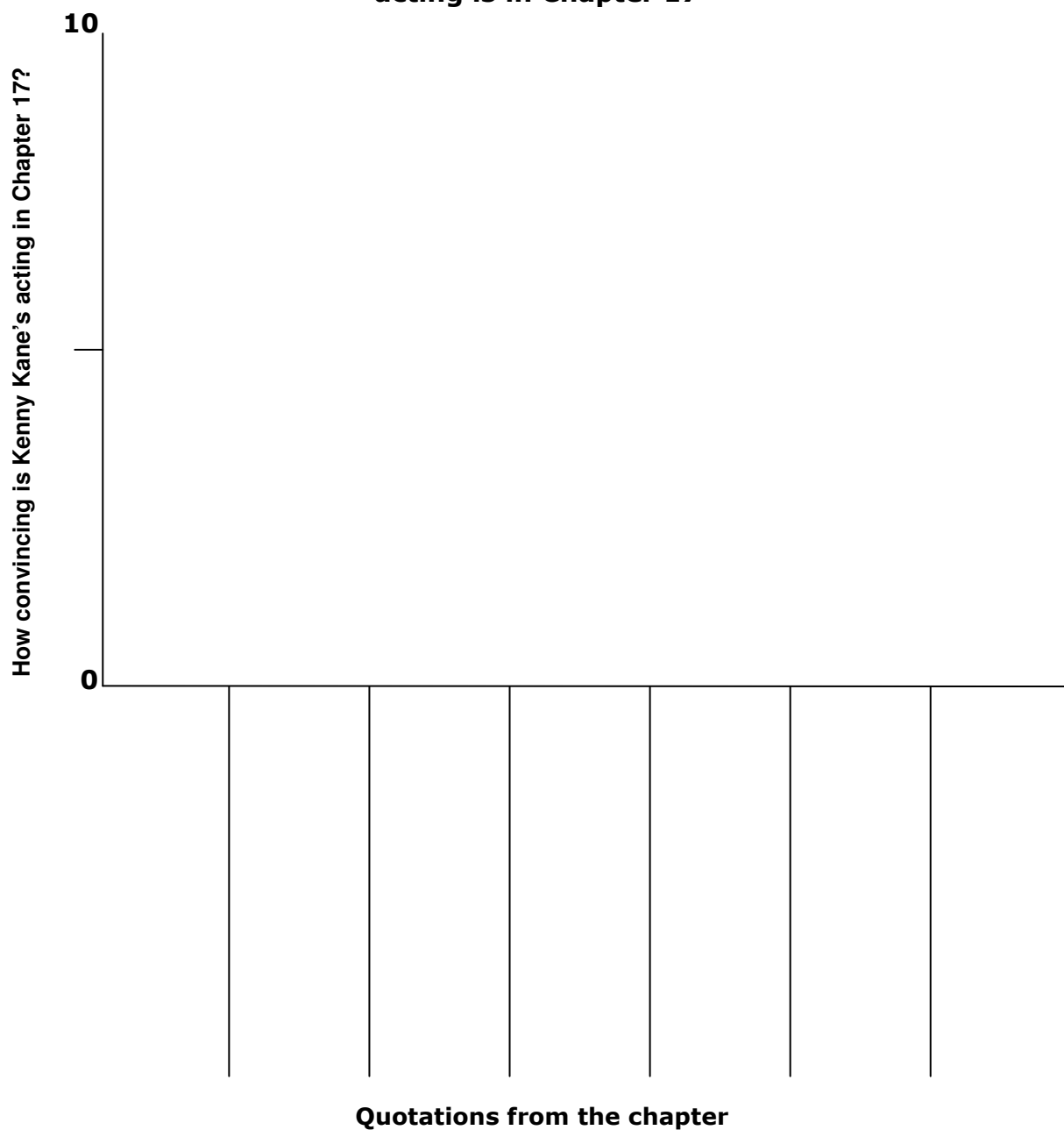


Pupil Resource Sheet 15

Task

As you read Chapter 17, note Kenny Kane's attempts to persuade Max to trust him. When you find a detail to comment on, try to decide how convincing Kane's acting is at this point and plot a point on the graph. Remember to look closely at the language used by the writer for clues!

