

Narrative Writing Unit

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Introduction

Preparation for this unit

Prior to teaching this unit, it would be helpful for teachers to be familiar with the mark scheme for the 2003 Key Stage 2 writing test. *Changes to assessment 2003: sample material for Key Stages 1 and 2* has been sent to all schools as a booklet and is also on the QCA website with some additional sample material www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/2003sample.

The assessment focuses in the 2003 mark scheme are drawn together under strands: sentence construction and punctuation, text structure and organisation, composition and effect. These are the elements of writing covered by the word, sentence and text level objectives in the NLS *Framework for teaching*.

Sentence construction and punctuation

- vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect
- write with technical accuracy of syntax and punctuation in phrases, clauses and sentences

Text structure and organisation

- organise and present whole texts effectively, sequencing and structuring information, ideas and events
- construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs

Composition and effect

- write imaginative, interesting and thoughtful texts
- produce texts which are appropriate to task, reader and purpose

The two word-level focuses are

- select appropriate and effective vocabulary
- use correct spelling

The vocabulary focus is assessed through all the three strands and the spelling focus is assessed through a separate spelling test.

Changes to assessment 2003: guidance for teachers (KS2 English) has also been sent to all schools. In order to understand the mark scheme, this booklet suggests

- comparing the 2002 sample materials with test papers from previous years
- using a script of a longer writing task in the sample materials on the website, cutting up the annotated notes and matching them to the appropriate places in the script, e.g. the narrative prompt *A New World* would be particularly helpful as preparation for this unit
- applying the strands from the mark scheme to the scripts
- giving the children a sample longer task using a prompt from the website, e.g. *A New World*, and marking a selection of the stories with a colleague using the 2003 mark scheme.

The unit

In this narrative unit, the resources for analysing texts and for demonstrating writing have been annotated under the three strand headings: sentence construction and punctuation, text structure and organisation, composition and effect. The unit extends children's understanding of effective narrative writing by analysing and writing each of the five parts of a narrative text: *opening*, *build-up*, *dilemma*, *events* and *resolution/ending* and supporting the children in writing their own narrative. While analysing the text and participating in demonstration lessons the children will learn how to construct sentences and paragraphs to achieve the effects needed to interest the reader. In the plenary, the teacher will have the opportunity to respond to the children's writing with the three assessment strands in mind.

During the first two weeks of the unit, two days will be spent on each element of narrative as shown:

| Day | Teaching/learning | Element of narrative |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Read and analyse text | opening |
| 2 | Apply this knowledge in demonstration and independent writing | |
| 3 | Read and analyse text | build-up |
| 4 | Apply this knowledge in demonstration and independent writing | |
| 5 | Read and analyse text | dilemma |
| 6 | Apply this knowledge in demonstration and independent writing | |
| 7 | Read and analyse text | events |
| 8 | Apply this knowledge in demonstration and independent writing | |
| 9 | Read and analyse text | resolution and ending |
| 10 | Apply this knowledge in demonstration and independent writing | |

The third week of the unit is an opportunity for children to write some aspects of narrative such as setting and characterisation in more detail.

Resources

The resources for weeks 1 and 2 include lesson notes for the first two days of the unit, general material on narrative structure, texts for analysis and texts to use to demonstrate writing. All the texts are annotated to show the effective features of the texts. These are notes for the teacher to use as support during the analysis of the text with the children and as points to bring out during demonstration-writing. (There is an alternative set of materials in *Year 6 Planning Exemplification 1 2001–2002* in the publications section on www.standards.dfes/literacy.)

Resources for week 3 of the unit include a number of shorter texts for analysis and demonstration-writing as well as two pieces of writing by children for assessment purposes.

