Using role-play to understand character

You will learn how to:

- perform a role using techniques such as gesture, speech and movement
- empathise with characters through group performance and discussion.

Acting out the part of a character from a story can be an effective way to understand what the character is like or how they are feeling.

Explore

Read this extract from 'The Fugitive' by Alain Mabanckou. The narrator is on the Paris underground but doesn't have a ticket and suddenly finds himself in a strange station.

I see myself on that day.

I'm being chased by three ticket inspectors. Two whites and a black man. They're after me because I took to my heels as soon as I saw them checking tickets a couple of hundred yards away. It's obvious to them that I don't have one. Or that I've something else to hide. How could such respectable inspectors not chase someone who was making them look stupid in front of the other passengers?

My mouth is open as I run. I push my way past outraged **commuters**, who swear and call me every name under the sun. I've one thing on my mind: finding the exit and melting into the crowd outside. My cousin is right: Montparnasse-Bienvenue seems to be the most complicated station in the Paris **metro** system. I am not the grandson of the **architect** so I take one-way passages the wrong way, leap up downwards escalators, run down stairs and come out on a platform for a train that could be going anywhere. The bell sounds just as I'm about to squeeze into a carriage, and the doors close. Time to start running again, heading for the end of the platform, where I can see a way out.

The three Metro employees are still hot on my heels. I reach the end of the platform; it's not a way out, it's the start of a long corridor. I don't stop to think, just grit my teeth and go for it.

I hear a voice echoing from far away. It's one of the inspectors shouting….

From 'The Fugitive' by Alain Mabanckou, translated by Polly McAfee

Vocabulary

commuters: people travelling to work from the suburbs

metro: the Paris underground railway system

architect: someone who designs buildings

1 In pairs, create a short scene in which the narrator is caught by one of the inspectors. The inspector wants to know why the narrator is running away.

- Use the highlighted sections to help you decide how the narrator and inspector might behave and speak.
- You will need to make up what each character says. For example:

  Inspector: Got you! Now – what's going on?

  Narrator: (out of breath) Going on? Er… nothing…

Develop

2 Now share your performance with another pair or small group.

3 a) Explain to each other how you attempted to show the narrator's and ticket inspector's character and feelings through speech, **gesture** and movement.

b) Give feedback on the performances you see, and identify:

- one thing you liked about it (for example, good facial expressions)
- one thing you think could have been improved (for example, movements).

Key term

gesture: a specific movement, like scratching your head or waving your hand, that signals a particular meaning

Respond

4 Working independently, write a performance log entry explaining:

- who you played
- how you tried to bring out the character and feelings of the narrator or inspector
- what you could do better in performance next time
- what you learned about your character.

Planning and structuring your own story opening

You will learn how to:

- generate ideas for a suspense story
- plan and structure an opening.

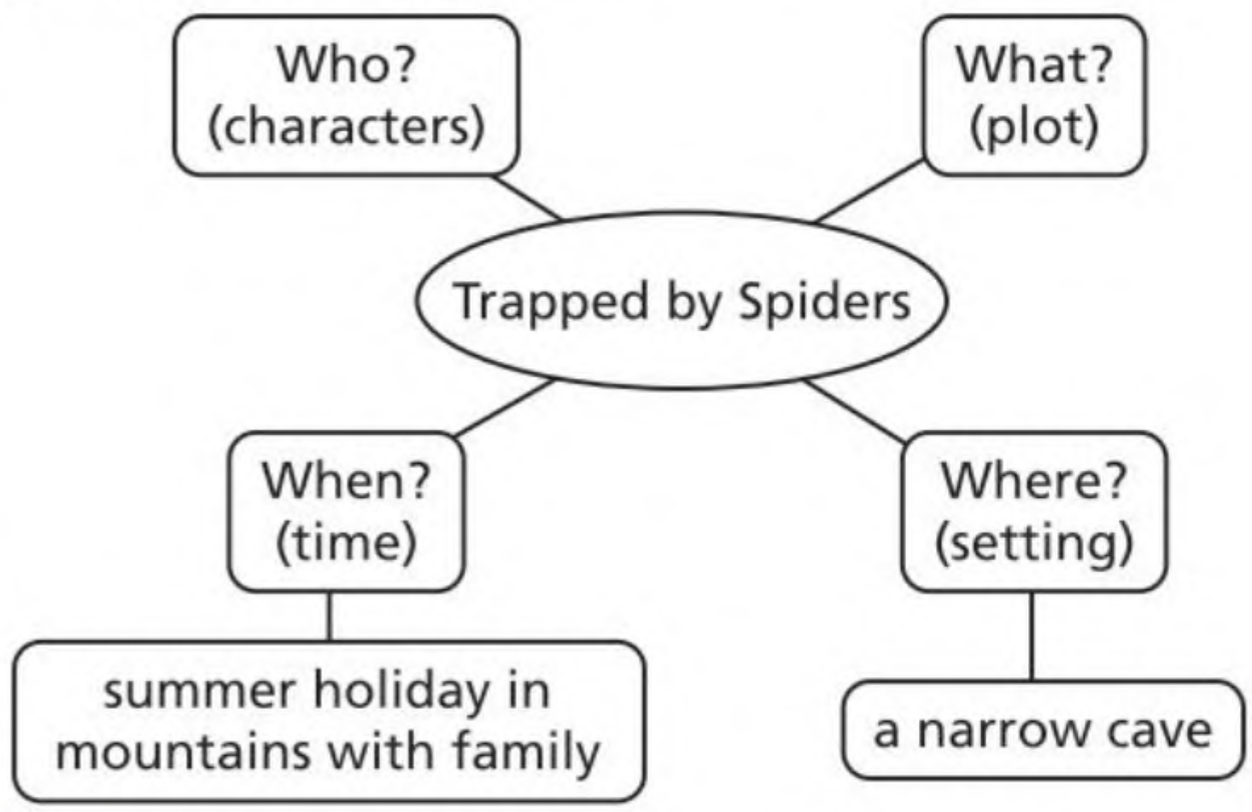
A good plan for your story will help you make it tense and dramatic. It will also help you decide how it will begin, and what you need to include to interest the reader.

Explore

Imagine you have been asked to contribute a story to an **anthology** called 'Scary Moments'. You have lots of ideas, but decide to write one called 'Trapped by Spiders'. How are you going to come up with a good story? One way is to use a diagram like the one below.

Key term

anthology: a collection of pieces of writing



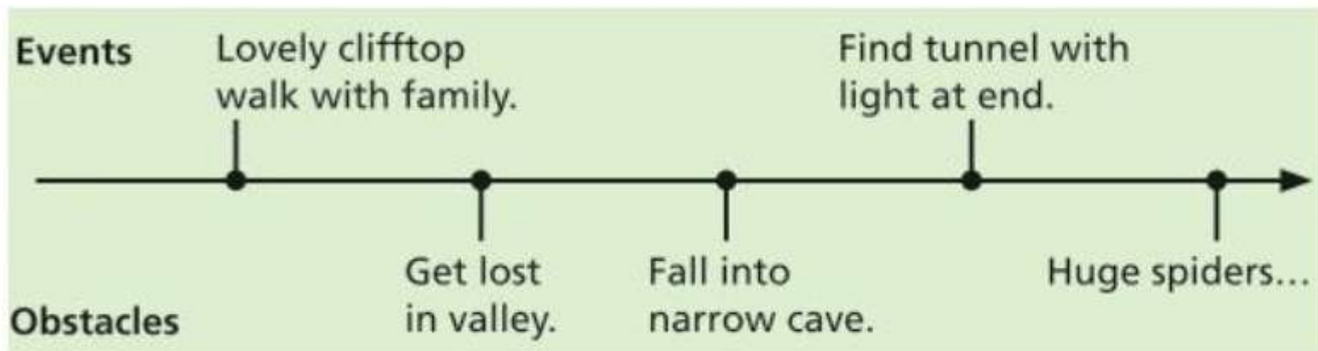
1. Which parts of the plan have been completed? Where do ideas still need to be added?
2. What other planning formats could you use to come up with ideas? Would a list, flow diagram or timeline work?

Choose the method that works best for you, then think about how you can add further ideas. Remember, for the 'What', you will need to decide the big problem or obstacles the main character has to overcome, and the resolution to the story.

Develop

3 Complete your diagram or list, adding as many ideas as you can. You could also make links between ideas in your diagram by drawing connecting lines.

4 You now need to decide where and when your story starts. Remember, this is a suspense story so it must grab the reader's attention. It might help to draw a timeline for the whole story, like the one you looked at in Unit 4.2. For example, can you complete the one below? Remember to include obstacles or problems.



5 Where would be a good place to start? You could begin on the clifftop walk, but it might be better to begin dramatically, in the cave.

Respond

6 Write the opening 25 words of your story. You could use one of these options below or choose your own.

Jade let out a scream as she fell…

There was no path. I was lost and…

He saw its eyes before he saw its body…

Checklist for success

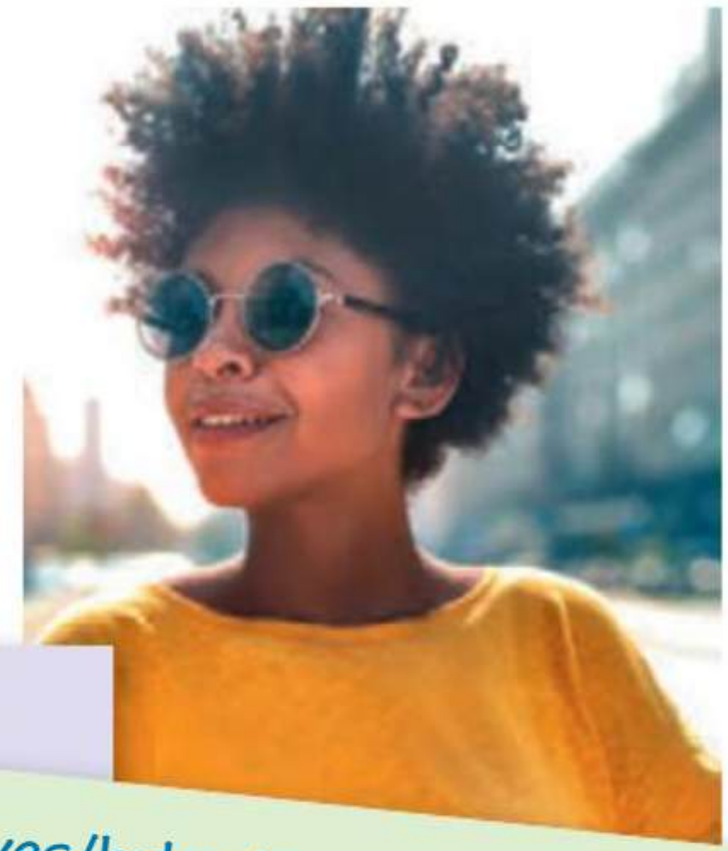
- ✔ Decide where and when in the story you will begin.
- ✔ Think about withholding information from the reader to create a sense of mystery.
- ✔ Create a mood with descriptive details. For example, 'There were dark, slowly moving shadows on the wall…'.

Introducing your own characters

You will learn how to:

- create a convincing character
- use speech and dialogue effectively.

You need to create a believable and interesting main character to keep your readers involved in your story. As you saw in Units 4.4 and 4.5, you should provide detail about their background, how they speak, look and move, and how others respond to them.



Explore

The index cards below show one student's idea of what her main character Jade is like.

Speech
often informal, can be jokey

Looks/clothing
black hair
small for her age

Moves/behaviour

How others respond to her

Background
only child, 15/16 years old

You may not use all of these details in your story, but they should help you picture your main character.

Key term

informal: chatty way of speaking, as if with friends

1. Complete the cards for Jade or create cards for your own main character (it doesn't have to be someone your own age). Try to make the character distinctive in some way. Perhaps he/she:
   - has a special ability or disability
   - wears a particular item of clothing or jewellery
   - is particularly tall or short
   - has unusual hair
   - has an unusual family or background (A twin? Lives on a boat?).

Develop

You can either introduce your character using direct facts or, better still, reveal the same information by *showing* the reader. For example:

Telling: I was small for my age.

Showing: My friend, who was the same age as me, towered over me. People often thought I was her little sister.

You can insert information *into* the action using bracketing commas or dashes:

My friend – who was the same age as me – towered over me.

You can also use compound or **complex sentences** to add detail. In suspense stories, these could include moody adjectives or powerful verbs. For example:

Compound

verb and adverb combination — atmospheric adjectives

Jade jumped athletically over a huge, rotten branch, so she didn't see the gaping hole behind it.

coordinating conjunction

Complex

subordinating conjunction — subordinate clause — dramatic verb/adverb combination

Although she was small and skinny, she grappled successfully with the side of the cave.

main clause

2 Complete these sentences, adding detail.

a) Even though her hands were cut, she…

b) She had just started climbing towards the light when…

c) Her eyes finally got used to the gloom, although…

d) The spider's hairy legs were huge, and its…

In these examples, it is clear that Jade is the **protagonist** in the story. However, sometimes you will also need **minor characters** or an **antagonist** – someone whose goal it is to stop or cause problems for your hero.

Key terms

complex sentence: a sentence that contains a supporting idea (subordinate clause) in addition to the information in the main idea (main clause)

Key terms

protagonist: the main character in a story whose 'journey' readers follow

minor characters: characters who are not important to the main action

antagonist: someone who opposes the main character in a story

In the story 'Trapped by Spiders', the antagonist could be a huge spider that blocks Jade's escape. A minor character could be another walker who accidentally gives Jade the wrong directions.

3 Which of the characters below could be antagonists in the story?

a) an older girl at school who dislikes Jade

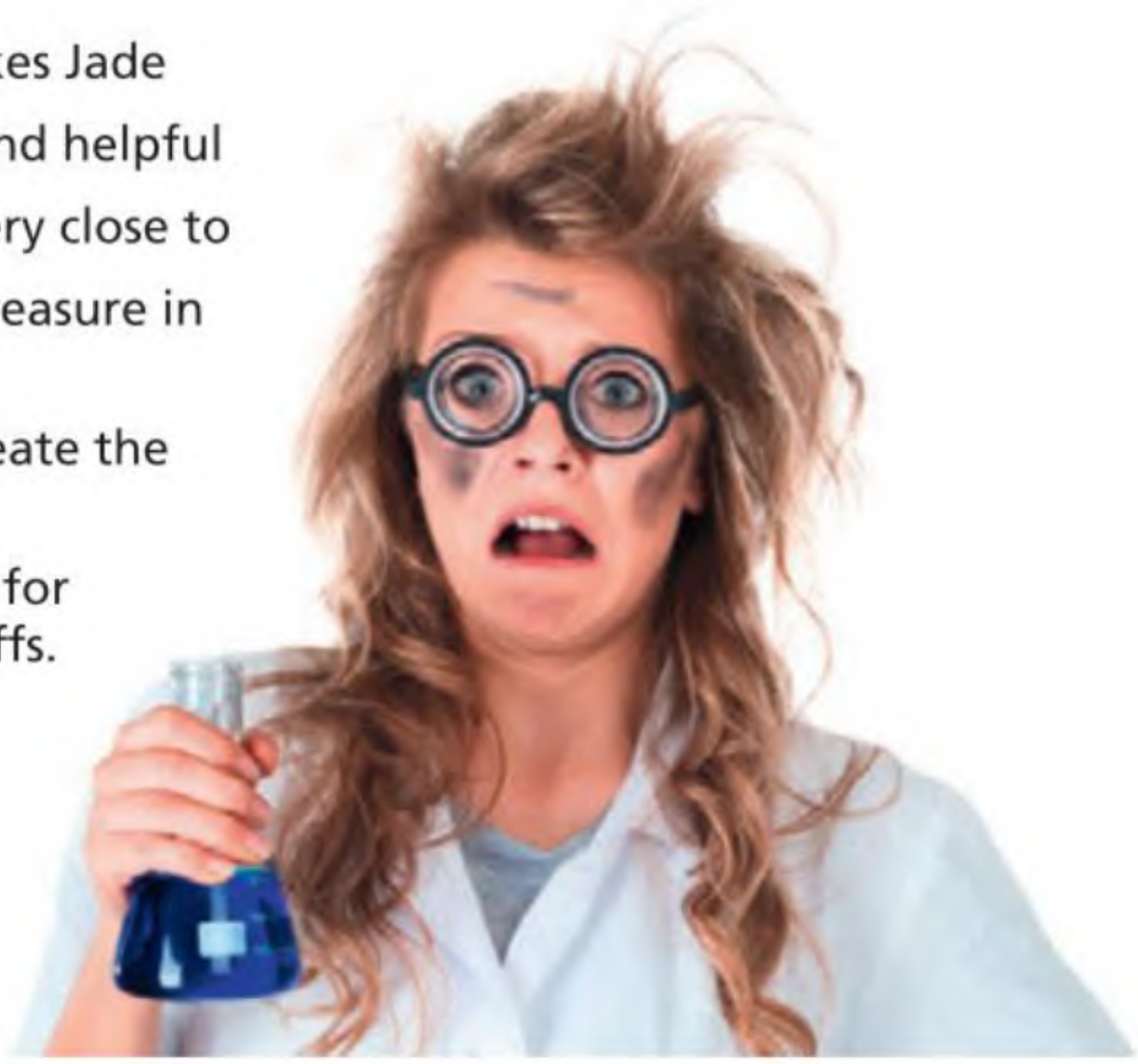
b) an elderly relative who is kind and helpful

c) Jade's twin sister whom she is very close to

d) a smuggler who keeps hidden treasure in the cave

e) a mad scientist who wants to create the largest spider in the world

f) an old fisherman who looks out for people who get lost near the cliffs.



As you saw in Unit 4.4, speech is an important way to show character.

4 Match these three lines of speech to the characters listed in Question 3:

> 'Ooh, my dear. Please be careful on those cliffs. When I was a little girl, I got lost there many, many times.'

> 'Hey! What are you doing sneaking around *my* cave? Thought you could creep up and steal my precious things, did you?'

> 'Right, my beauty! Time to let you out to terrorise the world!'

5 Now, write one line of speech for the old fisherman, imagining he finds Jade. You could begin:

'Right, lass…'

It is also important you set out speech correctly on the page. Look at the conversation below.

'Oi! Get away!' Jade shouted as the monstrous beast lumbered forward. She scrambled backwards over the stony ground until she could go no further. Grabbing a rock, she hurled it at the huge black shape as it tried to squeeze through the hole. 'Take that you great lump!' she cried.

Suddenly, she heard a voice from high, high above her. It sounded like her sister.

'Jade? Is that you?

'Yes, it's me,' Jade replied, hoarsely.

The voice sounded miles away.

Use speech marks around the spoken words. Punctuation to do with the speech goes inside the final speech mark.

Continue on the same line for the same speaker.

Use a new line and paragraph for a new speaker.

Use a comma before the speech mark for all speech (if not using question or exclamation marks).

6 In what ways is this section of the story effective? Make some brief notes about:

a) how Jade's character is shown through the way she speaks

b) how her style of speech could be seen as 'informal' – think of particular words or utterances she uses.

Respond

7 Now write four more lines of speech between Jade and her sister in the suspense story. You could use this beginning to help you – or write your own version. Add description where you can.

'Where are you?' called her…

Checklist for success

- ✔ Use speech marks around any spoken words.
- ✔ Remember to put speech punctuation inside the speech marks.
- ✔ Use a new line/paragraph for each speaker.
- ✔ Add detail by using compound or complex sentences, or by using bracketing commas or dashes.
- ✔ Use atmospheric adjectives and powerful verbs.
- ✔ Show, don't tell.

Writing your own suspense narrative

You will learn how to:

- plan and write your own narrative opening
- check and evaluate your work to make improvements.