Graph to show how convincing Kenny Kane's acting is in Chapter 17



Teacher Resource Sheet 16

This game focuses on details which lead the reader to worry that Max has been convinced by Kenny Kane and has failed the 'test' posed by his father.

The name of the game is:

The reader worries that Max will lose this battle with his father because...

How to play:

- Hand each pupil five pieces of paper. They need to cast their minds back over the events of Chapters 16-19, since Max was abducted by his father.
- On each piece of paper they should record one detail from the chapters that leads the reader to worry that Max will lose this battle with his father.
- Give them an example to get them started, e.g. Kenny tries to turn Max against Freak by telling him that Freak can't be trusted.
- Once pupils have recorded their ideas, they play a version of 'go fish'. They meet up with another pupil in the room and try to 'win' his/her pieces of paper. They do this by selecting one of their own ideas and turning it into a sentence beginning with the words, 'The reader worries that Max will lose this battle with his father because...'
- If their opponent has the same idea recorded, the pupil 'wins' the piece of paper. Then it is their opponent's turn to try to win.
- Run the activity with pupils taking on a number of opponents, each time beginning with the stem, 'The reader worries that Max will lose this battle with his father because...'

Pupil Resource Sheet 17

Task

In Chapters 21 to 23, the reader notices that Max is a very different character from the boy we first met at the start of the novel.

In your group, you are going to be responsible for investigating one of the following ways that Max has developed:

- His ability to make decisions
- His confidence to go to new places
- The way his grandparents treat him
- His ability to think ahead

As you read, record details from the text and explain what they show. You need to keep notes because, after reading Chapter 23, you will present your findings to a new group. Use the table below to help you:

| Quotation from the text | What this shows/suggests about Max's development | How is this different from the Max we met at the beginning of the novel? |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Pupil Resource Sheet 18

Task

In Chapters 21 to 23, the writer prepares us for Freak's death by hinting at what is to come.

- 1 With a partner, look at the following quotations from this section of the novel and make notes around the words which warn the reader of this.

"No more crazy adventures, or dangerous quests, young man. You have to be careful," she [Gwen] keeps saying. "Extra careful." (page 125)

Freak gets this very cool, scientific look on his face, and he always says the same thing: "The bionic research continues, my friend. The work goes on." (page 125)

"Maybe he won't have to stay home," the Fair Gwen says, and she and Gram kind of lock eyeballs for a second, that secret code that mothers have. "This is just in case, Max." (page 131)

The funny thing is, when at last they do bring out the cake, Freak asks me to flame out the candles while he makes the wish, and then he doesn't even touch his piece, he just sort of pushes it around the plate. (page 131)

*"So they're taking really good care of him?"
"They're doing their best, Max," she [Gwen] says. (page 134)*

"That's for you," he says. "I want you to fill it up with our adventures." (page 136)

- 2 Now find the hints on pages 138-139 that lead up to Max's realisation that Kevin is dead. Prepare to share your findings with the rest of the class.

Pupil Resource Sheet 19

Task

Through his experiences and his relationship with Kevin, Max has come a long way since the start of the novel. Here are some of the journeys he has made:

- Max has developed new skills.
- Max has learned to value himself more.
- Max has learned to deal with loss.
- Max has learned to enjoy knowledge and learning.
- Max has learned to use his imagination.
- Max has learned not to fear his memories.
- Max has learned to laugh and be happy.
- Max has learned to value and show his love for his grandparents.

- 1 With a partner, read through Kevin's dictionary and discuss how the words relate to Max's different journeys. Choose just one word for each journey and enter your ideas in the table below.