| Resource sheets | Purpose |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Lesson notes for days 1 and 2 |
| 2 | Narrative framework for writing. This shows the five typical stages in narrative writing and could be enlarged as a poster. |
| 3 | Examples of types of narrative. This shows the variations within the five narrative stages. |
| 4 | Checklists for effective narrative writing. These are intended for teacher reference only. Children should extract the features of effective narrative writing from the texts they analyse and compile their own classroom checklist with the teacher. The teacher can refer to Resource sheet 4 to ensure that the children have found all the features. |
| 5a–e | OHTs of story in five parts: <i>Mac's short adventure</i> |
| 6a–e | <i>Mac's short adventure</i> in five parts, annotated to show the effective features of narrative writing under three strand headings: sentence construction and punctuation, text structure and organisation, composition and effect. Some words which might be difficult to spell are also identified. |
| 7 | Planning frame for <i>Bloddon's adventure</i> |
| 8a–e | Story for demonstration-writing, <i>Bloddon's adventure</i> , in five parts, annotated with the effective features which can be identified by the teacher as he/she is writing the story with the children. Some words which might be difficult to spell are also identified. |
| 9a–d | Children's writing for assessment |
| 10a–b | Writing a character |
| 11 | Writing a character |
| 12a–b | Writing a character |
| 13a–b | Writing a setting |
| 14a–e | Writing an action story |

Word level work

Word level teaching and learning is incorporated into the work on analysis of text (e.g. meaning and spelling of connectives) and into shared, guided and independent writing. However, focused spelling, like mental maths, needs concentrated daily attention so that writing words correctly with a fluent hand is automatic and children's cognitive capacity is released to attend to the content and form of their writing. Ten minutes at the beginning of the literacy hour every day can be spent on sharpening up children's spelling knowledge.

The Booster Lessons for 2002–2003 contain a revision programme for spelling and can be downloaded from www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy from January 2003.

Framework objectives

Weeks 1 and 2

Year 6 Term 1

Text

7. to plan quickly and effectively the plot, characters and structure of their own narrative writing;

Sentence

1. to revise from Y5:
 - re-expressing sentences in a different order;
4. to investigate connecting words and phrases:
 - collect examples from reading and thesauruses;
 - study how points are typically connected in different kinds of text;
 - classify useful examples for different kinds of text – for example, by position (*besides, nearby, by*); sequence (*firstly, secondly . . .*); logic (*therefore, so, consequently*);
 - identify connectives which have multiple purposes (e.g. *on, under, besides*);
5. to form complex sentences through, e.g.:
 - using different connecting devices;
 - reading back complex sentences for clarity of meaning, and adjusting as necessary;
 - evaluating which links work best;
 - exploring how meaning is affected by the sequence and structure of clauses;

Word

1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;
2. to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings;
3. to use independent spelling strategies, including:
 - building up spelling by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
 - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
 - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
 - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
 - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.);
4. revise and extend work on spelling patterns for unstressed vowels in polysyllabic words from Year 5 term 3;
6. to investigate meanings and spellings of connectives: *therefore, notwithstanding, furthermore, etc.*; link to sentence level work on connectives;

Week 3

Year 6 Term 2

Text

10. to use different genres as models to write, e.g. short extracts, sequels, additional episodes, alternative endings, using appropriate conventions, language;

Sentence

13. to revise work on complex sentences:
 - identifying main clauses;
 - ways of connecting clauses;
 - constructing complex sentences;
 - appropriate use of punctuation;

Word

1. to identify mis-spelt words in own writing; to keep individual lists (e.g. spelling logs); to learn to spell them;
2. to use known spellings as a basis for spelling other words with similar patterns or related meanings;
3. to use independent spelling strategies, including:
 - building up spelling by syllabic parts, using known prefixes, suffixes and common letter strings;
 - applying knowledge of spelling rules and exceptions;
 - building words from other known words, and from awareness of the meaning or derivations of words;
 - using dictionaries and IT spell-checks;
 - using visual skills, e.g. recognising common letter strings and checking critical features (i.e. does it look right, shape, length, etc.);

Narrative writing: unit plan for weeks 1 and 2

| Week | Day | Shared text and sentence level | Guided reading/writing | Independent work | Plenary |
|------|-----|---|------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | 1 | Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Opening – introducing characters | | Working in pairs, analyse the openings of other short stories and extend the checklist | Children contribute to the class checklist of features of effective openings |
| | 2 | Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Opening – introducing characters | | Working independently, apply the checklist to write an opening | Children's work is evaluated against the checklist and the three writing strands (see Introduction) |
| | 3 | Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Build-up – establishing setting | | Working in small groups, analyse the build-up and setting of other short stories and extend the checklist | Contribute to the class checklist – build-ups |
| | 4 | Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Build-up – establishing setting | | Working individually, apply the checklist to build a story | Work evaluated against checklist |
| | 5 | Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Dilemma | | Working in pairs, analyse the dilemma of other short stories and extend the checklist | Contribute to the class checklist – dilemma |
| 2 | 6 | Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Dilemma | | Working individually, apply the checklist to create a dilemma | Work evaluated against checklist |
| | 7 | Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Reaction – events | | Working in pairs, analyse the reaction/events of other short stories and extend the checklist | Contribute to the class checklist – reactions |
| | 8 | Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Reaction – events | | Working individually, apply the checklist relate the events | Work evaluated against checklist |
| | 9 | Shared reading: analyse and annotate two examples/create checklist Resolution and ending | | Working in small groups, analyse the resolution and ending of other short stories and extend the checklist | Contribute to the class checklist – resolutions |
| | 10 | Shared writing – teacher demonstration using checklist Resolution and ending | | Working individually, apply the checklist to resolve/end a story | Work evaluated against checklist |