Your task

Using the understanding you have built up over this chapter, you are going to write the opening to a story that begins: 'Blake stared at the river. It was impossible to cross it…'.

Use the image opposite to help you with ideas.

Approaching the task

1. Using the techniques you have learned so far, generate ideas for the task. You should select the planning approach that works best for you (spider diagram, list, flow diagram), but whichever one you choose, remember to decide:
   - **who** the main character is and what **other characters**, if any, are involved
   - **where** and **when** the story takes place, or at least, where it begins
   - **what** is happening, and perhaps what has **already happened**.
2. Then, decide on your beginning, middle and end – perhaps using a timeline to plan what obstacles your main character faces and how they are resolved. You may also want to decide if there is an antagonist in your story.
3. At this point, note down some great descriptive phrases or sentences to use in the story.
   a) What atmospheric adjectives could you use to describe the dangerous river? ('roaring' or 'silvery'?)
   b) What combination of active or dramatic verbs and adverbs could you use to describe trying to cross the river? ('leapt athletically' or 'plunged swiftly'?)

4 Now, using your plan, write your suspenseful opening. You should write 250–275 words.

Checklist for success

- ✔ Engage the reader by withholding information and raising questions in their mind.
- ✔ Make your characters interesting and distinctive.
- ✔ Use some short sentence types and lengths to change pace or cause surprise.
- ✔ Use compound or complex sentences, or bracketing dashes and commas to add detail.
- ✔ Make sure your punctuation is accurate, especially in **direct speech**.
- ✔ Check your spelling as you go along – look out for common errors you might have made such as: *They could* ***of*** (incorrect)/*could* ***have*** (correct) and other homophones (*their*/*they're*/*there*). Where you are not sure of a spelling, try to think of similar words from the same family.

Key term

direct speech: the words that are actually spoken, presented with speech marks

Reflecting on your work

5 Once you have finished your draft story, check your own work against the checklist above.

- Highlight in RED any errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar you have made.
- You could highlight in AMBER any descriptions or uses of sentences that could be more suspenseful.
- You could highlight in GREEN any parts of your story that you think work really well.

Or exchange your work with a partner and apply these to their writing.

6 Read the two examples by other students below.

Response 1

Blake stared at the river. It was impossible to cross it.
Blake was sporty but he just couldn't do it. The gang were chasing him so he was stuck.
Then, he saw how he could escape. There was a tree by the bank of the river. It had a droopy branch. If he could climb to the end of it, he could possibly swing across.
He heard a nasty voice shouting.
'Where is he?' 'He must be near that river,'
Blake slowly began to climb up the bark of the tree. When he got to the place where the branch began to bend, he clung underneath it, like a monkey. He looked back and he saw the gang coming nearer.
He swung back and forth, trying to go quicker. But his hands were slipping.
'There he is!' said the gang leader.

- Character description but better to show this.
- Effective short sentence.
- Visual detail but lacks development.
- Direct speech adds drama, but check layout and punctuation.
- Active verb and sensory detail.
- Uses a simile.
- Verbs are rather dull and undramatic.

Comment on Response 1

This opening has lots of dramatic action, but the sentences at the start are too similar in length and style, and some of the description could be more detailed.

7 Looking at the annotations, discuss with a partner what the student has done well and what could be improved. For example, is there enough description of the river?

Response 2

4.8

Blake stared at the river. It was impossible to cross it. The swirling waters leapt up like monsters. It had been a stupid idea to do this trek on his own, just to prove his friends wrong.

But he couldn't turn back. He needed to get to a village. The sun was going down and the temperature was dropping swiftly. He could still hear his friends' voices in his head.

'Blake the not-very-brave!'

'Fake Blake!'

Then he saw it. In the middle of the water, a sandy rock occasionally stood out. If he could leap onto it, then maybe… just maybe… he could do it. But he didn't have time. It was almost dark and in the distance he could hear the wolves.

He took a step back, and then stopped. This was madness: he'd never do it. They were right – he was a coward. He could feel his skull throbbing. Then there was another howl, nearer this time. The light was fading, and still the river roared past.

He had no choice. He took off his glasses, and put them in his zip pocket, where he kept his asthma inhaler. It was time.

- Atmospheric adjective creates dramatic mood.
- Uses a vivid simile.
- Backstory tells us why.
- Short sentence adds drama.
- Accurate use of direct speech adds to plot.
- Compound sentence adds variety.
- Physical detail adds to drama.
- Characterisation through implied information.
- Bracketing commas around extra detail.

Comment on Response 2

This is a very effective opening, which reveals just enough information through the actions and descriptions.
The variety of sentences and visual details keeps the reader interested throughout.

8. In what way is this a more effective response than the first? Note down three things that you think the student has done better, based on the annotations above.

9. Using these responses as a guide, how could you improve your work? Redraft it, if necessary.

Responding to a mystery and suspense story opening

You will learn how to:

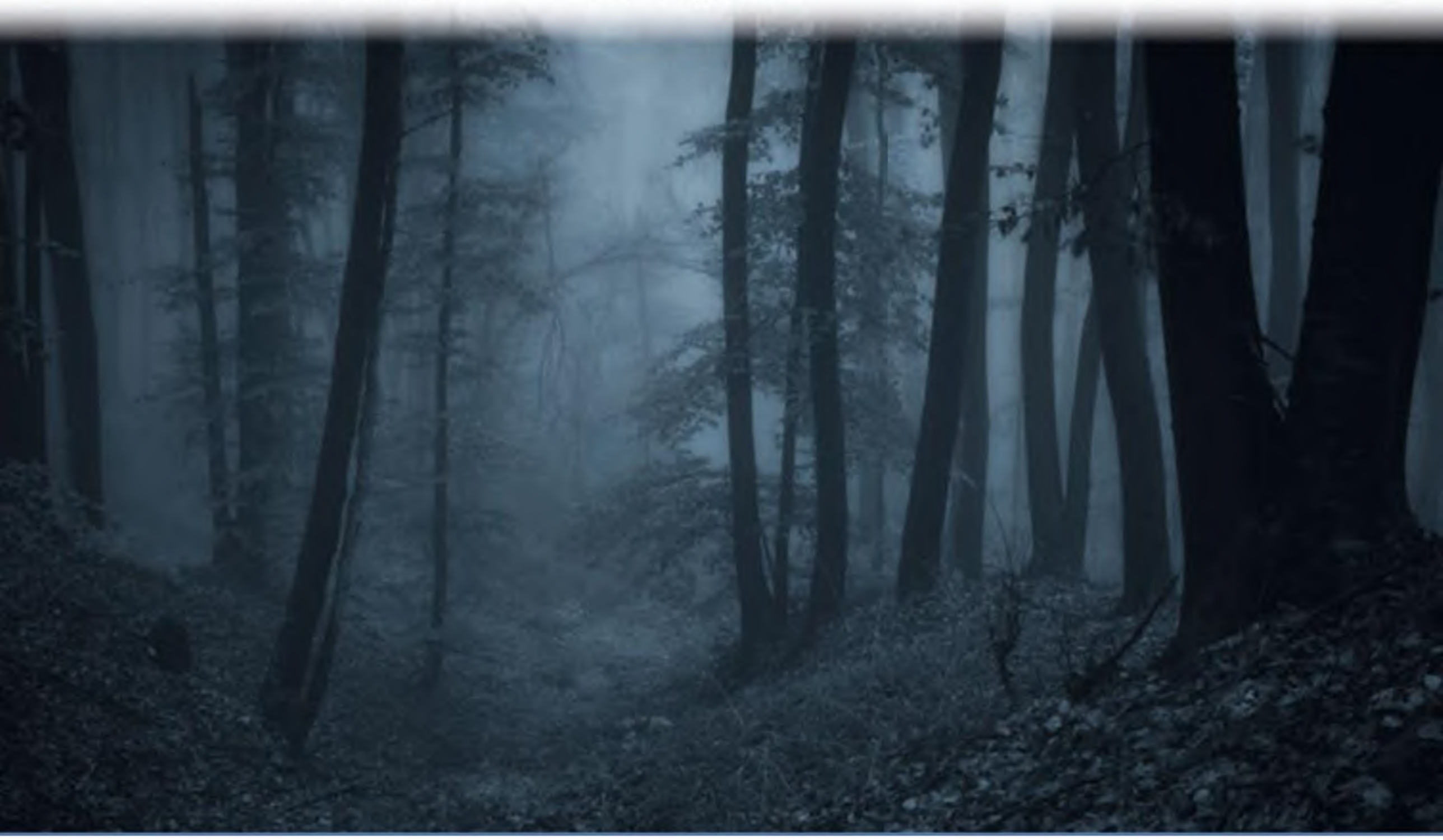
- respond to an extract from a mystery story
- apply what you have learned about structure, characterisation and language.

Using the understanding that you have built up during this chapter, you are going to explore the ways in which the text you read at the start of this chapter works.

Understanding the text

Look again at the extract from *Wolf Brother* on pages 106–107.

1. Write a sentence in response to each of the following.
   a) Explain **in your own words** where the story takes place, and how you know this.
   b) **Find at least one phrase** that tells the reader what the main character is feeling.
   c) **Complete this sentence**, explaining in your own words **what happens** at the end of the extract:
   The extract ends with Torak realising that…



Thinking about the text's purpose and features

2 What features of a suspense story can you identify in the extract? Complete the grid with relevant line numbers:

main character in danger	
character's fear or questioning things	
short sentences for dramatic effect	
atmospheric sights, sounds, and so on	
writer keeping the reader guessing	
sudden change of pace and action	

Looking at the text in detail

3 The text works well because of the writer's choice of vocabulary. Look at the following phrases from the extract. What does each one mean?

a) 'He froze.'

b) 'He spun round.'

c) 'He waited in rigid silence…'

4 Taken together, what do these phrases suggest about how Torak feels? Write one sentence in response, starting:

These three phrases all suggest that Torak is…

5 Reread this extract from the text.

> But deep within – no more than ten paces away – a stir of branches. Something was in there. Something huge.

How does the writer use punctuation *and* sentence types to show the boy's fear?

Complete these sentences on each of these aspects.

a) *The writer uses bracketing dashes to emphasise…*

b) *The effect of the short second sentence is…*

Writing about the text

6 Reread the extract from 'Torak forced himself to stay still' to the end.

Write a paragraph explaining how the writer uses a variety of sentences to create suspense. You could use this scaffold to help you, or write your own paragraph.

The writer uses lots of short sentences, such as…
These show that…
She also uses questions, such as … to show…
Another type of sentence is…
This…

Reflecting on your work

7 Read what two students have written in response to Question 6. Compare your own response to the two below. Once you have read them, think of ways in which your own could be improved. Rewrite your response, if needed.

Response 1

The writer uses lots of short sentences, such as 'A low hiss'. These show Torak noticing things clearly. She also uses questions to show that Torak is not sure about things. Another type of sentence is long sentences to give detail about the surroundings.

Comment on Response 1

This response gives some examples but leaves out others. The final point is a little vague; why is Torak describing what he hears or sees?

Response 2

The writer uses a repeated short sentence, 'Don't run', to show how Torak tries to keep calm. She also uses minor sentences like 'A low hiss' to show Torak's awareness of every sound and movement. Exclamations such as 'Coward!' suggest how cross he is with himself and how he feels about his actions. He is in a state of tension, not knowing what to do.

Comment on Response 2

This explains the effect of some of the sentence choices made by the writer and quotations have been chosen carefully. However, there could be some comment made on the use of questions, too.

What you have achieved

Reading

- You have learned how to recognise the features of suspense and mystery writing.
- You have identified words and phrases that create different effects.
- You have commented on the way writers use punctuation and different sentence types for effect.

Writing

- You have written the opening to a suspense story with key features in it.
- You have caught the reader's interest by holding information back.
- You have made characters and the situation interesting with a variety of sentences and punctuation.

Speaking and listening

- You have taken part in a performance to help understand characters in a story.
- You have developed performance skills, using speech and movement.
- You have thought about your performance and how it could be improved.

Next steps

Reading

One common feature of mystery and suspense stories such as *Moonfleet, Wolf Brother* and 'The Fugitive' is a central character thrust into a world they don't understand. You could also read South African novelist Beverley Naidoo's thought-provoking novel *Journey to Jo'burg*, which takes a similar approach to storytelling.

Writing

Plan your own mystery story around the theme of being trapped. See if you can find an image or picture online that suits the theme, and then write a full story around it, perhaps beginning with the image you have found of, for example, a dark forest.

Speaking and listening

Think of a short tale full of suspense or surprise (check out 'urban myths' for some examples) and practise telling the story with real feeling and drama to a group of friends – for example, pausing for effect or speaking with emphasis at an exciting moment. You could also look at professional storytellers online and see how they do it!

5

Chapter 5 Reviewing and discussing

Plays about outsiders

What's it all about?

This chapter is all about playscripts and performances, and how these can be reviewed both in a personal setting and in a more professional one. The theme of the chapter is outsiders – people who feel alone or are isolated from others.

You should already know:

- why some more unusual texts might be enjoyable to read
- some of the differences between spoken and written stories
- some of the main features of the structure of playscripts
- how to make a thoughtful point based on something you are discussing
- how to convey ideas about a character in drama through speech and movement.

You will learn how to:

- respond to a script from a different time and culture
- set out and understand the key features of a playscript
- listen and contribute effectively in group discussions
- perform a role using speech, gesture and movement
- use reading aloud and performance to explore key ideas
- structure a review using a range of language techniques
- choose appropriate language for a review.

You will:

- read an extract from a Shakespeare play, and from play and prose versions of *Beauty and the Beast*
- work in a group to discuss, improvise and perform ideas for a play
- write your own script and review a performance you have seen.

Enjoy reading

You will learn how to:

- read a challenging text from an earlier time
- explore the possibilities presented by a playscript.

You are going to read a scene from *Twelfth Night*, by William Shakespeare. A young woman, Viola, has landed on the coast of a strange land having survived a shipwreck in which her twin brother may have drowned.

1 Think about the situation.

a) How do you think Viola would feel?

b) What sort of mood might be created in this scene?

Now read the scene aloud with a partner.

SCENE II. The sea-coast.

Enter VIOLA, a CAPTAIN, and Sailors

VIOLA What country, friends, is this?

CAPTAIN This is Illyria, lady.

VIOLA And what should I do in Illyria?
My brother he is in **Elysium**.
Perchance he is not drown'd: what think you, sailors?

CAPTAIN It is perchance that you yourself were saved.

VIOLA O my poor brother! and so perchance may he be.

CAPTAIN True, madam: and, to comfort you with chance,
Assure yourself, after our ship did split,
When you and those poor number saved with you
Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,
Most **provident** in peril, bind himself,
Courage and hope both teaching him the practise,
To a strong mast that lived upon the sea;
Where, like **Arion** on the dolphin's back,
I saw him **hold acquaintance** with the waves
So long as I could see.

VIOLA For saying so, there's gold:
Mine own escape **unfoldeth to my hope**,
Whereto thy speech serves for authority,
The like of him. **Know'st thou** this country?

CAPTAIN Ay, madam, well; for I was bred and born
Not three hours' travel from this very place.

VIOLA Who governs here?

CAPTAIN A noble duke, in nature as in name.
VIOLA What is the name?
CAPTAIN Orsino.
VIOLA Orsino! I have heard my father **name** him: 30
He was a bachelor then.

From *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare

Shakespeare was writing in England over 400 years ago, so many words, phrases and structures might seem unfamiliar.

2 Choose five words that you don't know. Can you work out what each one means?

a) What sort of word is it: a verb, adjective, adverb or noun?

b) Does it contain a prefix or suffix you know already?

c) Does the context help? Look at the rest of the sentence – what is happening?

3 Answer these questions.

a) How would you normally write a phrase such as 'What think you?'

b) What do you think Viola means when she tells the Captain, 'There's gold'?

c) What does 'Ay' mean? (You can work it out from the context.)

4 Now note down answers to the following big five questions.

a) **Who** is this scene about?

b) **What** is happening in the scene?

c) **When** are the events happening: now, in the past or in the future?

d) **Where** do the events take place?

e) **Why** is this at the start of the play?

5 This extract is from a type of writing called a **playscript**. This means a script to be performed. Have you ever read or seen anything like this before? Is it the kind of text you would normally read?

6 The scene ends with Viola disguising herself as a young man to get work at Orsino's court. How do you think the story might develop?

Vocabulary

Elysium: in Greek mythology, a place where heroes went after death

Perchance: perhaps

provident: wise or clever

Arion: a character in Greek myth saved from drowning by dolphins

hold acquaintance: stay afloat

unfoldeth to my hope: makes me believe

Know'st thou: do you know

name: mention

Key term

playscript: the words and actions of a play written down for the actors to use

Exploring how playscripts convey character and action

You will learn how to:

- compare different conventions of plays and stories
- explore how a playwright presents ideas about character.

Writers tell stories in many different ways. In this unit, you will explore how the story of *Beauty and the Beast* works as a play, and as a prose story.

Explore

Read the two extracts below.

Text A

Both my father and I were extremely hungry, so we were delighted to see a tasty feast laid out for us. Perhaps the Beast was not as fearsome as he sounded, I wondered? Feeling less frightened we both sat down and began to eat. 5

Suddenly, I heard the deafening sound of footsteps approaching, and a voice roared, 'BEAUTY – I have come for you!'

'I won't leave you!' cried my father.

'You must,' I whispered, as the door slowly opened… 10

Text B

BEAUTY *sits alone singing the ballad from Act I.*

She has made a coronet of flowers and is weaving them into her hair. […]

FATHER *arrives and is just finishing a meal.*

The song is interrupted by a huge roar of… 'Beauty!' 5

Enter **BEAST'S MAN.**

BEAST'S MAN: It's time.

FATHER: No.

He wraps his arms around BEAUTY.

From *Beauty and the Beast* by Laurence Boswell

Vocabulary

Beast's man: the Beast's servant

1 Write short answers to the following questions.

a) Which well-known fairy tale are both texts based on?

b) Do the same people appear in both versions?

c) Which one do you think comes from a playscript, and which one from a short story or novel? What makes you think this?

2 Where can you find the following features of presentation in texts A and B?

For example:

> 'I won't leave you!' cried my father.

speech marks

a) There is a main character telling us what happens, using the pronoun 'I'.

b) There are speech marks when someone speaks.

c) The writer tells us what a character is doing or how they are behaving.

d) The way people behave is written in the past tense.

e) People's actions are described in the present tense.

f) Uses full sentences.

g) Uses lines and sentences that are short, like notes.

h) All the names of the characters who speak are laid out on the left-hand side.

i) Uses the words 'enter' or 'exit' to show when someone appears or leaves.

3 Now decide which of these features are from a play and which are from a story. Copy the grid below and put each feature in the correct column. Two have been done for you.

Play	Story
h)	b)

Develop

When watching a play, you have to work out what the characters are thinking. You can only do this by hearing what they say or looking at how they behave. Playwrights use **stage directions** to indicate how an actor should say their lines or to show how they should move.

> **Key term**
>
> **stage directions:** information provided by the writer of a play that tells the actor what to do or how to speak

> FATHER: No.
>
> *He wraps his arms around* BEAUTY.

Stage directions, written in the present tense.

4 What does the stage direction in the example above suggest about how Beauty's father feels? Choose one of the following options.

a) He feels protective and is worried what will happen.

b) He is angry with her.

c) He is frightened and wants her help.

d) She is cold.

e) He is cold.

5 Which of the following examples from another part of the play is the *correct* way to set out a playscript?

Version 1	Version 2	Version 3
BEAUTY *struggles to free herself from her* FATHER.	BEAUTY struggled to free herself from her FATHER.	BEAUTY struggles to free herself from her FATHER.
BEAUTY: I must go, Father!	BEAUTY said, 'I must go, Father!'	BEAUTY: 'I must go, Father!'