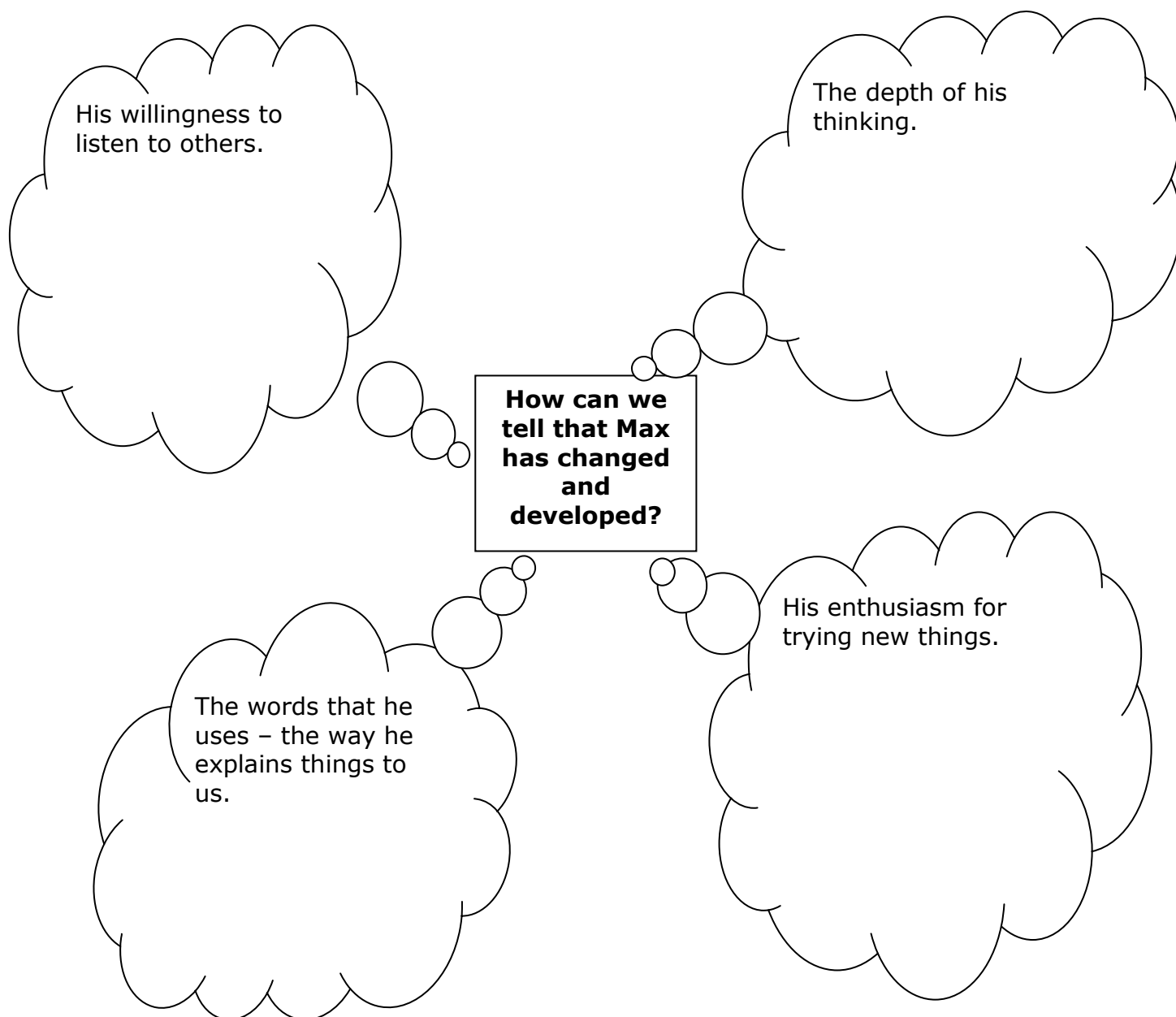
| The journey made by Max | Word which relates to that journey | How does the word relate to the journey? |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Max has developed new skills | | |
| Max has learned to value himself more | | |
| Max has learned to deal with loss | | |
| Max has learned to enjoy knowledge and learning | | |
| Max has learned to use his imagination | | |
| Max has learned not to fear his memories | | |
| Max has learned to laugh and be happy | | |
| Max has learned to value/show his love for his grandparents | | |

- 2 Now share your ideas about the dictionary with another pair in your class. Try to explain in detail:
 - why you chose the words you did
 - how the words related to Max's journeys
 - what the words show about Max's development.

Pupil Resource Sheet 20

Task

- 1 Re-read the final chapter of the novel (Chapter 25) and look for ways in which the writer shows us that Max has changed and developed over the course of the novel. Make notes on the map below.



- 2 Are there any other methods the writer uses to show Max's development? Write in the space below.