Narrative writing: unit plan for week 3

| Day | Shared text and sentence level | Guided | Independent work | Plenary |
|-----|--|--------|---|--|
| 1 | Shared reading Read and assess short descriptions of an incident written by two children (Resource sheets 9a to 9d). Discuss the effective and less effective features. Set a fresh imaginary incident to describe succinctly during independent time. | | Write a brief clear description of the incident. | Assess a child's writing against the key features discussed in shared session. |
| 2 | Shared reading and writing Analyse and annotate character description (Resource sheets 10a and 10b). Create web to support character creation (Resource sheet 11). Demonstrate writing part of description (Resource sheets 12a and 12b). Discuss key features of effective character description. | | Think of an imaginary character and write a description, using character web as support. | In pairs, assess each other's work with reference to earlier discussions in shared session. |
| 3 | Shared reading and writing Analyse and annotate beginning of a setting (Resource sheets 13a and 13b). Demonstrate writing the rest of the setting (Resource sheet 13b). Discuss key features of effective settings. | | Choose a setting and compose own story opening based on an effective setting. | Assess a child's writing against the key features discussed in shared session. |
| 4 | Shared reading and writing Analyse and annotate the beginning of an action story (Resource sheets 14a and 14b). Demonstrate writing the rest of the story's opening (Resource sheet 14b). Discuss key features of effective action openings. | | Write own action opening to a story. | In pairs, assess each other's work against the key features discussed in shared session. |
| 5 | Shared reading and writing Remind pupils of action opening of Jude story, then quickly read the ending (Resource sheet 14c). Read aloud the beginning of the middle section of the story (Resource sheet 14d) then demonstrate writing the rest of this middle part of Jude's adventure (Resource sheets 14d and 14e). | | Create an alternative middle section to Jude's story, that would fit with the opening and the ending. | Reflect on the week's learning, summarising the different types of writing and the key features of each. |

Resources

Lesson notes for week 1, days 1 and 2

Day 1

Shared reading – analysis of opening

- Tell the children that they will be writing an adventure story over the next two weeks. Briefly remind them of the five elements of a simple problem/resolution narrative – opening, build-up, dilemma, events, resolution. It is a good idea to have these words prominently displayed (Resource sheet 2). Tell them that you will be investigating examples of each element, reading as writers, and then you will show them how to write each element before they have a go themselves.
- Ask the children what types of opening they know (dialogue, setting, question, warning, dramatic, etc.) and what they know about writing good openings to stories. List some of the criteria they offer in a checklist, e.g. draw the reader into the story quickly, begin to build up the main character, use an early hook to catch the reader's interest. Explain that many openings will combine several aspects.
- Put up an enlarged text of opening paragraph of a story, e.g. *The Subtle Knife* by Philip Pullman (Scholastic, 1997), the second book in his fantasy adventure trilogy. Discuss what it hints at, how it draws the reader in and how there are the elements of plot, character and setting interwoven in the introductory paragraph. Add to the checklist if necessary.
- Repeat with the opening of *Mac's short adventure* (Resource sheet 5a). Discuss this opening (see Resource sheet 6a) and then review the criteria which 'grab the reader' (see Resource sheet 4).
- Discuss how the characters are introduced and how the author portrays character, e.g. through what they say and do, viewed through the eyes of an onlooker. Begin to create a list of criteria for effective characterisation.

Independent work

Give the children more examples of openings to analyse in pairs. These could be taken from guided reading books and this would provide some differentiation. Ask the children to categorise the openings and be ready to explain the strategies the writer uses to show character.