6 What is *incorrect* about the other two versions?

a) Version [1/2/3] is incorrect because…

b) Version [1/2/3] is incorrect because…

Respond

Read this extract from later in the story.

> Beauty was desperate for news of her family, and wept and wept. Quietly, the Beast entered her room.
>
> 'What is it?' he asked, tenderly, his growl less severe than before.
>
> 'I … miss my family,' she said, sadly.
>
> Beast held out a mirror. It sparkled in the light and seemed to change colour as Beauty took it from his rough hands.
>
> 'Here,' he said. 'Look into the mirror and it will tell you all you need to know.'
>
> Slowly, he paced out of the room.

7 Turn this part of the story into a playscript. Use the opening below, then continue in the same style. Remember, Beauty is an outsider here – how can you show this in the way she speaks and behaves?

> BEAUTY *sits on a bench looking out of the window.*
>
> BEAUTY: (*weeping*) Where are you, Father? I miss you and the rest of the family so much!

8 When you have finished, write some brief notes explaining *what* you did to turn the story into a playscript. You could write these on sticky notes and stick them on to your playscript.

Checklist for success

- ✔ Write the names of characters on the left-hand side of the page in capitals.
- ✔ Write what people say without speech marks.
- ✔ Include stage and speech directions.
- ✔ Use the present tense for describing how people speak or move.

Discussing and developing ideas for your own plays

You will learn how to:

- work in a group to develop ideas
- reflect on your and others' spoken contributions.

Both the play extracts you have looked at concern strangers in an alien land and how they react to their situation. Could you and your class come up with an equally powerful play about outsiders?

Explore

Imagine you are part of a theatre group. You have been asked to come up with a five-minute play to perform to teenagers in your local area, showing what it is like to be an outsider. The **producer** has given you some ideas to consider.

Read each of the suggestions carefully.

Option A: the new school
A student has just moved to a new part of the country. It is their first day at the new school. What happens when they arrive? Will they face friendship or isolation? Or both?

Option B: the traveller
A space traveller voyaging alone lands on a strange planet. What do they see and experience when they explore? Do they meet anyone – or anything? Do they get a friendly or a hostile welcome?

Option C: Shipwrecked
A young man, Sebastian, is shipwrecked in a strange land called Illyria. He believes his twin sister, Viola, died in the storm. He heads for the nearest city, not knowing what he'll find…

Option D: your own choice
Your own 'outsider' story. Could you mix some of the other ideas together? For example, a space traveller arriving for a new job on a new planet.

Key term

producer: the person responsible for the organisation and management of a show

1 Working independently, make brief notes on the following questions.

a) Who is the 'outsider' in each option? Who might they meet or face?

b) Which of the ideas appeals to you the most? Why?

c) Which ideas you are not so keen on? Why not?

d) Remember what you learned about narrative structure in Chapter 4. What would be the plot of your chosen play? Think about the beginning situation, what problem occurs, and how it is resolved or ends.

e) Who would be the main characters? Think about what obstacles or problems your outsider might face.

You are going to share your ideas with others in your group. It is important the discussion goes well.

2 What makes a good discussion? Look at this table of skills. Which skills do you think are particularly important? Rate each one on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Skill	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking clearly					
Listening to others					
Encouraging others to speak					
Keeping on track (not getting diverted into other topics)					
Making notes					
Identifying key points made					
Watching the clock (to keep to the time given)					
Giving reasons to support your views					
Being honest					
Being positive					

3 What are the things you definitely *shouldn't* do?

Develop

4 In your group, decide which of the play choices you are going to develop. Use the following structure to help the discussion go well.

Stage 1: Take it in turns to present your views on your choice of play. Set a time limit (two minutes maximum) for each person to speak.

- Make sure everyone has their say, even if some group members say more than others.
- Wait until each person has finished talking before you respond or ask questions.

Stage 2: Talk about each suggestion after the person making it has finished.

- Check anything you are not sure about ('So, am I right in thinking that you prefer Option A because…?')
- Ask for further information ('How would you show the audience that…?')
- Make positive suggestions ('That's a good idea, but could we also do this…?')

Stage 3: As a group, talk about the areas you agree and disagree on.

- Is there a favourite option?
- What are the biggest disagreements? Can you find a solution?

Stage 4: Agree your choice of 'outsider' play.

Stage 5: Decide: who is playing what role; what the basic plot will be; where it will take place.

5 Now, evaluate your own and others' performance in the group discussion. The table below shows four of the main skills. This is your own private log, so you don't need to show it to anyone else. If you don't want to use your friends' names, just use numbers.

Name	Listening to others	Making sure everyone has their turn	Making a worthwhile contribution	Understanding points of agreement and disagreement
Me				

6 What one area do you think you could improve on for the next group discussion?

Respond

You are now going to **improvise** your own short play based on the option you chose.

Key term

improvise: to make up a drama as you go along, rather than working from a written script

7 Rehearse the play – it doesn't matter if you don't speak exactly the same lines each time. This is an improvisation, so it will change a little each time you practise it.

8 Perform your play. When you have finished, evaluate its success.

a) How well did the play portray what it is like to be an outsider?

b) Did everyone contribute to the play's success? If not, why not?

c) What worked well in the performance? What didn't work so well?

d) How would your group improve the whole performance if you had the chance to perform again?

Performing and scripting plays

You will learn how to:

- perform effectively using speech, gesture and movement
- comment on how well a play works in script and in action.

In this unit, you will get the chance to turn your group's improvisation from Unit 5.3 into a written playscript, perform it and comment on how good the acting skills were.

Explore

This is part of one group's version of 'The Outsider' script. They have based it on *Twelfth Night*.

The setting is a shadowy cave. SEBASTIAN, *exhausted, clings to a rock.*

A figure enters. It is ANTONIO, *a soldier. He climbs across the rocks, approaches* SEBASTIAN *and hauls him up.*

ANTONIO: (*carefully*) There. You're safe now.

SEBASTIAN: (*warily*) Who … who are you? What do you want? I have no money.

ANTONIO: I saw your ship sink, and pulled you from the water.

SEBASTIAN: I'm sorry. Thank you. But, where am I?

ANTONIO: This land is called Illyria.

SEBASTIAN: Illyria? You are from here?

ANTONIO: No, I am a soldier. In fact, the Duke of this land, Orsino, is my enemy.

SEBASTIAN: So, you are a spy? Then you are in danger! And perhaps me too. (*Sadly*) But, what does it matter? My sister, Viola, is drowned. I might as well be dead too.

ANTONIO: What will you do?

SEBASTIAN: I shall head to Orsino's court – where else can I go?

He stands up.

Many thanks again, my friend. One day, I shall try to repay your kindness.

ANTONIO: Let me serve you – help you survive here.

SEBASTIAN: No. I must make my own way.

1. How well has the student developed the idea of the 'outsider'? Discuss these questions with a partner.
   a) What does the word 'warily' tell you about how Sebastian feels?
   b) In what way does he misunderstand the situation when he tells Antonio: 'I have no money.'
   c) Where does Sebastian say he has no choice but to go? Why?
2. What do you think happens next?

Develop

3. Now, work in pairs to perform the script above, using what the writer has provided as guidance.

   Consider:

   - the tone of voice you use
   - how you might move or what **gestures** you could make.

   For example:

   SEBASTIAN: (*warily*) Who … who are you? What do you want? I have no money

   [1] he backs away, defensively

   [2] emphasise 'no'

Key term

gesture: a specific movement, like scratching your head or waving your hand, that signals a particular meaning

4. How could you make this even clearer?

Was there a clear difference between how the two characters spoke? If not, think again about the clues in the text and also how you can make it obvious Sebastian is full of despair and Antonio is strong and kind.

You are going to write a scene from a playscript. You can *either*:

Write a new scene from *Twelfth Night*. Imagine Sebastian finds Orsino's court. Antonio has followed him, despite the danger. However, Orsino has already met Sebastian's twin, Viola, disguised as a boy/man. What could possibly go wrong?

or

Write up your own 'Outsider' improvised scene from earlier.

5 Write out a draft of the scene.

Checklist for success

- ✔ Start with a brief description of the setting or stage. This can be something simple like 'a carpeted hallway' or 'by an old gate'.
- ✔ Use capital letters to introduce your first character who is on, or comes onto, stage.
- ✔ Use the present tense for actions or movements ('*Antonio watches from a distance*').
- ✔ Put the names of characters on the left-hand side of the script.
- ✔ Do not use speech marks for spoken words in a script.
- ✔ Use brackets around any simple guidance on ways of speaking or moving, for example, (*nervously*).

6 Now, work in small groups to perform the script.

- Remember to adapt your voice to suit the character you are playing.
- Use gestures and movements that seem to fit with your character.
- Speak clearly so the audience can hear you.

You could begin:

SEBASTIAN: (*clearing his throat*) Err. Well, I wondered if I might speak with Count Orsino?

Respond

7 Once you have finished the performance of your own play, copy and use this grid to think about how effective the script was, and how effective the performance was.

My script	My performance
1) Layout and presentation of my script *It was good because…* *It was not so good because…*	1) My use of voice and movement *I used my voice well because…* *I used movement well because…* *However, I could have…*
2) The theme of the outsider *It showed the theme of the outsider well because…* *However, it could have been better if I had…*	2) The character of the outsider *The person who played the outsider (me/ someone else) played it well because…* *However, they could have…*
3) Overall my script: needed lots more work ☐ worked quite well ☐ worked very well ☐	3) Overall, our performance: needed lots more work ☐ worked quite well ☐ worked very well ☐

Exploring the structure of reviews

You will learn how to:

- explore the key structural features of reviews
- understand how quotations and paragraphs are used to review effectively.

Have you ever read a **review** of a play or film? Reviews can be found in newspapers, magazines or online in blogs or on news sites. Usually, a type of writer called a critic provides information about the film or play and gives their opinion on whether it is worth seeing.

Key term

review: a written report of a play, film, video game, album, etc. which gives the writer's opinion

Explore

1. Imagine you want to go to see a play or film locally. You find a review. What would you expect to see or find out from the review? Complete the notes below.

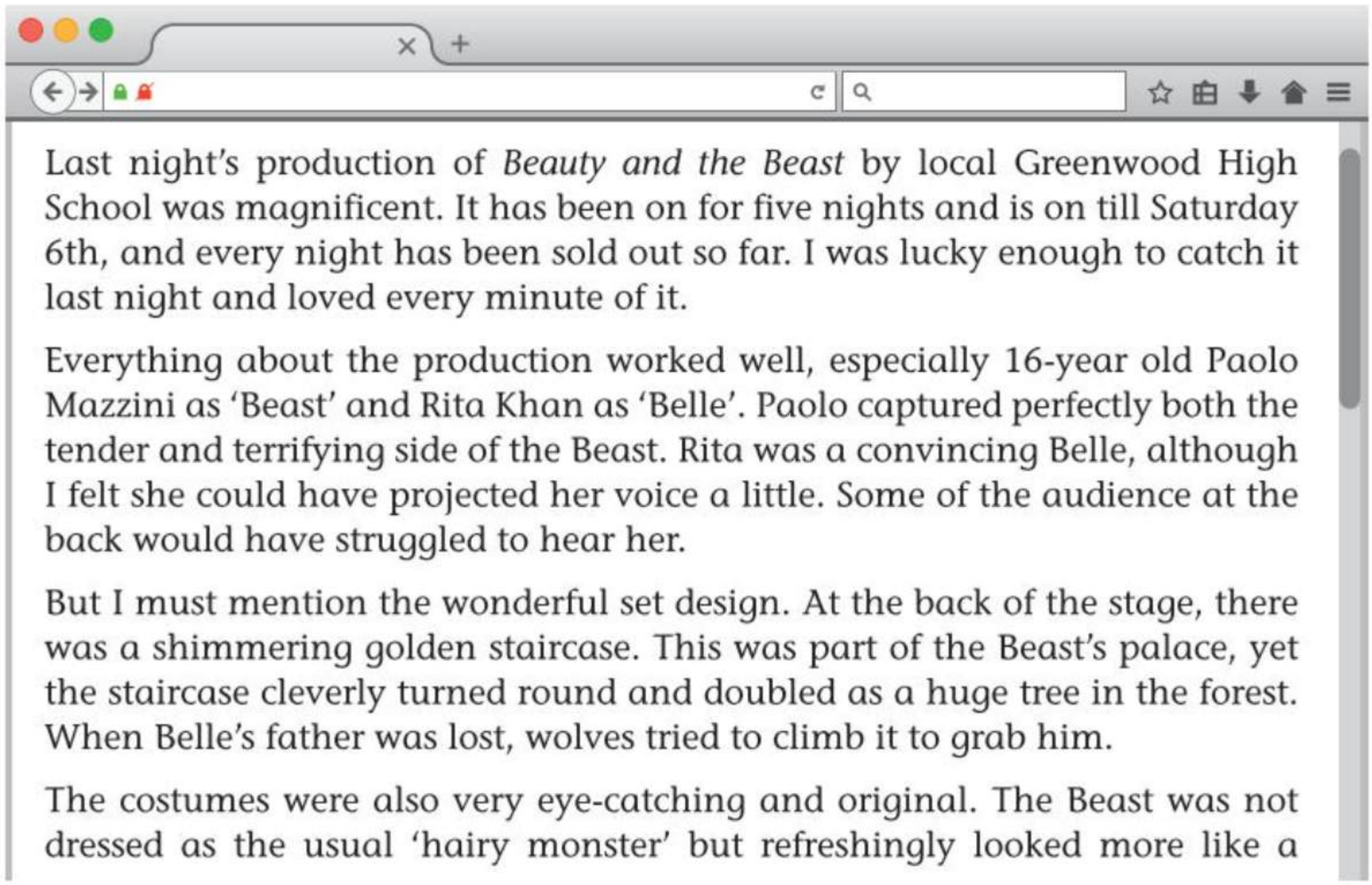
   a) Who is in it?

   b) When is it on?

   c) .....?

   d) .....?

A critic for a local news website has been to see a play. Read her review of it.



Last night's production of *Beauty and the Beast* by local Greenwood High School was magnificent. It has been on for five nights and is on till Saturday 6th, and every night has been sold out so far. I was lucky enough to catch it last night and loved every minute of it.

Everything about the production worked well, especially 16-year old Paolo Mazzini as 'Beast' and Rita Khan as 'Belle'. Paolo captured perfectly both the tender and terrifying side of the Beast. Rita was a convincing Belle, although I felt she could have projected her voice a little. Some of the audience at the back would have struggled to hear her.

But I must mention the wonderful set design. At the back of the stage, there was a shimmering golden staircase. This was part of the Beast's palace, yet the staircase cleverly turned round and doubled as a huge tree in the forest. When Belle's father was lost, wolves tried to climb it to grab him.

The costumes were also very eye-catching and original. The Beast was not dressed as the usual 'hairy monster' but refreshingly looked more like a

lizard or dragon; he had horrible green scales and a long tail, which he swished menacingly from time to time. Belle was dressed very simply in a white dress with a crimson cape and hood. She seemed delicate and fragile, and reminded me of Little Red Riding Hood.

All in all, this was a hugely successful production, which was as good as many professional versions I have seen. Praise must go to the director, Claire White, for extracting such great performances from our talented youngsters. I'm already looking forward to the school's next production.

2 Did this review provide all the things you wanted to know?

When you review a play, you need to focus on particular things. For example, in the first paragraph the reviewer deals with the success of the play ('every night has been sold out'). She also tells us her general view ('magnificent'). In the next paragraphs, she focuses on particular things she liked about the play and tells us why.

3 Copy and complete the grid below.

Paragraph	Focus (if any)	Critic's viewpoint	Evidence
1	summary of the play's success		
2	the acting of Paolo and Rita	Paolo and Rita's acting was very good.	'Paolo captured perfectly…' 'Rita … a convincing Belle'
3	the set design, in particular the staircase		
4	the costumes, in particular those of…		
5	she sums up her views		

Develop

The following are two paragraphs from a review of a recent production of *Twelfth Night*. As you read them, think about what the reviewer says about the style of the production.

Paragraph A

Once the cast and a community chorus of 30 people hand out pieces of jerk chicken inside the auditorium, spilling out from Robert Jones's brightly coloured, stylised **Notting Hill carnival** street set, the good times really began to roll. This very loose musical version of Shakespeare's comedy with music and lyrics by Shaina Taub, is far from perfect, but its benign heart and inclusive warmth make it a welcoming touchstone for the kind of theatre **Kwei-Armah** wants to produce.

Vocabulary

Notting Hill carnival: an annual London street festival celebrating Caribbean culture

Kwei-Armah: Kwame Kwei-Armah, the play's director

Paragraph B

As Viola, Gabrielle Brooks is a gentle joy, lending warmth and **pathos** to her love scenes with Rupert Young's awkward Orsino. Natalie Drew makes Olivia's violent mood swings both funny and understandable, and Gbemisola Ikumelo is a fine, feisty **Maria** and Melissa Allan a strong-voiced **Feste**.

From 'Review: Twelfth Night (Young Vic)' by Sarah Crompton, 8 October 2018, whatsonstage.com

Vocabulary

pathos: creating pity or sadness

Maria; Feste: characters in the play (the first a maid, the second a clown)

4 Think back to the scene from *Twelfth Night* that you read at the start of the chapter. It was quite sad and gloomy. The style of the production mentioned in the review above sounds rather different. In what ways?

5 Now think about the structure of the review.

a) Which of the two paragraphs do you think is:

- a summary/opening paragraph covering lots of aspects of the play?
- a middle paragraph covering one particular aspect?

b) What is the reviewer's overall view of the play?

c) How does the reviewer feel about the acting?

Respond

6 Try changing the order of the paragraphs of the *Beauty and the Beast* review. Do they still work? Why? Why not?

Developing the language of reviews

You will learn how to:

- use a range of vocabulary, sentences and connectives to create an effective review
- check spellings and grammar so your writing is accurate and clear.

When you write a review, make your viewpoint clear but express it in an interesting and entertaining way. To do this, you'll need to vary your vocabulary and sentences, and link your points smoothly.

Explore

You can use carefully selected adjectives and nouns to sum up the performance of an actor in a play or film.

1. Look at each of these examples from reviews in this chapter and identify the positive adjectives and nouns.

> 'As Viola, Gabrielle Brooks is a gentle joy'

> 'Gbemisola Ikumelo is a fine, feisty Maria'

> 'Rita was a convincing Belle'

> 'The costumes were also very eye-catching and original.'

2. Here are some further review statements from a critic who *didn't* like these two productions. Copy and complete these statements, adding your own negative adjectives.

   a) 'Rita's voice was incredibly … and …'

   b) 'The set design looked very … and …'

Reviewers also use adverb + adjective combinations to emphasise a viewpoint. For example:

> All in all, this was a hugely successful production…

adverb

adjective

3 Complete these sentences, taken from another review of *Beauty and the Beast*, adding an appropriate adverb from the word bank below.

a) Unfortunately, I found the acting … unrealistic.

b) Her heartfelt speech was … captivating.

c) The slick dance routines were … choreographed.

d) Their first meeting was, I'm afraid, … directed.

utterly poorly perfectly totally

Develop

It is equally important to structure your paragraphs so that ideas link naturally. Ideally, you need to combine factual details with your viewpoint. For example:

> The Ivy Theatre's latest production of *Twelfth Night*, directed by Tara Sanchez, is certainly unusual. It is set in a futuristic city and features a rusty palace made of old cars. Although this approach is definitely different, it made Illyria plain and less magical.