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Pupil Resource Sheet 21


Task

When we respond to a text, we try to use the following pattern:

Make a **point** → Find some **evidence** to support the point → **Explain** what the evidence shows

Use the following grid to help use this pattern. Write your ideas about Max's developments in the columns. Have your copy of *Freak the Mighty* open at Chapter 25, so that you can find evidence to support your ideas.

| Make a <u>point</u> about how we can tell that Max has developed in Chapter 25 | Find some <u>evidence</u> from the text to support your idea about the change in Max. | <u>Explain</u> what the evidence shows about Max's development |
|--|---|--|
| | | |



You might want to use the following connectives to help you to make your ideas flow:

One of the ways... For instance... "----" This suggests...
This shows...

Pupil Resource Sheet 22

Task

When we talk about the structure of a text we mean:

- the order of events
- the way that one section of the story leads into the next
- how the beginning and the end are linked.

In many ways, this novel follows the structure of a typical hero's adventure or quest.

- 1 With a partner, order the events in the box below and then add any other events which you think are important in the novel.

Max meets Freak.

Freak goes into hospital for the last time.

Freak and Max return Loretta's purse.

Kenny Kane returns for Max.

The reader meets Max.

Max and Freak beat Kenny Kane.

Freak dies.

Max and Freak outwit Tony D and his gang at the pond.

The friendship grows.

Max learns to live without Freak and writes the adventures of Freak the Mighty.

- 2 Using **Resource Sheet 23** which outlines the stages of a hero's journey, complete the final column of the table with events from *Freak the Mighty*.
- 3 Explain your findings to another pair:
 - How did you decide which of the novel's events linked with each section?
 - Did you disagree with any of your partner's ideas? If so, why?
 - In your opinion, how similar is *Freak the Mighty* to a typical hero's quest?

Pupil Resource Sheet 23

Task

Consider, and then discuss, how the events in *Freak the Mighty* relate to those of a typical hero's quest.

| STAGES OF A TYPICAL HERO'S QUEST | EVENTS IN THAT STAGE | EVENTS IN <i>FREAK THE MIGHTY</i> |
|---|---|--|
| The ordinary world | The ordinary world is shown in order to provide a contrast with the 'new' world the hero is about to enter. | |
| The call to adventure | The hero is presented with a problem, challenge or adventure to undertake. As soon as they know about this call they can no longer be comfortable in the ordinary world. The hero's goal is made clear: to win treasure; get revenge; right a wrong; confront a challenge or achieve a dream. | |
| Refusal of the call | The hero becomes reluctant to take on the challenge and may start to think of turning back. Advice from a mentor or some other circumstance is needed to enable the hero to overcome their fear. | |
| Mentor | The mentor helps the hero prepare for the adventure. He or she gives guidance and sometimes magical equipment. They can only travel part of the journey with the hero and at this point can give stern advice to the hero to get the adventure going. | |
| Crossing the first threshold | The hero commits to the adventure, agrees to face the consequences of the challenge and enters the special world of the story. This is where the adventure starts. | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Tests, allies and enemies | The hero begins to face the challenges of the new world. They meet new friends and enemies. Often the settings can be dark and dangerous and the hero's determination to complete the adventure is tested. | |
| Approach to the inmost cave | The hero comes to the edge of a dangerous place where the object of the quest is hidden. When the place is entered, the hero crosses the second threshold. Often heroes pause at the gate to prepare and plan. | |
| The supreme ordeal | The hero has to face the greatest fear. They will also face death and will battle with the enemy. | |
| Reward | The hero wins the treasure. This treasure could be knowledge and reconciliation with the enemy. | |
| The road back | The hero must face the consequences of the battle with the enemy. If there has been no reconciliation, the enemy may return to chase the hero as they make their way back to the ordinary world. | |
| Resurrection | The hero must be re-born in order to return to the normal world. The hero faces another brush with death. The lessons learned from the supreme ordeal help the hero to win through. | |
| Return with elixir | The hero returns to the ordinary world bringing back some elixir, treasure or knowledge from the journey. | |

Assessment Task 1

To be completed after reading Chapter 10. The purpose of this task is to assess Reading AFs 3 and 5 using speaking and listening. The focus for this assessment is the question: **How does Kevin's language make him different?** Pupils will analyse the ways that the language Kevin uses in Chapters 1 to 10 help to show how he is different from other people.