Plenary

- Complete the list of criteria from any new points the children have decided from the independent activity.
- Ask the children to discuss with their partners the type of openings they like best and the one they would like to try.
- Show the children the planning frame for the quest story you will be beginning the following day (Resource sheet 7). Explain how the basis for this sort of story is losing something, as in *Mac's adventure*, or deciding to go off and discover something. In this story the dwarfs need a herb and someone has to go off into the wilds to find it. The plot aims towards an ending in which the characters in the story find what they are looking for. So our job as writers is to get the characters off on their journey, give them an interesting time and get them back again safe and sound! To make it a good read, the reader needs to be able to visualise the characters and the setting as the plot develops. In this story the dwarf takes his pet with him, loses the map, is rescued and gets home with the herb.
- Ask them to think about their own idea for an adventure that involves two friends going to find something and write down their ideas in a planning frame before tomorrow.

Day 2

Shared writing – demonstration

- Display the planning frame for the story, *Bloddon's adventure* (Resource sheet 7). Tell the children that you are going to write the beginning of the story for them today and complete it over the next two weeks.
- Using the notes on Resource sheet 8a, demonstrate how to write the opening by introducing the characters, establishing a setting and getting the plot moving quickly. Explain what you are doing while you are doing it – or ask the children why they think you are doing it! Ask them to look at the checklist to see which techniques you are using. (The *Grammar for writing* video shows a Year 6 teacher doing this – time code 1:16:11.)
- Tell the children that they will be writing the opening of their own story in independent time. Give them two or three minutes to show their partner, and talk about, their plans for an adventure story that involves two friends going to find something.

Independent/guided work

- Ask the children to choose one of the sorts of openings they thought was particularly effective and write one or two paragraphs to start the story off. They should establish the characters by referring to the checklist. They must also remember to give an idea of the setting and get the story moving as the examples showed. Ask one or two children to write theirs on overhead transparency so that it can be shared with the class in the plenary session.
- Before the end of the session, allow the children to share their work with their response partners and allow time for individual checking.

Plenary

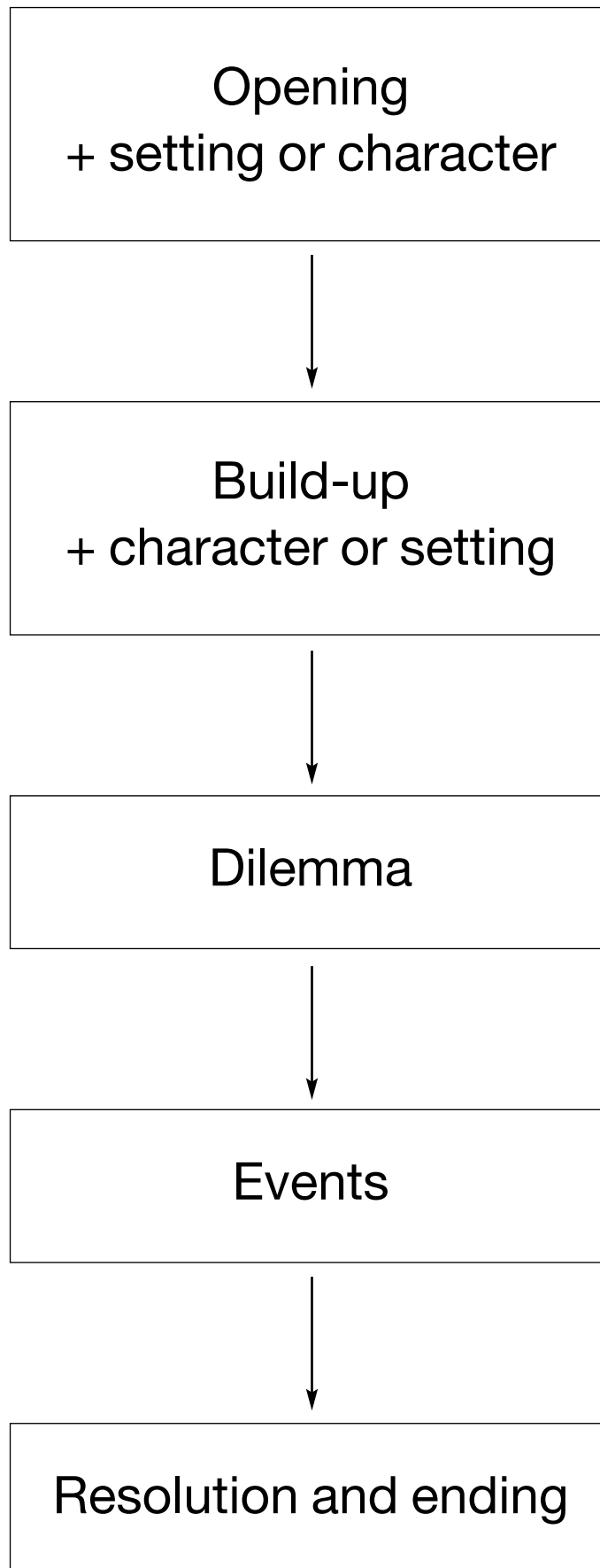
Discuss the opening paragraphs written on the transparencies. Ask the children to identify the features of effective writing. Identify appropriate use of connectives. It is important to deal with positive aspects of the writing before suggestions are given for possible improvement.