Introduces the basic facts, and how the reviewer feels overall.

Describes two aspects of the production.

Weighs up whether the unusual approach works.

The variety of sentences helps explain the reviewer's views.

4 Identify which of the sentences above is:

- a simple sentence using bracketing commas for extra information
- a compound sentence made up of two equally important clauses, balanced by a conjunction such as 'and' or 'because'
- a complex sentence with a main clause (one that makes sense on its own) and at least one dependent clause (that doesn't work on its own).

5 Imagine you didn't agree with the review.

a) Change the first sentence so that it is positive. You could use a combination of these adjectives and adverbs.

totally | utterly | wonderfully | magical | amazing | mad

b) Rewrite this final complex sentence, taking a more positive view:

Although this approach is definitely different, it made Illyria seem … and …

Now, read another paragraph. The paragraph is one long sentence.

> The production really made me think about outsiders because for example Viola gets involved with other people's love affairs and Olivia isolates herself and even though it is funny to see all the mix-ups it is sad that Viola doesn't know if her brother is still alive and in the end you are pleased to see it all sorted out.

6 Create a new paragraph beginning *and* ending with a simple sentence. You may need to cut some words out.

The production really made me think about outsiders. For example, Viola…

When you are writing a review such as this, **connectives** can be very useful in telling the reader your views. For example:

Key terms

connective: a word or phrase used to link parts of a sentence or to show connection between two paragraphs

qualify: to add something to a point that provides more information, e.g. 'one small bad thing in an otherwise good experience'

Comparing things or ideas you liked/ disliked	Qualifying things or showing difference	Developing or linking	Giving examples
similarly, in the same way, like, both	even though, although, in spite of, despite, yet, however, but, on the other hand	what is more, in addition, also, moreover, additionally, in fact	in this way, for example, as can be seen when
Example: *Like the opening, the ending left the audience stunned.*	Example: *In spite of the chaos on stage, Viola's cries of happiness pierced the noise.*	Example: *In addition, I found Joe Rudd's Orsino irritating and unrealistic.*	Example: *I was moved several times, for example when Viola and Sebastian reunite.*

7 Select the best word or phrase to complete these statements from a review. More than one connecting word or phrase may work.

a) … I loved the costumes, I thought Viola's was too boyish.

b) The actor playing Orsino made me laugh. …, Viola's sadness over her brother's apparent death made me cry.

c) The **backdrop** was very gloomy. …, the director gave the play a serious beginning.

d) I rarely cry at the end of plays, but I did here. …, the music stayed in my head for days.

Respond

Look at this image of a set design for *Twelfth Night*.

8 Read the word bank below and label a copy of the image with the correct terms, where appropriate.

design stage set backdrop mood
audience centre levels lights colour
dark glow sight exit stair step
depth high **prop** column ramp

9 Now write a paragraph of at least 75 words describing the set design, as if from a review. Make your paragraph positive. Use this scaffold.

The overall design was…
You could see … and also…
Another aspect I liked/disliked was…
The mood/effect it created was…

Key terms

backdrop: a curtain or wall at the back of the stage

prop: an object, such as a cup, used in a stage play

Checklist for success

✔ Use positive adjectives and adverbs. These could be individual or combined, e.g. 'highly atmospheric'.

✔ Use a variety of sentences. Start with a simple one giving your overall opinion of the set. Include longer sentences that give factual detail and suggest a viewpoint.

✔ Where necessary, link sentences or parts of sentences with connectives.

✔ Check spellings both as you go along and when you have finished, especially unfamiliar ones to do with plays.

Writing your own review

You will learn how to:

- write a review of your own or other groups' performances
- evaluate how successful your review is and decide what should be improved.

Your task

Write a review of one of the following, for your school magazine or website.

A Your, or another group's, performance on the theme of 'outsiders'.

B A production or extract of a production from a version of *Twelfth Night*.

C A performance of the scenes from *Beauty and the Beast* from earlier in the chapter.

D Any play, film or other performance you have seen.

Approaching the task

1 Either during or after you have watched the performance, use this grid to make notes on:

what the basic plot/story is	
who was in it	
what the main ideas were – and what mood or feeling it created	
what different aspects of the performance you could comment on (for example, how actors spoke, how they moved, any use of set design – even if it was just a chair)	
what you think went well	
what could have been improved	
what your overall impression or opinion of the performance was	
anything else worth mentioning	

2 Once you have made notes on the performance and decided what your opinion is, write your review.

Checklist for success

- ✔ Start with an introduction that includes the key information about the performance and gives an idea of what you think.
- ✔ Add paragraphs that deal with separate aspects of the production and what you think of each one.
- ✔ Conclude by summing up your views about the performance.
- ✔ Use a variety of sentences and vocabulary that conveys your viewpoint.
- ✔ Link your ideas so that you add detail and examples.

Remember to make it sound like a review in a magazine which will be read by someone who has not yet seen the play.

Reflecting on your work

3 Look at the following extract from a review by a student. As you read it, consider what they have done effectively, and what could be improved.

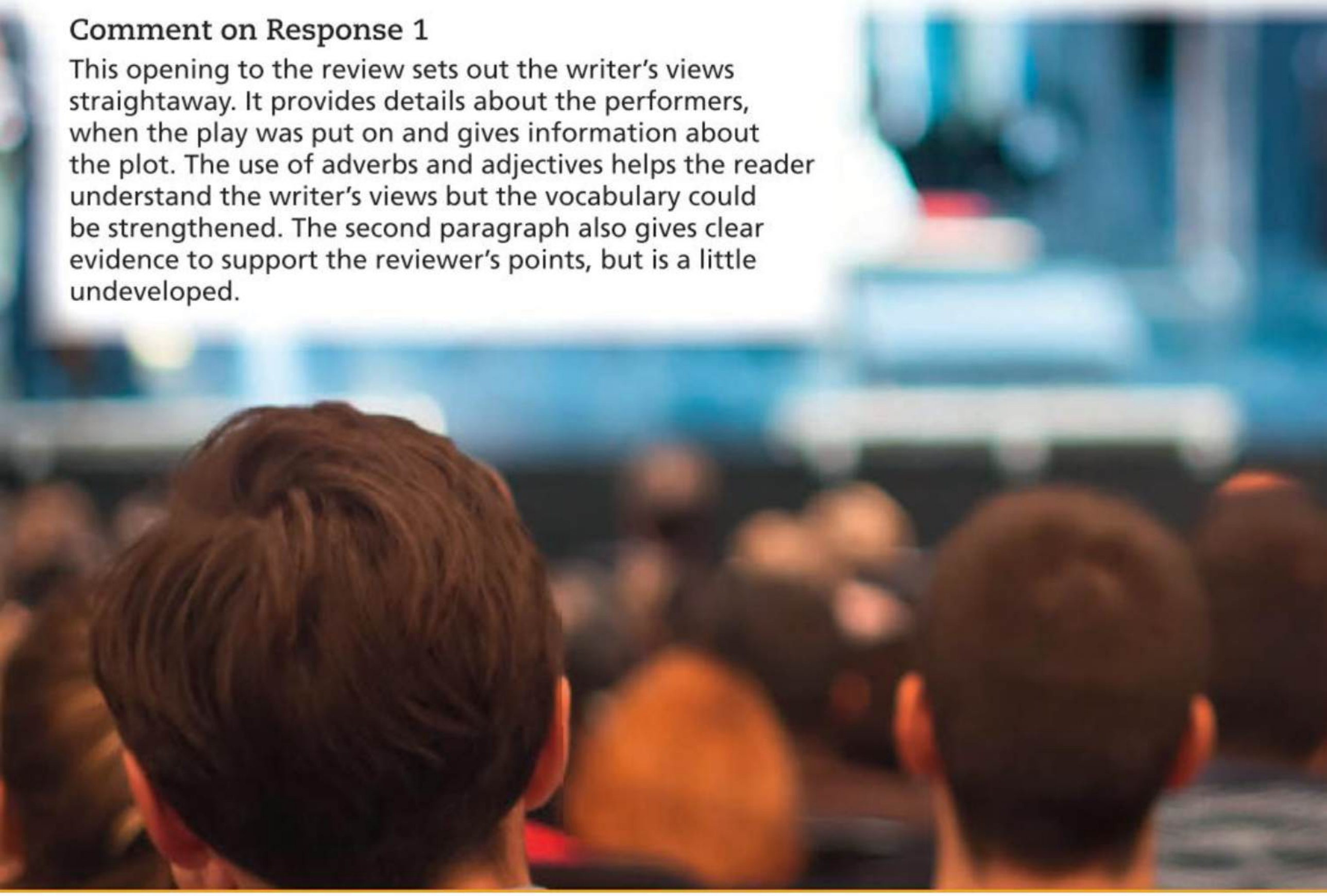
Response 1

This afternoon I saw a great performance of a scene based on 'Twelfth Night'. It was put on by a group from Class 7B, and was really powerful and interesting. Sami Das played Sebastian, a shipwrecked man, who thinks his sister is drowned. Alone in a strange land he meets a kind villager called Ruth, but her family don't want her to help him. Sami was excellent as Sebastian. When he wept tears for his dead sister, we all believed they were real. He spoke with a shaking voice as he asked Ruth if she had any news of his sister. The way she welcomed him and gave him food was very moving, too.

- Simple sentence gives information and sums up opinion.
- Adverb and adjective combination shows viewpoint.
- Longer, compound sentence provides more detail of plot.
- Simple sentence introduces new paragraph focus.
- Clear detail about the acting.
- Connective helps develop the point.

Comment on Response 1

This opening to the review sets out the writer's views straightaway. It provides details about the performers, when the play was put on and gives information about the plot. The use of adverbs and adjectives helps the reader understand the writer's views but the vocabulary could be strengthened. The second paragraph also gives clear evidence to support the reviewer's points, but is a little undeveloped.



4 Now read this second extract from another review. What makes it better than the first?

Response 2

Class 7B's performance of a scene based on 'Twelfth Night' was a revelation. From the first words spoken by Sami Das as Sebastian, the shipwrecked man who believes his sister has drowned, we were taken to the shores of Illyria. Isolated and bewildered in this strange land, Sebastian is helped by kind villager Ruth (played brilliantly by Rowena Lam) but her family refuse to offer him shelter.

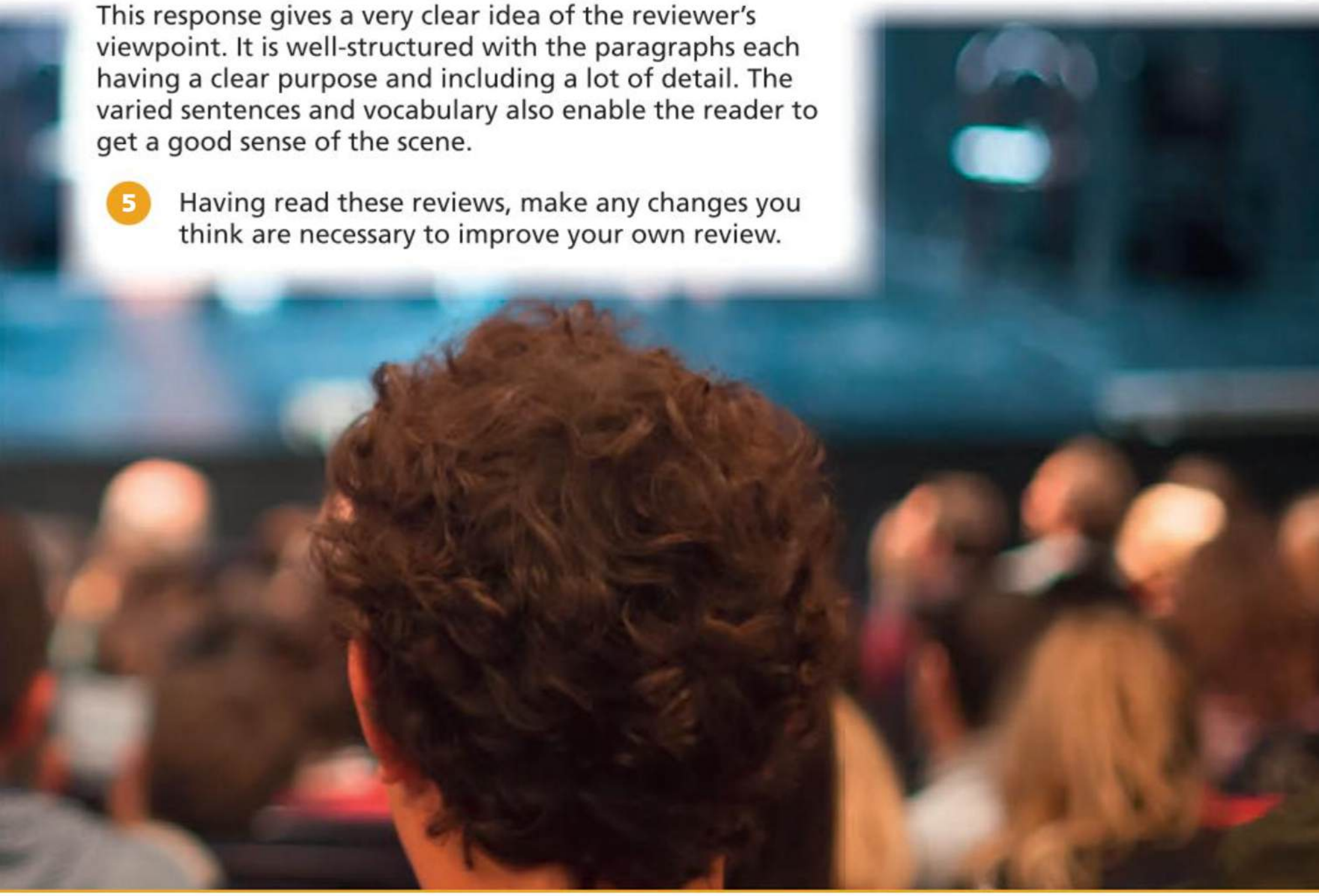
Sami's performance as Sebastian was incredibly moving. Standing alone at the front of the stage, he stared out at the audience as if looking into a stormy ocean. Yet his performance was matched by that of Rowena, who conveyed real tenderness in her role. Both commanded the space so that your eyes never left them.

- Opening sentence uses a powerful opinion word.
- Long complex sentence builds in all the background detail.
- Well-chosen adjectives tell us more about characterisation.
- Short sentences signal clear shift to focus on characters.
- Focus on acting skill shown.
- Connective links skills of both actors.
- Final summative sentence conveys reviewer's viewpoint.

Comment on Response 2

This response gives a very clear idea of the reviewer's viewpoint. It is well-structured with the paragraphs each having a clear purpose and including a lot of detail. The varied sentences and vocabulary also enable the reader to get a good sense of the scene.

5 Having read these reviews, make any changes you think are necessary to improve your own review.



Responding to a scene from a play

You will learn how to:

- respond to a different extract from a play
- apply what you have learned about the key ideas, structure and characterisation in a play.

You are going to respond to a short scene from a play set in the near future. Like Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*, Jed arrives in a strange place.

My Classmate is a Robot

The setting is a schoolroom but it is one on another planet. The room has white walls, each with a blank screen on it. There do not appear to be any chairs, except for one small, white, upside-down cone. JED has been sent to the school by his parents who live on another planet. JED enters and hovers uncertainly near the white chair, wondering if it's for him.

Enter A4, a small robot.

A4: (*robotic, boring voice*) Hello. You. Must. Be. Jed.

JED stands up. Holds out his hand. A4 moves his head (actually a box with one central eye in it) up and down but ignores it.

JED: (*nervously*) Err. Umm. Yes. That's right. I'm new.

A4: So. Am. I. I was built. Just three weeks. Ago.

JED: Right. No – well, what I mean is – I'm new *here*.

A4: My name is A. Four.

JED: 'A' for what? A for Adam? Ajay? Andre?

A4: A4 for A4. A4 is my name.

JED: What's your surname?

A4: You mean. My serial number?

JED: I suppose so.

A4: I am. Not allowed to know. It. Do you know. Yours?

JED: Kind of. Though it's more of a word, really.

A4 comes closer, whirring and circling around JED as if inspecting him.

A4: When. Were. You. Built?

JED: I wasn't exactly built. More like 'born'. 13 years ago.

A4: (*barks out a laugh*) Ha-ha-ha-ha. YOU are OLD. 30

JED: Old? My parents keep on going on about how young I am, how I will understand more when I'm a parent … blah, blah, blah.

A4: 'Parent'. I have heard. This word. But it is alien. To me. 35

JED: Alien to *you?* The only alien around here is… (*stops himself*). Sorry – go on.

A4: 'Parent'. This means 'designer'. Yes?

JED: Err. Sort of.

A4: You. Are. Strange. But you may. Sit next. To me. 40

JED: Can you sit? I mean, are you able to?

A4: I am. Sitting.

JED: (*guiltily*) Oh. Well, yes. Thanks. It's good to have a friend in a new school.

A4: Friend? What is 'friend'? 45

JED: Oh dear.

Jed sits on the white cone-thing. But it buzzes and whirrs around. He leaps up.

JED: Yikes! I thought…

B4: (*interrupts, in very high voice*) Be careful, humanoid! I am B Four. 50

JED: Before what?

By Mike Gould

Understanding the text

1. How many characters does the scene contain for the first 46 lines? How does this change in the last two lines?

2. What details does the writer give about the set?

3. How does the writer show Jed is unfamiliar with his new surroundings when he enters the classroom?

4. What differences do you notice between Jed and A4 in terms of their appearance and their lives so far? Write down at least three differences.

   a) … b) … c) …

Thinking about the text's purpose and features

5 Write answers to the following questions.

a) What sort of information is given in the stage directions before the speaking begins?

b) How do we know how the speakers say or are meant to speak certain lines?

c) How are characters' movements shown? What tense is used?

Looking at the text in detail

6 The writer has used language and dramatic techniques to develop the characters of Jed and A4 in the scene.

a) In line 26, what does '*whirring*' mean?

b) What does the word suggest about A4?

c) Find two examples of how Jed's uncertainty is shown through the language he uses.

d) Look at A4's first line: 'Hello. You. Must. Be. Jed.' What does the punctuation suggest about the way A4 speaks?

e) Why does Jed stop himself from finishing the sentence 'The only alien around here…'?

Writing about the text

7 Now write a paragraph about the characters of A4 and Jed and how they are developed in this scene. Write about how each character speaks, what they say and the stage directions used to describe them.

Reflecting on your work

8 Compare your own response to Question 7 to the two sample responses. Once you have read them, identify ways in which your own response could be improved. Rewrite it, if needed.

Response 1

This scene presents the two characters as very different. A4 speaks in short, incomplete sentences, which are sometimes just a word or phrase. The writer also uses stage directions that suggest A4 is a robot, for example he 'barks out a laugh' and is 'whirring' around. Jed is unsure of himself, and uses informal words like 'Um' and 'Err' to show he is confused. He also does silly things like hold his hand out while A4 whizzes around. Also, when Jed sits on the 'chair' it turns out to be another robot.

- Useful introductory sentence.
- Good supporting detail.
- Further evidence in quotation form.
- Comment on character's use of language.
- Comment on gesture, but could say more about the effects.

Comment on Response 1

This is a clear explanation of how the characters are different, but some evidence is missing, and more could be said about the effect of the speech and movements used by A4.

Response 2

In this scene, the characters are shown to be very different. In terms of gesture and movement, the stage directions tell us that Jed 'hovers uncertainly', while A4 is 'circling around as if inspecting' Jed. The way they speak is different too: A4 speaks in short, sharp bursts which do not have the normal human tones, while Jed mumbles, using abbreviated phrases such as 'Sort of'. The boy and robot understand the world differently too, with A4 failing to understand concepts such as age and parents. The contrast between Jed appearing to be stuck to one spot, foolishly holding out his hand to shake, and A4's busy, buzzing movements creates some very funny moments for the audience.