Using a jigsaw technique for grouping, the class will discuss their area of focus in their 'expert' groups and then present their findings to their 'home' group ready to formulate a group response to the question. **Resource Sheet 8** can be used for the pupils to collect their ideas. The feedback to home groups will enable a Speaking and Listening assessment of En2.

| Assessment focus 3 | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
| I can understand the literal meaning but find it difficult to read between the lines to find deeper meanings. I can make straightforward comments when talking about a text but sometimes I give a personal view rather than referring to the information within the text. | I try to use evidence from different points in the text to read between the lines and understand what the writer means. My comments about the meaning of a text are often correct but I sometimes fall back on telling the story. | I can draw on evidence to develop an explanation of the writer's meanings. In my comments I can make inferences and deductions based on evidence in the text. | I attempt to explore in detail different layers of meaning, using evidence in the text. I can explain the significance of what I have discovered in the text. | I can explore and analyse different layers of meaning, supporting my deductions with detailed and carefully selected evidence from the text. |

| Assessment focus 5 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
| I can identify a few straightforward features of the writer's use of language, although I might not add a comment about them, e.g. 'Kevin uses lots of horse images.' | I can identify some straightforward features of writers' use of language and make some simple comments about the writer's choices, e.g. 'All the long words Kevin uses makes you think he is clever.' | I can identify a number of different features of writers' use of language and add some explanation of the effect of choices, e.g. 'When Kevin uses complicated words, they make us think that he is clever and we admire his intelligence.' | I can explain in detail, using appropriate technical terms, how the writer uses language effectively at different points in the text. I can comment on how the writer's language choices have an effect on the reader, although these comments might be quite general ones, e.g. 'The repeated images of horses used by Kevin to describe Max make you see that Freak the Mighty as a powerful knight.' | I can identify and explain in detail a range of features of language use and look for patterns in how they are used. I can explain and analyse the effect on the reader of the writer's choice of specific words, phrases and techniques. |

Assessment Task 2

To be carried out after reading Chapter 25 and the dictionary. The purpose of this task is to analyse the ways that the language and ideas of Chapter 25 help to show that Max has developed as a character over the course of the novel. The investigation should be completed in pairs, using **Resource Sheet 20**. A further shaping of ideas, using **Resource Sheet 21**, will lead to a Speaking and Listening assessment of En2 as pupil pairs explain their ideas and findings to another pair.

| Assessment focus 3 | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
| I can understand the literal meaning but find it difficult to read between the lines to find deeper meanings. I can make straightforward comments when talking about a text but sometimes I give a personal view rather than referring to the information within the text. | I try to use evidence from different points in the text to read between the lines and understand what the writer means. My comments about the meaning of a text are often correct but I sometimes fall back on telling the story. | I can draw on evidence to develop an explanation of the writer's meanings. In my comments I can make inferences and deductions based on evidence in the text. | I attempt to explore in detail different layers of meaning, using evidence in the text. I can explain the significance of what I have discovered in the text. | I can explore and analyse different layers of meaning, supporting my deductions with detailed and carefully selected evidence from the text. |

| Assessment focus 5 | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
| I can identify a few straightforward features of the writer's use of language, although I might not add a comment about them, e.g. 'Max has become more confident by the end of the novel.' | I can identify some straightforward features of writers' use of language and make some simple comments about the writer's choices, e.g. "Max has moved from being unable to read and think to be able to write his own novel." | I can identify a number of different features of writers' use of language and add some explanation of the effect of choices, e.g. 'At the end of the novel, Max uses the phrase "unvanquished truth". He could not have done this at the start of the novel.' | I can explain in detail, using appropriate technical terms, how the writer uses language effectively at different points in the text. I can comment on how the writer's language choices have an effect on the reader, although these comments might be quite general ones, e.g. 'Max is able to understand the power of knowledge. He says that now he has written a book, he "might even read a few." This makes the reader smile and we realise that he now sees himself as being quite clever.' | I can identify and explain in detail a range of features of language use and look for patterns in how they are used. I can explain and analyse the effect on the reader of the writer's choice of specific words, phrases and techniques. |