- Fluently expressed details about the characterisation.
- Cleverly links the way the way each character speaks.
- Further well-chosen details about the gestures and movements.
- Refers to effects on the audience.

Comment on Response 2

This is a well-developed response, which comments on a wide range of differences between the two characters and provides detailed evidence to support these points.

What you have achieved

Reading

- You have learned to recognise and explain the features of playscripts and reviews.
- You have identified how characters are conveyed through speech and action in plays.
- You have analysed how reviews are structured and get across their point of view.

Writing

- You have learned how to structure a review so that you make your view clear and provide useful information to the reader.
- You have learned how to use vocabulary and sentence structures that make your opinion obvious.
- You have learned how to write your own playscript, using correct layout and conveying the plot and characters effectively.

Speaking and listening

- You have learned how to create a short scene with others, using some performance skills.
- You have learned what makes a good discussion and have applied the skills.
- You have thought about your own performance both in discussion and when acting.

Next steps

Reading

There are many ways of finding out more about William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, including watching cartoon versions created for the BBC (*Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*), or reading retellings in prose form, such as Mary Lamb's version in *Tales from Shakespeare*. You can also read or see the actual play.

Writing

It can be fun to complete a whole play for performance. It doesn't take much to develop a scene like the one you have written in this unit, and either improvise more scenes or write more to complete it. Stick to fairly simple stage directions so that it is easy to produce or perform, and think about how simple objects can be used to suggest character (for example, a cap for a sailor).

Speaking and listening

When you are next with a group or at a family gathering, pay attention to the way people get their points across through gesture or tone of voice. What are the biggest differences you notice between speakers? Who is a good listener? Why?

6

Chapter 6 Exploring and commenting

Animal poetry

What's it all about?

Poems are a great way of exploring interesting topics and help us to see the world through other people's eyes. This chapter includes some exciting poems about animals and how we feel about them, and shows you how to begin exploring and commenting on poetry in more depth.

You should already know:

- that writers choose words to create a particular impact
- that writers use different sentence lengths or types for effect
- that there is a wide range of different types of poem
- how to approach words or phrases you don't know
- how to listen to what others say in a discussion and remember at least one key point.

You will learn how to:

- enjoy sounds, shapes and patterns used by poets
- talk and write about interesting themes or ideas from poems
- write simple, clear points about poems with evidence to back up what you say
- analyse how poets make their poems come alive
- think about the poems you enjoy reading and would like to write.

You will:

- put a poem back together from jumbled pieces, using some clues
- discuss and agree the themes in a powerful poem you have read
- write clearly structured paragraphs about a poet's use of language and form
- write your own poem about an animal.

Enjoy reading

You will learn how to:

- share your first impressions of a poem
- explore the main ideas in a poem.

You are going to read a poem by an Australian writer about a school lesson that is interrupted by sounds from outside.

1. Do you ever daydream or find it hard to concentrate in class?
   a) What can you hear or see from your classroom window?
   b) Which of the sounds are 'manufactured' (like cars) and which are natural (like birdsong)?

2. Read the poem slowly, noting down any unfamiliar words or phrases.

Bird in the Classroom

The students drowsed and drowned
In the teacher's ponderous monotone –
Limp bodies looping in the wordy heat,
Melted and run together, desks and flesh as one,
Swooning and swimming in a sea of drone. 5

Each one asleep, swayed and vaguely drifted
With lidding eyes and lolling, weighted heads,
Was caught on heavy waves and dimly lifted,
Sunk slowly, ears ringing, in the syrup of his sound,
Or borne from the room on a heaving wilderness of beds 10

And then, on a sudden, a bird's cool voice
Punched out song. Crisp and spare
On the startled air,
Beak-beamed
Or idly tossed,
Each note gleamed 15
Like a bead of frost.

A bird's cool voice from a neighbour tree
With five clear calls – mere grains of sound
Rare and neat
Repeated twice…

But they sprang the heat
Like drops of ice.

Ears cocked, before the comment ran
Fading and chuckling where a **wattle** stirred,
The students wondered how they could have heard
Such dreary monotones from man,
Such wisdom from a bird.

By Colin Thiele

3 Now choose five of the words you noted down. Can you work out what each one means?

a) What sort of word is it: a verb, adjective, adverb or noun?

b) Does it contain a prefix or suffix you know already? (For example, 'im' is a prefix meaning 'not'.)

c) Does the context help? Look at the rest of the sentence – what is happening?

Vocabulary

wattle: a type of Australian shrub or bush

4 Note down answers to the big five questions about the poem.

a) **Who** is this poem about?

b) **What** is happening in the poem?

c) **When** does this poem take place? Can you tell if the events are happening now or in the past or future?

d) **Where** is the poem set?

e) **Why** has the poet written this poem? What are they trying to make you think, feel or imagine?

5 How can you tell this is a poem?

6 Have you ever read anything similar to this poem? Is it the kind of thing you would normally read? Why? Why not?

7 Did the poem make you want to read more animal poetry? Why? Why not?

Exploring and commenting on a poem's language

You will learn how to:

- explore writer's language in detail
- explain the effect of particular words and phrases.

When you explore and comment on poetry, you look at **explicit** meanings of words, but you also make inferences and explore the effect of the writer's choices: what they make you think, feel or imagine.

Key term

explicit: obvious or straightforward

Explore

When poets describe an animal, they will often focus on:

- colour or patterns on fur or hair
- texture or feel
- shape, size and movement
- sound.

Look at these examples.

a)

'a bird's cool voice
Punched out song'

From 'Bird in the Classroom' by Colin Thiele

b)

'an old mouse bolted in the wheat'

From 'The Mouse's Nest' by John Clare

c)

'My bull is dark like the rain-cloud in the storm'

From 'The Magnificent Bull' (traditional African poem)

d)

'Green-eyed scratcher'

From 'Cat!' by Eleanor Farjeon

To decide what aspect of the animal the poet is describing, you would look closely at individual words or phrases. For example, the adjective 'dark' is part of the bull's appearance.

1 Copy and complete this table with words or phrases from each poem. The first one has been done for you. Some words might go in more than one column.

	Colour/patterns	Texture/feel	Shape/size/movement	Sound
a)		'cool'?		'cool voice' 'punched out song'
b)				
c)				
d)				

Once you understand the words, you can look at the effect of the language on you as the reader. This can mean:

- what picture is created in your mind
- what mood the choice of words creates. (For example, does the description of an animal make you laugh or feel sad?)

These effects can be created by explicit information (things stated directly) or implicit (not stated directly but hinted at through the language used).

A student has begun to make notes about one of the examples above.

> 'an old mouse bolted in the wheat'

This is explicit information – telling the reader.

This is a verb of action – is it like 'thunderbolt'?

This is the habitat – where the mouse lives.

2 What do you think this line suggests about the old mouse? Consider each of these options.

a) The mouse was struck by lightning so it ran away.

b) The mouse was frightened so shot out quickly from its nest.

c) The mouse looked like a flash of lightning.

d) The mouse had a heart attack.

Now look at these lines from 'Bird in the Classroom' with annotations.

> 'And then, on a sudden, a bird's cool voice
> Punched out song.'

Cold or fresh? Or could this mean stylish?

Like a singer?

Strong and direct! Like being hit.

Here are three students discussing the lines.

Kumiko: 'Punched' means hit strongly, doesn't it? So, the bird is attacking, isn't it?

Rae: Hmm. I think the poet means the sound is very strong. Remember it's a hot sunny classroom – the class are all sleepy. They've been hit with the freshness of the bird. It makes a contrast.

Jon: I think the poet just means birds are really cool. Who doesn't want to be a bird singing in a tree? Wouldn't it be cool to fly?

3 a) Which of the students has talked about the meaning *and* effect of the words?

b) Which comments, if any, do you agree with? Why?

4 What other examples can you find in the complete poem on pages 166–167 of the bird's sound being like something cold and bright?

5 Look again at the poem extracts c) and d) and discuss what you are being told directly, and what is implied in each case. For example, does a cat being called a 'Green-eyed scratcher' mean it is aggressive?

Develop

Another way of exploring a poem is to look at the semantic field. This means the way in which words, phrases or images can be grouped together.

6 In 'Bird in the Classroom', what do the highlighted words or phrases have in common?

> The students drowsed and drowned
> In the teacher's ponderous monotone –
> Limp bodies looping in the wordy heat,
> Melted and run together, desks and flesh as one,
> Swooning and swimming in a sea of drone.
>
> Each one asleep, swayed and vaguely drifted
> With lidding eyes and lolling, weighted heads,
> Was caught on heavy waves and dimly lifted,
> Sunk slowly, ears ringing, in the syrup of his sound,
> Or borne from the room on a heaving wilderness of beds

7 Here are some possible semantic fields. Discuss which fit the selected words in Question 6, and why.

a) sickness

b) sleepiness

c) sadness

d) shock

Identifying a semantic field can often help you understand the mood or impact of the language.

8 Look at the semantic fields below. Can you find evidence for any of these in the extract above? Look for at least two words or phrases from the poem that would fit.

heat underwater sounds colours food

9 Now, write two sentences about which of these 'fields' is the most important. Use this frame to help you.

The writer uses a lot of words and phrases to do with … such as … and…
I think this is the most important choice of language because it suggests that…

Respond

Here is the fourth **stanza** from 'Bird in the Classroom'.

A bird's cool voice from a neighbour tree
With five clear calls – mere grains of sound
Rare and neat
Repeated twice…
But they sprang the heat
Like drops of ice.

Key term

stanza: a group of lines in a poem

10 The poet says the five notes of the bird's call are 'grains of sound' and 'Like drops of ice'.

Write a paragraph commenting on one of these two descriptions.

a) Start with a sentence explaining the meaning of your chosen phrase.

b) Add a sentence about the pictures or associations the phrase brings to mind.

c) Finish by saying if/how the images link to other vocabulary in the poem (the semantic field).

You could begin:

The poet describes the bird's call as being like…

Exploring and commenting on a poem's form and structure

You will learn how to:

- explore a poem's form and structure
- analyse its impact or effect.

Poetry can take many forms. Poets use a variety of forms to express their thoughts and feelings.

Explore

Form means the poem's shape, pattern and sound, including:

- the number and length of lines used
- the way these are laid out on the page
- whether the poem is broken up into different sections or stanzas
- its **rhythm**: the number and pattern of syllables or stresses in each line
- its **rhyme scheme**.

Here are three different examples of poetry about animals.

Key terms

form: a poem's shape, pattern and sound

rhyme scheme: the pattern of rhymes used at the end of the lines in a poem. For example, poem A below has a rhyme scheme of AABB: AA because the first two lines rhyme ('grow/toe') and BB because the third and fourth lines rhyme ('eyes/size')

rhythm: the pattern of syllables or stresses in a line of poetry, e.g. in the word 'looked' the emphasis is on the first syllable

Text A

Way down South where bananas grow
A grasshopper stepped on an elephant's toe;
The elephant said, with tears in his eyes,
'Pick on somebody your own size!'

Anonymous

Text B

Going yesterday,
Today, tonight… the wild geese
Have all gone, honking.

By Taniguchi Buson, translated by Daniel C. Buchanan

Text C

Cat!
Scat!
Atter her, atter her,
Sleeky flatterer,
Spitfire chatterer,
Scatter her, scatter her
Off her mat!
Wuff!
Wuff!

By Eleanor Fanjeon

1. What do you notice about the form of each poem? Discuss these questions with a partner.
   a) What do you notice about the rhythm of each poem? Try beating out each line.
   b) What do you notice about the use of sound in each poem? Which poems use rhymes? What sort of pattern, if any, do the rhymes have?
   c) Is there anything else you notice about the layout of the words and lines?

2. Compare your findings with another pair. Why do you think the poet has chosen the form in each case? For example, how would the 'Cat!' poem have a different effect if it used longer lines like text A?

Now read the following poem in a different form. It was written about 200 years ago by a poet famous for his observations of nature.

The Mouse's Nest

I found a ball of grass among the hay
And **proged** it as I passed and went away
And when I looked I fancied something stirred
And turned again and hoped to catch the bird
When out an old mouse bolted in the wheat
With all her young ones hanging at her **teats**.
She looked so odd and so **grotesque** to me
I ran and wondered what the thing could be
And pushed the **knapweed** bunches where I stood
When the mouse hurried from the crawling brood
The young ones squeaked and when I went away
She found her nest again among the hay.
The water **o'er** the pebbles scarce could run
And broad old **cesspools** glittered in the sun.

By John Clare

Vocabulary

proged: a dialect word meaning 'prodded'

teats: nipples on an animal

grotesque: ugly

knapweed: a prickly plant

o'er: over

cesspool: a pit where waste water or sediment has gathered

3. What is the form of this poem? Work with a partner to answer these questions.
   a) How many lines does the poem have?
   b) Are the lines the same length or do they vary?
   c) What rhyme scheme does it follow?
   d) What rhythm do the lines have?

Sonnets are poems that were first written in Italian in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They became famous in English when Shakespeare wrote 154 love sonnets.

Traditionally, a sonnet has 14 lines and uses **iambic pentameter** for its rhythm.

Key term

iambic pentameter: a line of verse made up of ten syllables of which five are stressed in the pattern unstressed, **stressed**, e.g. *Shall **I** com**pare** thee **to** a **su**mmer's **day**?*

4 Is 'The Mouse's Nest' a sonnet?

a) Check the number of lines and its rhythm.

b) Is it a love poem? Think carefully. What story does it tell? What happens to the poet in this sonnet?

5 Go through the first six lines of the poem (sometimes called a sestet) to see how the story begins.

a) What does the poet do to the 'ball of grass' as he passes it?

b) What does he think he has seen or heard?

c) What, in fact, has he disturbed?

6 The second sestet deals with his reaction.

a) What is his reaction?

b) What happens once he has moved away?

In many sonnets, the final **couplet** changes direction or expresses a new or unexpected idea.

Key term

couplet: a pair of rhyming lines next to each other in a poem

7 In his final couplet, what does John Clare focus on?

Develop

Now read a longer section of the poem 'Cat!' aloud.

Cat!
Scat!
Atter her, atter her,
Sleeky **flatterer**,
Spitfire chatterer,
Scatter her, scatter her
Off her mat!
Wuff!
Wuff!
Treat her rough!
Git her, git her,
Whiskery spitter!
Catch her, catch her,
Green-eyed scratcher!

From 'Cat!' by Eleanor Farjeon

Vocabulary

Scat: informal way of saying 'Go away!'

flatterer: someone who praises you in order to get something from you

8 What impression is given of the cat? Which words and phrases help to create this impression?

9 How is the form of this poem different from Clare's?

a) What rhyme scheme does it have (if any)?

b) Are all the line lengths the same?

c) Is there a regular rhythm or pattern to the lines?

Respond

Now look at the rest of the poem set out as prose.

Slathery Slithery Hisser, Don't miss her! Run till you're dithery, **Hithery Thithery** Pfitts! pfitts! How she spits! Spitch! Spatch! Can't she scratch! Scritching the bark Of the sycamore-tree She's reached her ark

And's hissing at me Pfitts! pfitts! Wuff! wuff! Scat, Cat! That's That!

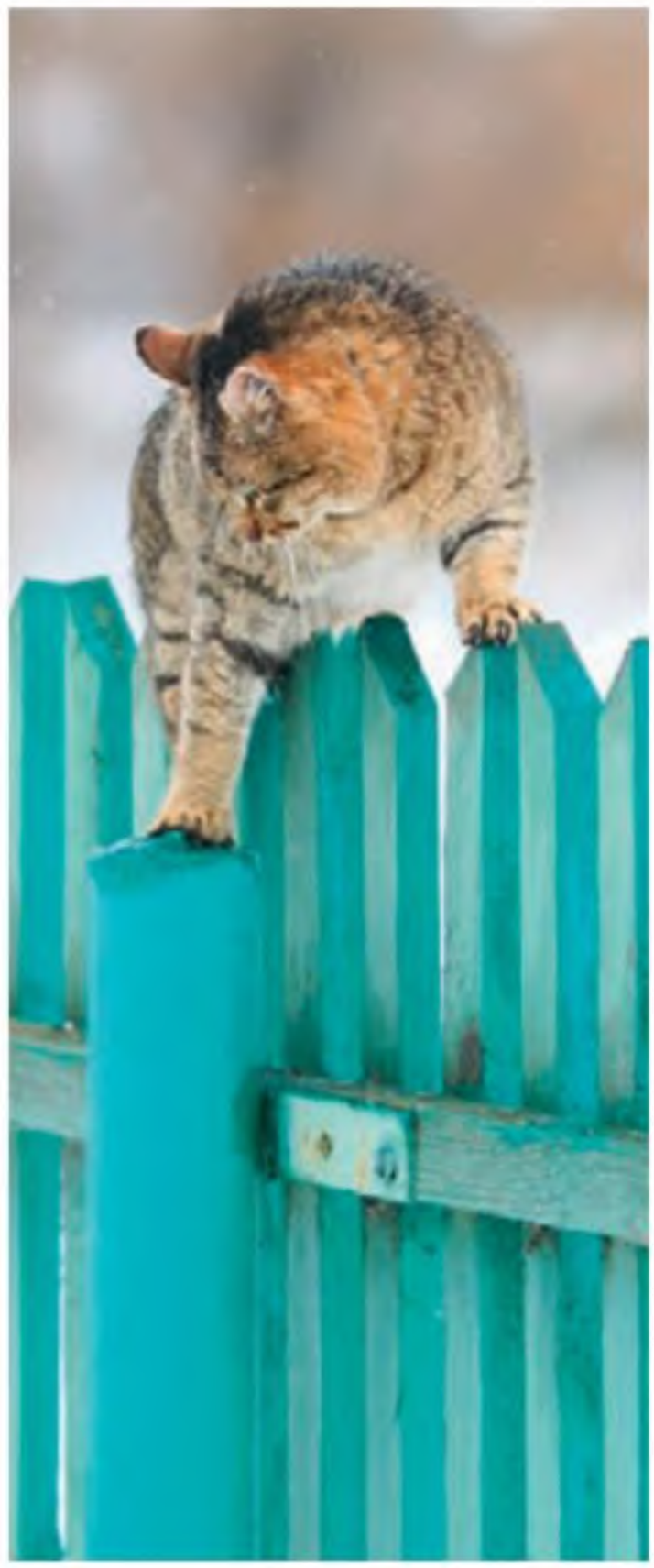
Vocabulary

Hithery, Thithery: 'hither' and 'thither' were an old way of saying 'towards here' and 'towards there'

10 Try to reassemble the prose in the form the poet intended. To do this:

- look at the form and layout in the first extract
- use the capital letters and punctuation as clues
- try to capture the same speedy, sudden and sharp movements and sounds.

11 How well do you think Eleanor Farjeon captures the spirit of the cat? Write a sentence explaining your thoughts.



Exploring and writing poems using dialect

You will learn how to:

- recognise non-standard English and its effects in poetry
- try out non-standard English in your own poetry.

One of the most enjoyable things about reading a poem can be the sense it gives us of the poet's voice and where they come from. Poets often use words and phrases from their own **dialect** or local version of English. We call this **non-standard English**. This adds to the richness of their poetry.

Key terms

dialect: vocabulary or grammar that is specific to a region or country

non-standard English: local English which differs in vocabulary and grammar from the form accepted by most speakers and writers

Explore

1 Read the first verse of this poem by the Scottish poet Robert Burns, who was writing in the eighteenth century. Can you work out what he is saying? Read the poem aloud, as it is written ('sae' should sound like 'ay').

> *On Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785*
>
> Wee, sleekit, cowran, tim'rous *beastie*,
> O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
> Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
> Wi' bickering brattle!
> I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
> Wi' murdering *pattle*!
>
> From 'To a Mouse' by Robert Burns

Vocabulary

Plough: a large blade pulled by a horse to make rows in the earth for seeds

How can you go about understanding the vocabulary?

First, you need to be aware that some words in the poem are **standard English** but spelt so that the reader pronounces them in a Scottish accent ('wad' for 'would'). Others are Scottish dialect words that are specific to Scotland ('brattle' means 'rattle' or 'clatter').

Second, think about what it is *likely* the poet is going to say about a frightened mouse, disturbed by a plough. This will help you guess the meaning of any words you don't know.

Key term

standard English: the accepted, most common form of spoken and written English, which is not specific to a place or region

2 Match these words in standard English to the non-standard words in the poem.

little | smooth | timid | cowering | creature or beast | breast | you | not | jump | away | so | with | loath (meaning 'unwilling' or 'sorry') | run | and | paddle/blade

Reading the poem aloud gives a strong sense of Burns's voice and his viewpoint.

3 What is he telling the poor little mouse?

Develop

4 A different dialect is used in this stanza from another poem. Do you know what it is? Read the poem aloud.

We no have no Autumn like Europe,
we don' have de American Fall,
but dere is a time when de flame tree in the Forest
light de woodland like a fireball,
when de blue **mahoe** leaf dem turn bright
bronze,
de almond look like wearing henna,
when de nightfall flicker wid peeni-wallie,
an' grasshopper an' tree frog call
to de moon. But we don' have Autumn or Fall.

From 'Two Seasons' by Valerie Bloom

Vocabulary

mahoe: a small bushy tree of the violet family

5 How are standard English words like 'there' and 'the' written in the poem?

6 What different things in the forest does Valerie Bloom describe?

7 Three creatures are mentioned in this poem. Two are fairly common but one is more unusual. Which local word do you think refers to a little blue beetle?

8 How do the forest and the things in it change or behave according to the season?

9 How does the poet's use of non-standard English link to what she is saying in the poem?

Respond

Think about any dialect words you know from your own area and about how you pronounce common English words.

10 Write a five-line poem about an animal, insect or plant from your own country or culture. Use at least two dialect or accent words and write as you would speak, using your local grammar.

In my garden… or In the fields… or In the trees…

Exploring and commenting on sound in poetry

You will learn how to:

- identify a range of sound techniques used by poets
- explain how they create particular effects.

Poets use a range of techniques related to sound to convey feelings or ideas. In this unit, you will explore some of the more common ones.

Explore

Look at this picture of an aggressive or frightened cat.

1. What sort of sounds come to mind when you think of the cat's mouth and claws?

2. Now look again at the extract from the poem 'Cat!' on page 174. What are the main sounds you hear in these sets of words? Try saying them out loud.

   a) 'Scat', 'atter', 'flatterer', 'mat'

   b) 'sleeky', 'spitfire' and 'scatter'

   c) 'Got her, git her'

   Do these words match the sort of sounds a frightened cat might make?

There are two main sound techniques used here: **assonance** and **alliteration**.

3. In a)–c) above, which examples use assonance and which use alliteration?

The poet uses two other sound techniques: **siblilance** and **onomatopoeia**.

4. Can you identify any examples of these techniques in the extract from 'Cat!'?

Key terms

assonance: the use of similar vowel sounds in the middle of words

alliteration: when consonant sounds are repeated at the start of phrases or lines

sibilance: a form of alliteration that uses 's' or 'sh' repeatedly to create a hissing or shushing effect

onomatopoeia: when words sound like the thing they are describing, such as 'fizz'

The other key techniques are rhythm, rhyme and repetition. For example:

> **Atter** her, **atter** her,
> Sleeky **flatterer**,

5 a) Say these lines out loud – do the lines have a particular rhythm?

b) What other repeated phrases are there in the extract? Do they have a similar rhythm?

Develop

It is important that as well as identifying these techniques, you are able to say what their effect is: what they make you think, feel or imagine.

Read what one student has written:

> I think the poet uses assonance really effectively. The repetition of the 'a' and 'at' sounds in these lines, reminds the reader that the whole focus of the poem is the 'cat'. In fact, even the word 'cat' appears in other words like 'scat' and 'scatter' and 'catch'.

6 Answer these questions.

a) What technique is the student commenting on?

b) What examples do they choose to support the point?

c) What does the student say the effect or impact is of this technique?

Respond

7 Write one paragraph about how the poet uses either sibilance or onomatopoeia in the poem extract.

Checklist for success

✔ Start by identifying the technique.

✔ Give two or three short examples.

✔ Explain what they are describing (for example, the cat's movement or sound).

Exploring themes in poetry through talk

You will learn how to:

- recognise and talk about themes in poetry
- explore the ways poets draw your attention to them.

Most poems have a **theme** – a main idea or issue that interests the poet. Talking with others and explaining your ideas verbally can help you identify and comment on these themes.

Key term

theme: the issue or main topic in a text

Explore

We work out a poem's themes from what happens in it and from the language used. So, if a poem is about a mouse trying to escape from an eagle, you might say the theme is 'fear' or 'power'.

When poets write about animals, they may be interested many different themes. For example:

beauty	cruelty	power	captivity
extinction	friendship	pride	protection

1. Discuss each of these **abstract nouns** in a small group.
   a) What do these words mean?
   b) How might they apply to animals – or humans and animals?

Now, read the poem out loud. The title should give you a clue about what the poet thinks of the bull, so consider how your voice can mirror this. Use the punctuation and the length of lines to guide your **pace** and the strength of your voice.

Key terms

abstract noun: a noun that represents an idea or a feeling rather than something you can touch or see

pace: reading speed

The Magnificent Bull

My bull is white like the silver fish in the river
White like the shimmering crane bird on the river bank
White like fresh milk!
His roar is like the thunder to the Turkish cannon on the
steep shore.
My bull is dark like the raincloud in the storm.
He is like summer and winter.
Half of him is dark like the storm cloud
Half of him is light like sunshine.
His back shines like the morning star.

His brow is red like the beak of the hornbill.
His forehead is like a flag, calling the people from a distance.
He resembles the rainbow.
I will water him at the river,
With my spear I shall drive my enemies.
Let them water their herds at the well;
The river belongs to me and my bull.
Drink, my bull, from the river; I am here
To guard you with my spear.

Traditional African poem

2 In pairs, discuss these questions.

a) Who and/or what is the poem about? Who is speaking?

b) What is happening in the poem?

c) Where is the setting or situation?

d) Why is the poet/speaker writing this poem?

3 Now, join up with another pair to share your findings. Did you agree on all four questions? If not, why not?

Develop

You are going to analyse one aspect of the language more closely – the use of **similes**.

4 Reread the poem and select three similes from it. Then copy and complete the table below.

What is being described	What the description is	What it is compared to
the colour of 'My bull'	'white'	'like the silver fish in the river'

Key term

simile: a comparison between two things that uses the words 'as' or 'like' (e.g. 'Our garden is like a jungle)

Poets use similes to create an effect – for example, to create a vivid picture of what is being described. This is often done through the associations of individual words or images.

Here, three students discuss how the bull is described as 'white like the shimmering crane bird'. Notice how the three students build on each other's thoughts with questions.

Josh: Well, 'shimmering' sounds like a word to do with light.

Imran: Could it mean 'shining' or 'glittering'?

Josh: Are crane birds bright? Maybe – if they're white against grey water.

Olga: So, what else glitters or shines? What comes to mind?

Imran: Err – the sun? No, wait – precious objects, like jewels?

5 What do the students think is the effect of the simile? What does it suggest about how the poet views his bull?

In your group, look at the similes you listed in your table. Between you, choose one of them.

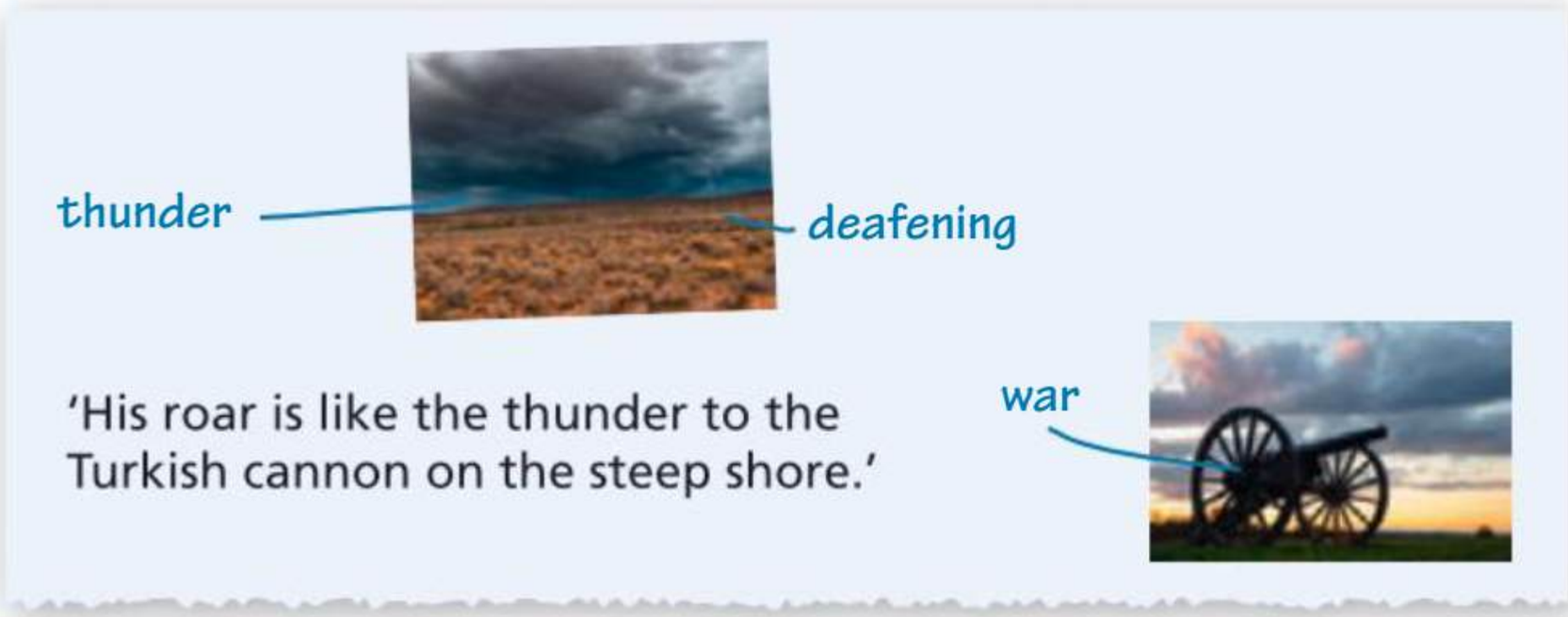
6 Write the quotation in the middle of an A4 sheet of paper.

a) Begin by deciding what the individual words or phrases mean. Note this on your sheet.

b) Then add any associations these words or phrases bring to mind. You could use a mix of words, drawn images and pictures you have found online or in magazines.

c) Finally, add any links to other parts of the poem. For example, does the simile repeat any words used elsewhere? Does it express a similar idea to another line?

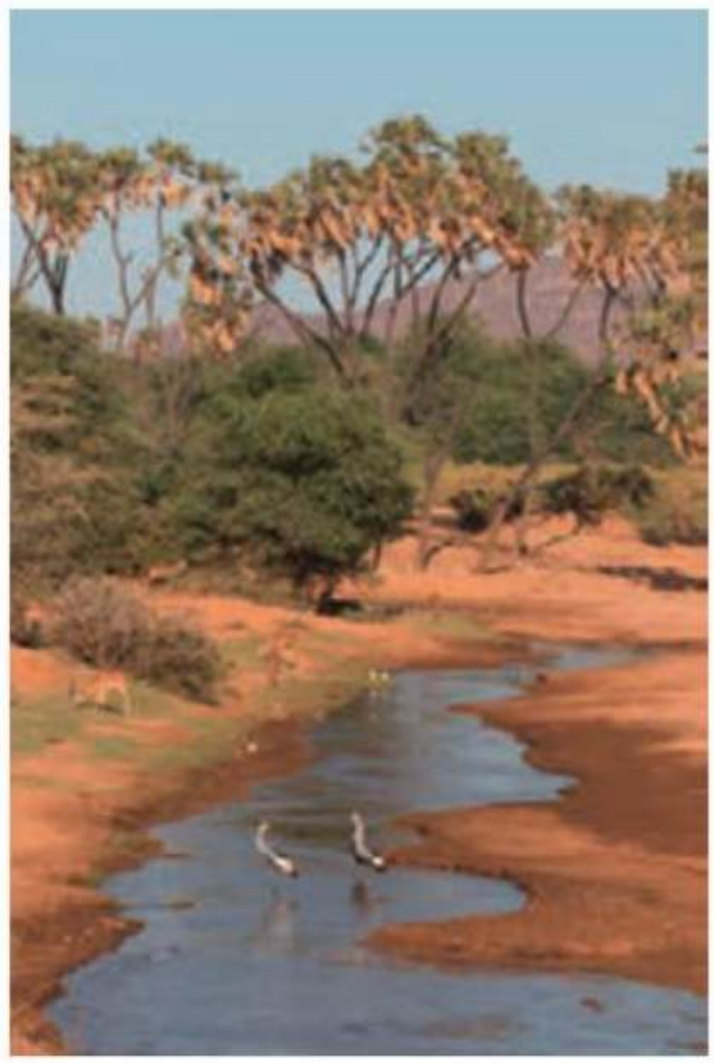
Here is a part-completed example:



7 Decide what the simile suggests about the bull and how the poet sees it.

8 Present your group's ideas to the class.

- Person A could read the simile aloud – in a commanding voice!
- Person B could talk about what the key words or phrases mean.
- Person C could explain any possible associations that are suggested.
- Person D could say what it could tell us about the bull or the poet's view of it.



Respond

Once you have heard all the presentations of individual similes, return to your group.

9 You are going to discuss this question: **What are the main themes of the poem?**

You will need to:

- suggest what you each think the theme or themes might be
- give an explanation to back up your suggestion – for example, explaining how one of the similes conveys the theme
- come to an agreement as a group about what the main theme is.

Checklist for success

✔ Reread the poem to yourself and collect your ideas as notes.

✔ When the discussion starts, make sure everyone has a chance to contribute. You can do this by encouraging other group members ('So, what do you think?') or by asking questions to develop their ideas ('Right, so are you saying that…?').

✔ When it is your turn, speak clearly to the whole group. Vary your tone of voice so what you say will interest the other group members.

✔ Be positive: even if you disagree, find a kind way of expressing it!

Introducing key points

You will learn how to:

- make a clear point about a detail in a text
- use linking words or phrases when talking or writing about a text.

When commenting on a text, it is important to support your ideas by using relevant quotations from the text.

Explore

Read this paragraph, in which a student is writing about the language of the poem 'My Magnificent Bull'.

In the fourth line of the poem, the poet describes the bull's roar, which 'is like the thunder to the Turkish cannon'. The simile 'like thunder' emphasises the power of the bull's voice. However, the word 'cannon' also makes us think of war and conflict.

Explains the part of the poem that is being analysed.

Gives the chosen phrase (not the whole line).

Poetic technique with clear explanation given.

Explores the meaning of the word and what it suggests.

1. Which quotation has the student selected?
2. What poetic technique does the student mention the poet uses?
3. What is the poet's purpose in using the phrase 'like thunder'?
4. What words in the last sentence suggest the student wants to make a slightly different point?

Develop

Punctuation and your own choice of vocabulary can also help make your commentary precise. Read another paragraph from the student's analysis.

> In the later lines, the poet repeats similar phrases: 'dark like the raincloud' and 'dark like the storm cloud'. On the one hand, the poet is simply referring to the natural world; on the other, he implies the bull could get angry any moment, like a storm that suddenly comes.

Colon introduces a list of items.

Semicolon contrasts two clauses.

Key terms

colon: two dots ':' which can be used to introduce a list

semicolon: ';' used to link two equally weighted sentences; semicolons can sometimes take the place of conjunctions such as 'and' 'but' or 'so' in a sentence

Here are some other words and phrases that can help you make your analysis clear.

Words/phrases showing the order of things	Words/phrases that help make links
firstly, initially, to start with	in the same way, similarly, as well as, also, both stanzas show
next, then, later, afterwards, after that	
finally, at the end, at the conclusion, in the last stanza	in contrast, however, yet, but

The words and phrases in the right-hand column are useful for showing how two things are alike or different.

5 Which of the words or phrases from the right-hand column could you use instead of the semicolon in the example above?

Respond

6 Write a paragraph about the language in 'The Magnificent Bull'.

- Start: The speaker describes the bull's magnificent appearance…
- Add a colon.
- Then add one or two short quotations.
- Say where in the poem your chosen phrases come from. You could use some of the words in the box above.
- End with a sentence explaining what the quotations show.

Responding to an animal poem

You will learn how to:

- support your ideas when you comment on aspects of a poem
- write about the overall effect of a poet's techniques.

You are going to respond more fully to a poem you read earlier in this chapter. You will be exploring how the poet brings her chosen animal to life through form, structure and language.

First read the whole poem aloud.

Cat!

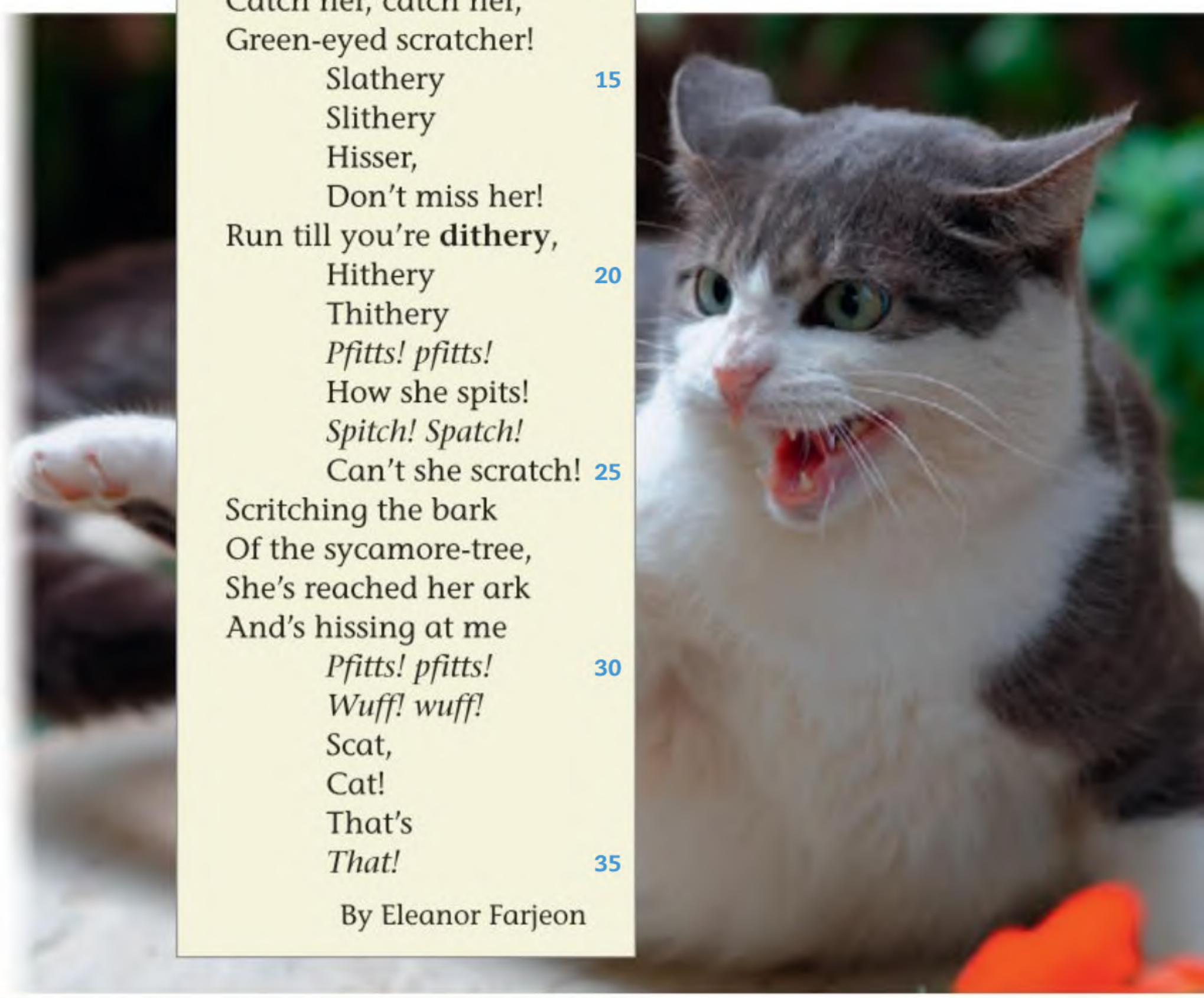
Cat!
Scat!
Atter her, atter her,
Sleeky flatterer,
Spitfire chatterer,
Scatter her, scatter her
Off her mat!
Wuff!
Wuff!
Treat her rough!
Git her, git her,
Whiskery spitter!
Catch her, catch her,
Green-eyed scratcher!
Slathery
Slithery
Hisser,
Don't miss her!
Run till you're **dithery**,
Hithery
Thithery
Pfitts! pfitts!
How she spits!
Spitch! Spatch!
Can't she scratch!
Scritching the bark
Of the sycamore-tree,
She's reached her ark
And's hissing at me
Pfitts! pfitts!
Wuff! wuff!
Scat,
Cat!
That's
That!

By Eleanor Farjeon

Vocabulary

Atter: made-up word – could mean 'After' as in 'Go after her' or 'At' as in Go at her'

dithery: made-up word from 'dither' – to be nervous, over-excited, unsure



Understanding the text

1 Check your basic understanding of the poem by answering these questions.

a) Who is telling the story/speaking in the poem? How do you know?

b) Where is the cat at the start of the poem?

c) Where is she at the end of it?

d) How does the cat respond to being chased?

Thinking about the text's form and features

2 In what ways is this a poem that uses an unusual form with a variety of original features? Copy and complete the grid with the relevant line numbers.

Feature	Line number/s or example
made-up words to suit the topic	
variety of line lengths	
repeated words or phrases	
sibilance that matches the sound a cat makes	
clever use of the word 'cat' in other words	
rhythm that matches sudden, darting actions	
other sound techniques (alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance) that matches a cat's movements and sound	

Looking at the text in detail

3 Find words with these meanings in the poem:

a) someone who praises others without meaning it

b) a verb meaning 'go away!' or 'get out'

c) a noun meaning someone who talks too much

d) an alternative to the verb 'scratching'.

4 The poet uses three made-up words to show the actual sounds made by the cat. List them.

5 The speaker describes the cat as a '*spitfire* chatterer'.

What do you think the poet is trying to say about the cat's behaviour? Write one sentence.

6 What evidence is there in lines 1 to 20 that the cat is very hard to catch? Find:

a) two short lines suggesting the cat moves like a snake

b) a line suggesting she drives you mad trying to get hold of her.

7 Why do you think the poet chooses so many words or phrases with 's' and 't' in them?

Write a sentence explaining your ideas.

8 What is the effect of having so many short lines or one-word lines in the poem?

Write a sentence explaining your ideas.

Writing about the text

9 Write three paragraphs about the ways in which the poet brings to life the conflict between the cat and the poem's narrator. You could consider:

- the vocabulary used to describe the cat
- sound effects/techniques
- the form and structure of the poem: how it starts, develops and ends.

Reflecting on your work

6.8

Here is one student's response to Question 9.

Response 1

The poet describes the conflict between the cat and the narrator. The poet says about all the sounds the cat makes, like 'hissing' and how she is a 'spitter' at him. These are things the speaker of the poem doesn't like. The words 'hissing' and 'spitter' are onomatopoeia. The cat also climbs the tree at the end and that shows it is scared, as that is what cats do when they are frightened.

- A clear introductory sentence, but repeats the task.
- Some well-chosen quotations.
- A simple explanation.
- Mentions poetic technique but doesn't explain the effect.
- Basic comment on structure, but doesn't really add much.

Comment on Response 1

This contains some well-chosen quotations, but there is not enough commentary on the language and how it brings to life the feeling of a conflict between cat and the poem's narrator.

10 How effective is this response? Think about how the student could have explained what onomatopoeia is, and also analysed other sound effects.

11 Now read Response 2. How is this better?

Response 2

The conflict is shown in the descriptions of the cat from the narrator's point of view. He calls her a 'spitfire chatterer' which sounds as if the cat won't stop miaowing in a spiteful way. The aggressive sounds the cat makes at him are also described in other sound words like 'hisser', which is onomatopoeic so when we read the poem we hear an unpleasant sound like a snake. The poet also makes the cat sound snake-like, by using alliteration in 'slithery' and 'slathery', which sounds as if the cat slips away every time the narrator tries to catch her.

- This introduces the idea of viewpoint.
- Well-chosen quotation.
- Clear explanation.
- Poetic technique with effect explained.
- Connective enables student to make a new point.

12 Compare your response with these. Which is it closest to? What could you do to improve it?

What you have achieved

Reading

- You have learned how to recognise the features of different forms of poem.
- You have identified how words, images, sounds, shapes and patterns create effects.
- You have reconstructed a poem using your knowledge of shape and form.
- You have explored and commented on how poets use language to develop themes in different ways.

Writing

- You have learned how to introduce and develop points about themes and poets' use of language, imagery and form in a paragraph.
- You have learned how to put quotations into sentences to support what you say.

Speaking and listening

- You have learned how to read poems aloud to express the poet's feelings or ideas.
- You have discussed key themes from poems in groups, making sure everyone takes part.

Next steps

Reading

Check out the poems 'Snake' or 'Mountain Lion' by D.H. Lawrence. You could also read other poems that use shape and form to express ideas about animals, such as Lewis Carroll's 'A Mouse's Tale' and Grace Nichols's 'I'm a Parrot'.

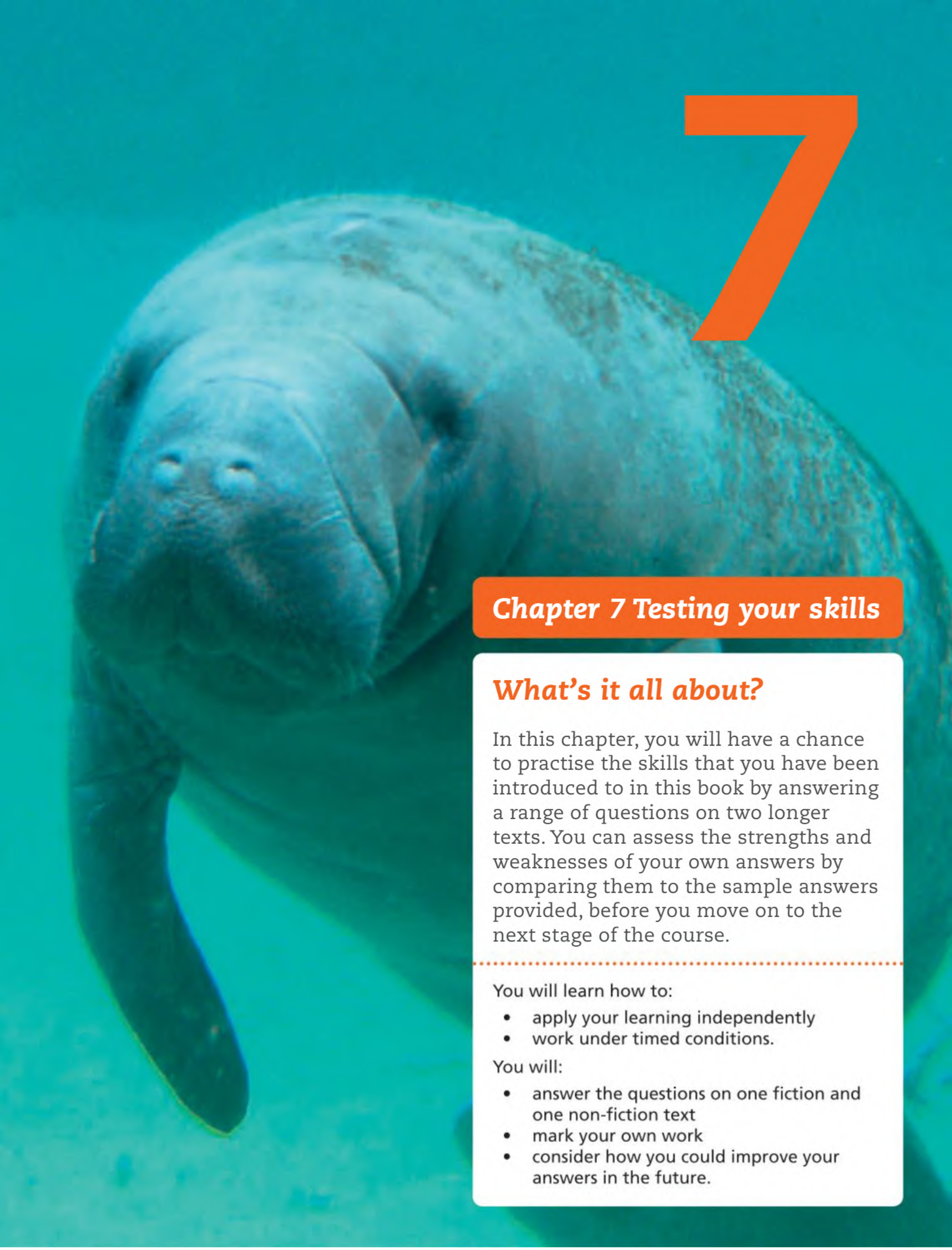
Writing

'The Magnificent Bull' is a praise poem for the speaker's bull. Write your own 'praise poem' about an animal. The theme could be the animal's beauty or how useful it is.

Or write a poem in the style of 'Cat!' about another animal with very clear movements or behaviour: try to use a similar layout with single-word lines and suitable sounds. ('Snake' would be a good one!)

Speaking and listening

There are lots of performance poets and poetry readings you can watch online. For example, visit The Children's Poetry Archive website, which features poets like John Agard reading their work. Listen to how they read and then practise reading out some of your own poems, thinking about how best to get across your feelings and ideas.



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Chapter 7 Testing your skills

What's it all about?

In this chapter, you will have a chance to practise the skills that you have been introduced to in this book by answering a range of questions on two longer texts. You can assess the strengths and weaknesses of your own answers by comparing them to the sample answers provided, before you move on to the next stage of the course.

You will learn how to:

- apply your learning independently
- work under timed conditions.

You will:

- answer the questions on one fiction and one non-fiction text
- mark your own work
- consider how you could improve your answers in the future.

Reading and writing questions on non-fiction texts

Task 1: Reading

Read the extract from an information text that explores and suggests answers to well-known mysteries – in this case, what are mermaids?

The Sirenia (Sea Cow) Theory

It seems there is no evidence for a mermaid-like 'missing link' between fish and humans. So, many scientists have turned instead to creatures already known to exist. Is it possible that one of these animals is sometimes mistaken for mermaid?

The sea cow

At first, sea cows may seem like an unlikely candidate. Instead of slender, graceful figures, sea cows have large, cucumber-shaped bodies and weigh over eight times as much as the average human. At 4 metres (13 feet), they are also over twice as long. Their skin is rough and grey, and instead of arms, they have rounded flippers.

But some scientists are so sure sea cows are the 'mermaids' that have been reported that they have named this group of mammals 'sirenians' after the sea-dwelling creatures known as sirens in ancient Greek myths. Sirenians include all three species of manatees and the dugong.

Sea cows and mermaids: separated at birth?

Mermaids and sea cows (manatees or dugongs) do share some surprising similarities. As mammals, sea cows must occasionally rise to the surface to breathe air – and they do so head first, just like humans. Female manatees and dugongs have breasts and could resemble a woman, especially when they rise out of

the water to suckle their young. Their short, paddle-like flippers allow sea cows to swim gracefully – and could even be mistaken for short human arms. Since 30 sea cows feed on sea grass in shallow waters, they are also likely to be spotted by observers near the shore.

From *Mermaids (Solving Mysteries with Science)* by Lori Hile

Now answer the following questions.

1. Which word in paragraph 1 suggests that people who think that sea cows are mermaids are wrong? (1)

2. Explain in your own words the meaning of the word 'unlikely' as it is used in paragraph 2. (1)

3. Which of these statements is a fact about sea cows? (1)
   a) Sea cows are slender and graceful.
   b) Sea cows weigh more than humans.
   c) Sea cows have arms.
   d) Sea cows have grey scales.

4. Which word in paragraph 2 suggests that sea cows are big? (1)

5. What does using the word 'But' at the start of paragraph 3 suggest? (1)

6. Which word in paragraph 3 has a suffix? (1)

7. Write a suitable subheading for paragraph 3. (2)

8. Find an adjective in paragraph 4 which shows that the writer did not expect manatees and mermaids to be alike. (1)

9. Write three ways in which sea cows are like humans. (2)

10. Explain in your own words the meaning of each of the following, as it is used in the text. (2)
    a) dwelling (line 18)
    b) spotted (line 32).

Total (13)

Read this extract from later in the same information text.

Cryptozoology and Other Hypotheses

Three-quarters of all mermaid sightings occur in waters where no seals or sea cows live. How can we explain these sightings? Cryptozoologists propose that mermaids are creatures that have not yet been discovered.

Cryptozoology

Cryptozoology is the search for animals whose existence has not been proven, such as Bigfoot, unicorns or mermaids. To strengthen their case, cryptozoologists point to the recent discovery of the Megamouth shark. This 750-kilogram (1,653-pound), 4.5 metre- (15-foot-) long fish was completely unknown until members of the US Navy pulled it from the bottom of the sea in 1976. Its discovery makes us wonder: What other undiscovered creatures could lurk in our waters?

But is cryptozoology a 'real' science?

Most scientists do not recognise cryptozoology as an official branch of science. Although scientists agree that thousands of unknown animals exist – particularly insects – they criticise cryptozoologists for focusing their efforts mostly on exciting and elusive (hard to find) creatures, like mermaids, despite little scientific support for their existence. But cryptozoologists point out that many real animals including giant pandas were once believed to only exist in myths.

From *Mermaids (Solving Mysteries with Science)* by Lori Hile

Now answer the following questions.

11 What is the main purpose of this text? (1)

12 Write down the statement that most accurately reflects what cryptozoologists think mermaids are. (1)

a) Mermaids are mythical creatures.

b) Mermaids are sea cows or dugongs.

c) Mermaids are a new type of animal.

13 Write down a phrase from paragraph 2 which shows that the writer is giving examples to make her meaning clearer. (1)

14 What is the underlined word an example of?
'Its discovery makes <u>us</u> wonder' (1)

15 Write a summary of 60–70 words explaining why cryptozoology could provide the answer to the mystery of what a mermaid is. (5)

16 Why does the writer use a pair of dashes in paragraph 3? (1)

17 Divide the following complex sentence into a series of shorter ones, using any punctuation that you consider appropriate. You may change wording slightly to retain agreement and clarity. (2)

> Although scientists agree that thousands of unknown animals exist – particularly insects – they criticise cryptozoologists for focusing their efforts mostly on exciting and elusive (hard to find) creatures, like mermaids, despite little scientific support for their existence.

Total (12)

Task 2: Writing

Write a news article for a local paper about the sighting of a possible mermaid or other creature of legend such as a unicorn or dragon.

You will need to:

- choose a creature or invent a new one
- use the language and structure of a news article to help make the information clear – for example, headline, standfirst.

Do not include illustrations or any other layout features.

Write your plan first.

Total (25)

Reading and writing questions on fiction texts

Task 3: Reading

Read this passage from *Ingo* by Helen Dunmore, about a girl called Sapphire and her adventures under the sea when she meets Faro, who is half boy, half seal.

'Look around, Sapphire, and tell me what else you've *noticed*,' he challenges.

I peer through the water:

'Well, rocks – over there, look sharp ones.

I wouldn't want to go near them. And there's a fish! Just going out of sight, look, it's a really big one.'

'Huge,' Faro agrees. 'It must be at least as big as this,' and he puts his hands a few centimetres apart. 'What else have you noticed?'

'Um – is that a **current** over there? And I think I saw something scuttling down on the sea bed just now – but it's so far down, it's hard to tell—'

'Anything else?'

'I noticed that shark, anyway. And you didn't.'

'All right. My turn.' A rush of sound pours out of Faro's mouth.

'Faro, I can't understand—'

'I know you can't. I'm not talking to you.

I'm asking everyone who is here to come out where you can see them.'

The sea around us begins to thicken. Two grey seals slide by, twisting as they go. They turn and circle, almost touching us. They have big eyes like retriever dogs, and they look as if they're laughing. Their nostrils are closed tight and their whiskers are flattened against their **muzzles**. But how strong they are, how powerful. Their muscles ripple under their skin as they

Vocabulary

current: an area of water moving in a specific direction

muzzle: part of the face between nose and chin

mercury: a silvery grey coloured chemical element

go by. A dazzling cloud of silver fish flickers in and out between my fingers like droplets of **mercury**.

I look to my left and there's a huge flatfish, as big as our kitchen table, with one popeye goggling at me. One after another a raft of purple jellyfish floats past, tentacles drifting, their jelly skirts bellying in and out, in and out…

'So that's how they move,' I whisper. Their tentacles are thick and snaky and have suckers all the way down – what if one of them whipped across my leg? They look as if they would sting. I scull backwards, out of range. The jellyfish sail on in a line, like battleships now, making for war.

'Look down there,' says Faro, and a giant spider crab appears out of a whirl of sand, and then another. Conor hates spider crabs. I can always frighten him by picking up a dead one on the shore and chasing after him with it, flapping its claws. But I wouldn't touch one of these.

The sand settles and shows an angler fish, almost buried but for the shine of her lure. Dad caught one once when he was deep-sea fishing, and showed it to me. 'It lives far out, on the sea bottom. They're adapted to the dark. Just as well, poor creature, it's ugly as sin. It wouldn't want to see itself in the light.'

'Look up,' says Faro, and I see a soup of plankton shimmering in the light from the surface. And right above us there's another shark, much smaller but the same shape as the other little-feeder. A shoal of tiny grey fish darts to the side, away from the sieving jaws. And that rock there – it's covered with dog whelks, thickly striped. More fish flick past – and here's a herd of sea horses riding the curve of Faro's tail—

'It's not fair. You made them come. All these creatures weren't here when I was looking.'

From *Ingo* by Helen Dunmore

Now answer the following questions.

1. Which of the statements below best sums up this extract? (1)

   a) It is about a girl who is scared of what she sees in the water.

   b) It is about a girl who begins to see what has been around her in the water all the time.

   c) It is about a girl who learns to live under water.

2. Whose viewpoint is this story told from? (1)

3. Reread the paragraph that begins 'The sea around us began…'. In your own words, describe the way the writer has used sentence lengths and structures to describe the seals. (5)

4. The writer uses a dash once in line 17 when Sapphire is speaking to Faro. Why does the writer use this dash? (1)

5. Which word used in paragraph 11 suggests that the fish are brightly coloured? (1)

6. Read this sentence from the passage:

   > I look to my left and there's a huge flatfish, as big as our kitchen table, with one popeye goggling at me.

   What two things are compared in this sentence? (1)

7 Find two examples of imagery used to describe the jellyfish. (2)

8 What do the words 'I scull backwards' suggest about Sapphire's feelings towards the jellyfish? (2)

9 Why does the writer use an ellipsis at the end of the paragraph describing the jellyfish? (1)

10 Which word in line 42 tells you that the spider crabs move quickly? (1)

11 Reread lines 1–20. Describe the relationship between Faro and Sapphire as shown in this extract. (4)

12 How is Sapphire feeling during this extract? (5)

Total (25)

Task 4: Writing

In the passage you have read, Sapphire discovers a whole new world where she does not expect it.

Write a description of your own about a place where things change or are revealed in a way you did not expect.

You will need to consider:

- **setting:** Where are you going to be for your description?
- **character:** Are there any other characters? How do you feel?
- **plot:** What happens? In what order do things happen? Why do things happen in this way?

Total (25)

Assessing your progress: Reading and writing non-fiction

In this section of the chapter you are going to look at your answers and some suggestions about what you could have written. You can use these to see how you can improve your answers and to assess your strengths and weaknesses.

Task 1: Reading questions on non-fiction texts

1 Which word in paragraph 1 suggests that people who think that sea cows are mermaids are wrong?

Answer: *'mistaken' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

> It seems that there is no evidence for a mermaid-like 'missing link' between fish and humans. So, many scientists have turned instead to creatures already known to exist. Is it possible that one of these animals is sometimes mistaken for a mermaid?

Some students would see 'no evidence' and think that this is the answer, but actually this phrase is about earlier theories of what mermaids could be.

Always check the rest of the sentence or short paragraph before you decide on your answer.

2 Explain in your own words the meaning of the word 'unlikely' as it is used in paragraph 2.

Answer: *not much evidence for this idea/not a good fit and therefore slow to come to mind (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You might have misread the text and thought the word was 'likely' or you may have thought it was about whether or not something was going to happen.

You need to read the whole sentence as the word is used to describe whether or not sea cows are a probable candidate for a mismatch.

3 Which of these statements is a fact about sea cows?

a) Sea cows are slender and graceful.

b) Sea cows weigh more than humans.

c) Sea cows have arms.

d) Sea cows have grey scales.

Answer: b) *Sea cows weigh more than humans. (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

If you picked answer a) then you may have scanned for the key words from the question and when you found them, looked no further. Actually the passage says '*instead of* slender, graceful figures', which means that they *do not* have this appearance. Always read the whole sentence.

Answer b) is correct as the passage tells us that they weigh eight times more than us. You might have missed this if you were scanning for the word 'more', but in this case you could infer the correct answer.

If you answered c) then you were misled by finding the word 'arms' in the passage, but actually it said 'instead of arms'. Remember to read *around* the key word.

If you picked answer d) then you did not read carefully enough. Sea cows have grey *skin* not scales.

4 Which word in paragraph 2 suggests that sea cows are big?

Answer: *'large' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

The paragraph contains several phrases that describe the sea cows as being long and heavy, but this is the only single word that suggests overall size. Look for the word that most precisely matches the meaning you are looking for. You may also have selected a phrase – be careful to only give one word if asked for it.

5 What does using the word 'But' at the start of paragraph 3 suggest?

Answer: *that the scientists who believe that sea cows are mermaids do so even though/despite the fact that there is evidence to the contrary (1 mark for any reasonable explanation)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You might have just said that 'But' is a conjunction. However, the question asks 'What…?', so you need to explain what the writer conveys with the word.

6 Which word in paragraph 3 has a suffix?

Answer: *'sirenians' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have copied out just the suffix – 'ians' – or explained the meaning of the word that contains the suffix. The question asks you to identify the word with the suffix, so you simply need to write out the full word.

7 Write a suitable subheading for paragraph 3.

Answer*: A new name for sea cows/Scientists rename sea cows (or any similar answer that features scientists or reclassification). (1 mark for idea of new animal/classification plus 1 mark for mention of scientists/experts)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You might have thought that sirenians were a new breed of animal and written something about this discovery. Or you may have read that a siren is a creature from ancient Greek mythology and written about that. This type of question is testing whether or not you can pick out the main idea of a paragraph – these are just two pieces of information that contribute to the main idea, which is that some scientists are so certain that mermaids are sea cows that they have renamed sea cows to suggest this. If you struggle to identify the main idea, ask yourself what message the writer is trying to communicate.

8 Find an adjective in paragraph 4 which shows that the writer did not expect manatees and mermaids to be alike.

Answer: *'surprising' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have written out a phrase – for example, 'surprising similarities'. Unfortunately, you will not get any marks for this, as it is important to show that you know *exactly* which word is the correct answer.

9 Write three ways in which sea cows are like humans.

Answer:
They come out of the water head first.
They have breasts.
Their flippers could look like arms.
(3 correct = 2 marks; 1 or 2 correct = 1 mark)

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have identified all three similarities.

10 Explain in your own words the meaning of each of the following, as it is used in the text.

a) dwelling (line 18)

b) spotted (line 32).

Answer: *a) living in/resident of, b) to be seen (briefly)*
(1 mark for each correct answer)

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have been unsure of these words and so missed out the question. It is important to read the whole sentence and see if you can work out a meaning from the context.

11 What is the main purpose of this text?

Answer: *to explain to us (about cryptozoology and whether or not it is able to explain mermaids) (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have stated what type of text this is, e.g. non-fiction, or what form, e.g. an information text.

12 Write down the statement that most accurately reflects what cryptozoologists think mermaids are.

a) Mermaids are mythical creatures.

b) Mermaids are sea cows or dugongs.

c) Mermaids are a new type of animal.

Answer: *c) Mermaids are a new type of animal. (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

The text uses quite a few words which could suggest that cryptozoologists believe mermaids are a real thing: 'existence has not been proven', 'unknown', 'undiscovered'. If you did not read closely, you may have thought that they were saying that a mermaid was a Bigfoot, a unicorn or a shark.

13 Write down a phrase from paragraph 2 which shows that the writer is giving examples to make her meaning clearer.

Answer: *'such as' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You might have skim-read the question and thought you needed to find the examples: Bigfoot, unicorns or mermaids.

14 What is the underlined word an example of?
'Its discovery makes <u>us</u> wonder'

Answer: *inclusive language/personal pronouns/including the reader (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have remembered how writers use words such as this to make a connection with the reader. Always think carefully about the effect a word has on you if asked to comment on it specifically.

15 Write a summary of 60–70 words explaining why cryptozoology could provide the answer to the mystery of what a mermaid is.

Answer: *1 mark for each of the following, up to 5 marks*

Mark	Answer	Further information
1	*Identification of four main points.*	*Other theories don't explain all sightings.* *New things are being discovered all the time.* *Scientists agree that there are lots of unknown creatures.* *Some very real animals used to be considered to be fantastical.*
1	*Use of own words and not copying text too much.*	
1	*Organisation of ideas (the order and groupings of ideas that you include).*	
1	*Accuracy of language. Your choice of grammar, spelling and punctuation.*	
1	*Word length of 60–70 words.*	

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have found all the points. Remember that the number of marks shown on this kind of question is a clue to the number of points needed in your answer. You may have given lots of examples rather than sticking to the point. You might not have realised that some of the information given could support cryptozoology if you had not considered the inferences you could draw from the text.

16 Why does the writer use a pair of dashes in paragraph 3?

Answer: *to separate out an additional piece of information (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have thought that dashes were used in this way, as commas are used in this way in formal texts. However, this text is quite informal and so the dashes are appropriate.

17 Divide the following complex sentence into a series of shorter ones, using any punctuation that you consider appropriate. You may change wording slightly to retain agreement and clarity.

> Although scientists agree that thousands of unknown animals exist – particularly insects – they criticise cryptozoologists for focusing their efforts mostly on exciting and elusive (hard to find) creatures, like mermaids, despite little scientific support for their existence.

Answer: *You should divide this into a series of shorter sentences. You will need to check that each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. You should check that each one makes sense on its own and contains a subject, object and verb. (1 mark for each correct sentence)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You might have struggled to make this into shorter sentences and keep the meaning the same. Remember that the question allows you to alter the wording a little.

Task 2: Writing

Use the table below to assess your answer to this task. You may find it helpful to highlight using a different colour when you find evidence of what you have done well. Remember that your teacher will also look at your spelling, punctuation and sentence structures before you can award yourself a level.

Purpose and audience	Text structure
It is sometimes clear who you are writing for and you have used a few of the features of a news article. You have sometimes written as a journalist in your article.	You have tried to write your ideas in the order of a news article but end up telling a story or including elements of a TV interview.
It is often clear who you are writing for and you have used many of the features of a news article. You have almost always written as a journalist in your article.	Your article often follows the usual structure of a news article with a headline, subheading, introductory paragraph and then a retelling in more detail with quotations from sources.
It is clear who you are writing for and you have used the features of a news article. You have written as a journalist all through your article.	Your article follows the usual structure of a news article with a headline, subheading, introductory paragraph and then a re-telling in more detail with quotations from sources.

Assessing your progress: Reading and writing fiction

Task 3: Reading questions on a fiction text

1 Which of the statements below best sums up this extract?

a) It is about a girl who is scared of what she sees in the water.

b) It is about a girl who begins to see what has been around her in the water all the time.

c) It is about a girl who learns to live under water.

Answer: *b) It is about a girl who begins to see what has been around her in the water all the time. (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

This question is asking you to identify the main point of the extract. It is true that at times Sapphire seems scared. She definitely learns to swim under water at the start of the extract. However, the main idea that recurs throughout the extract is that she sees the underwater world clearly and fully for the first time.

2 Whose viewpoint is this story told from?

Answer: *Sapphire's (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have read the opening and scanned the rest and noticed that Faro speaks a lot during this extract. This may have led you to assume it is from his viewpoint. You need to read the whole text carefully, paying particular attention to pronouns.

3 Reread the paragraph that begins 'The sea around us began…' (line 21) In your own words, describe the way the writer has used sentence lengths and structures to describe the seals.

Answer: *1 mark each for the following comments:*

The seals' movement is described in shorter sentences than their appearance. (1)

Most sentences are similar in structure with a main and a subordinate clause. (1)

Most sentences start with 'They' or 'Their'. (1)

Add 2 marks for each comment about the effect of these structures. For example, It reflects the movement of the seals 'twisting'; It suggests she is staring/cannot take her eyes off them.

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have commented on the wrong sentences – always read the question carefully.

You may have counted the sentences or copied them out. The question asks you to describe the way that they are used, which means that you need to identify the types of sentences and structures using their names or other terminology that you have been taught.

You may not have scored all 5 marks. Remember to check how many marks are available, as this usually shows how many comments you need to make.

4 The writer uses a dash once in line 17, when Sapphire is speaking to Faro. Why does the writer use this dash?

Answer: *to show that he answers very quickly, interrupting her (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have said that a dash is used to add information, but this is usually done with a pair of dashes around the information.

5 Which word used in paragraph 11 suggests that the fish are brightly coloured?

Answer: *'dazzling' (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have written silver or mercury – however, these are not always bright in colour. The word 'dazzles' means that something blinds us with its glare so it is a word directly relating to brightness.

6 Read this sentence from the passage:

> I look to my left and there's a huge flatfish, as big as our kitchen table, with one popeye goggling at me.

What two things are compared in this sentence?

Answer: *the flatfish and the kitchen table (1)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have copied out the whole sentence or added the extra details. Remember, if you are asked for two things then you should only write two things.

7 Find two examples of imagery used to describe the jellyfish.

Answer: *1 mark for each of the following possible examples, to a maximum of 2 marks:*

a raft of… (jellyfish) (1)

…purple (jellyfish) (1)

(jelly skirts) bellying in and out (1)

(NB: the words in the brackets are not needed.)

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have copied out a full sentence that includes more than one example of imagery, but you need to separate out your examples and just write the key word or phrase.

8 What do the words 'I scull backwards' suggest about Sapphire's feelings towards the jellyfish?

Answer: *They suggest that she is scared/nervous/apprehensive/feels in danger. (1)*

Add 1 mark for a reasonable explanation – for example, as she moves away/out of harm's reach. (1)

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may have been uncertain what 'scull' means and so not tried to give an answer. Actually it is enough to know that she moved away from the jellyfish to understand her feelings. Remember that understanding the gist of the text is often enough to attempt to answer a question.

9 Why does the writer use an ellipsis at the end of the paragraph describing the jellyfish?

Answer: *to suggest time passing/that there were a lot of jellyfish/that they did not stop moving (1 mark for any reasonable answer)*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have known what 'ellipsis' means and so given up, but the question also told you where it was, so it would have been possible to work it out.

10 Which word in line 42 tells you that the spider crabs move quickly?

Answer: *'whirl' (1)*

11 Reread lines 1–20. Describe the relationship between Faro and Sapphire as shown in this extract.

He is in control/He is challenging/bossy towards her.	*Uses orders. The word 'challenge' is used.*
He is sarcastic.	*He mocks her for thinking the fish is big. 'Huge,' Faro agrees. 'It must be at least as big as this,' and he puts his hands a few centimetres apart.*
She feels that he isn't fair to her.	*'Faro, I can't understand—'*
She tries to regain some authority.	*'I noticed that shark, anyway. And you didn't.'*

Answer: *Give 4 marks for two points with some development such as a quotation or reasoning for each point. Give 3 marks for two points with development of one point. Give 2 marks for two ideas or one idea and development.*

Where might you have gone wrong?

If you copied out whole phrases or sentences from the text instead of the key word or short phrase that supported your point, you would not receive the mark for development because you would not have shown that you know precisely which word creates the effect.

12 How is Sapphire feeling during this extract?

Answer: *1 mark for each of the following points (up to 5) plus 1 mark each for a relevant quotation to go with the point.*

Point	Quote
uncertain	*'peer', 'Um – is that a current…'*
defensive	*'I noticed that shark…'*
confused	*'Faro, I can't understand –'*
awed	*'So that's how they move,' I whisper.*
nervous	*'I scull backwards,'*
indignant/ annoyed	*'It's not fair.'*

Where might you have gone wrong?

You may not have found all the points or given quotations for them. Remember that the number of marks available is

usually a clue to the amount you should write. Remember also that if a question asks you to *explain*, it is looking for reasons so back up your ideas with quotations.

Task 4: Writing

Use the table below to assess your answer to these questions. You may find it helpful to highlight using a different colour when you find evidence of what you have done well. Remember that your teacher will also look at your spelling, punctuation and sentence structures before you can award yourself a level.

Purpose and audience	Text structure
There are some pieces of description but your writing is mainly a story.	Your writing follows a narrative structure and the emphasis is on time passing and events.
It is often clear that you are writing a description but sometimes you focus too much on telling a story or creating a character.	Your writing has episodes of imagery and atmosphere but may follow a narrative structure.
It is clear that you are writing a description and you have created atmosphere and a sense of setting throughout your writing.	Your description is structured to lead the readers' eye or to encourage their senses rather than to develop a series of events or characterisation.

Glossary of key terms

abstract noun: a noun that represents an idea or a feeling rather than something you can touch or see

alliteration: when consonant sounds are repeated at the start of phrases or lines

antagonist: someone who opposes the main character in a story

anthology: a collection of pieces of writing

assonance: the use of similar vowel sounds in the middle of words

atmosphere: the mood or feeling associated with a place or setting

backdrop: a curtain or wall at the back of the stage

bias: a preference for a particular opinion or viewpoint

chairperson: the leader of a group discussion or meeting

colon: two dots ':' which can be used to introduce a list

complex sentence: a sentence that contains a supporting idea (subordinate clause) in addition to the information in the main idea (main clause)

connective: a word or phrase used to link parts of a sentence or to show connection between two paragraphs

connotations: the ideas and emotions associated with a word, e.g. red is often associated with romance or anger

couplet: a pair of rhyming lines next to each other in a poem

dialect: vocabulary or grammar that is specific to a region or country

direct speech: the words that are actually spoken, presented with speech marks

emphasis: extra stress put on a word to highlight its importance

explicit: obvious or straightforward

form: a poem's shape, pattern and sound

formal language: language and style that is suitable for a serious occasion or purpose

gesture: a specific movement, like scratching your head or waving your hand, that signals a particular meaning

iambic pentameter: a line of verse made up of ten syllables of which five are stressed in the pattern unstressed, stressed, e.g. *Shall **I** com**pare** thee **to** a **su**mmer's **day**?*

implicit: meaning that is suggested or implied, but not stated directly

imply: to suggest something without stating it directly

improvise: to make up a drama as you go along, rather than working from a written script

indirect speech or reported speech: words that sum up what was said

informal language: language and style that is suitable for more relaxed occasions

literal: the most basic or usual meaning of a word; its explicit meaning

metaphor: a type of comparison that describes one thing as if it is something else (e.g. 'Our garden is a jungle')

minor characters: characters who are not important to the main action

minor sentence: a grammatically incomplete sentence

modal verb: an auxiliary verb that expresses necessity or possibility, e.g. 'must', 'shall', 'will', 'should', 'would', 'can', 'could', 'may' and 'might'

narrative: a tale or story

non-standard English: local English, which differs in vocabulary and grammar from the form accepted by most speakers and writers

onomatopoeia: when words sound like the thing they are describing, such as 'fizz'

personification: when an object is described as if it has human characteristics (e.g. 'Our garden swallowed the lawnmower!')

playscript: the words and actions of a play written down for the actors to use

preposition: a word indicating the relationship of one thing to another (e.g. 'for', 'in', 'by')

producer: the person responsible for the organisation and management of a show

prop: an object, such as a cup, used in a stage play

protagonist: the main character in a story whose 'journey' readers follow

qualify: to add something to a point that provides more information, e.g. 'one small bad thing in an otherwise good experience'

resolution: the solution to or end of the problems a character faces in a story

review: a written report of a play, film, video game, album, etc. which gives the writer's opinion

rhetorical question: a question that is used to make people think, rather than requiring an answer

rhyme scheme: the pattern of rhymes used at the end of the lines in a poem

rhythm: the pattern of syllables or stresses in a line of poetry, e.g. in the word '*look*ed' the emphasis is on the first syllable

scan: to use key words to find specific information in a text

semicolon: ';' used to link two equally weighted sentences; semicolons can sometimes take the place of conjunctions such as 'and' 'but' or 'so' in a sentence

sibilance: a form of alliteration that uses 's' or 'sh' repeatedly to create a hissing or shushing effect

simile: a comparison between two things that uses the words 'as' or 'like' (e.g. 'Our garden is like a jungle')

skim: to run your eyes quickly over a text to understand the main points or ideas without reading every word

stage directions: information provided by the writer of a play that tells the actor what to do or how to speak

standard English: the accepted, most common form of spoken and written English, which is not specific to a place or region

standfirst: an introductory paragraph in an article that summarises the article

stanzas: a group of lines in a poem

style: the particular way a story is told

subordinating conjunction: a word used to link clauses in a complex sentence (e.g. 'although', 'while', 'when', 'if')

suspense: a feeling of excited or anxious uncertainty

symbolism: using an object or image to represent a feeling or idea

synonym: a word that is identical or close in meaning to another one, e.g. wet/damp

theme: the issue or main topic in a text

travelogue: writing, talk or film about travel or a particular person's travels

withheld information: facts or details that are not revealed to a reader

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