Continuing the unit

Days 3 and 4 follow the same pattern. In shared writing on day 3, analyse the next part of *Mac's short adventure* (build-up). During independent time, ask the children to analyse the next part of a story they started to analyse on day 1. On day 4, demonstrate the second part (the build-up) of *Bloddon's adventure*. In independent time, ask the children to continue writing the second part of their own stories.

Continue in the same way through days 5/6, 7/8 and 9/10. Some sections of *Bloddon's adventure* might be too long to demonstration-write in front of the children so write up the first part of the section in advance and discuss the features of this before continuing to demonstrate the rest.

Narrative framework for writing



Examples of types of narrative

| | Quest | Suspense | Warning |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| OPENING | Task established – to find something. Begin establishing characters/setting | Introduces characters/setting; story gets going | Warning not to do something, e.g. do not play by the canal. Begin establishing characters/setting |
| BUILD-UP | Establishes setting/characters. Characters set off and overcome obstacles <i>en route</i> | Establishes setting/characters. Characters start to do something – all appears to be going well | Establishes setting/characters. Characters start to do something – and get tempted, e.g. they make their way to the canal |
| DILEMMA | Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can't find it • can't get in • get trapped • get chased | Suspense section – something starts to happen | Do the thing they have been warned not to do, e.g. play by the canal |
| EVENTS | Struggle and overcome each problem | Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they run, and possibly get chased • they investigate and get close | Struggle to save themselves from the anticipated consequence, e.g. one falls in |
| RESOLUTION and ENDING | Arrive back at start – task accomplished. Final comment | Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nothing after all • chasing/fighting off something • finding something unexpected Final comment | Succeed in getting away, surviving, e.g. friend drags the other one out Final comment probably from the person who gave initial warning, e.g. Mum who finds them soaking wet |

Checklists for effective narrative writing

1. Opening/setting scene or introducing characters

Some possible options for opening a story 'to grab the reader'

- using dialogue, e.g. a warning given by one character to another
- asking the reader a question
- describing some strange behaviour of one of the characters
- using a dramatic exclamation (Help!) or dramatic event
- introducing something intriguing

Techniques for introducing characters

- using an interesting name
- limiting description on how the character feels, e.g. sad, lonely, angry or what they are, e.g. bossy, shy
- relying on portraying character through action and dialogue
- using powerful verbs to show how a character feels and behaves, e.g. muttered, ambled
- giving the thoughts and reactions of other characters
- revealing the characters' own thoughts and ideas

2. Build-up/creating setting

- making the characters do something
- using detail based on sense impressions – what can be seen, heard, smelt, touched or tasted
- basing settings on known places plus some invented detail
- using real or invented names to bring places alive – to help to make the setting more real and more believable
- creating atmosphere, e.g. what is hidden, what is dangerous, what looks unusual, what is out of place
- using the weather, time of day and season as well as place
- lulling the reader into a false sense of security that all is well

3. Dilemma

- introducing a problem
- using 'empty' words, e.g. 'someone' to create suspense
- using short sentences to be dramatic
- strengthening nouns and verbs rather than adding adjectives and adverbs
- employing suspense words such as 'suddenly', 'without warning'
- drawing the reader in by asking a question
- occasionally breaking the sentence rule by using a fragment to emphasise a point, e.g. 'Silence!'
- varying sentence openings by sometimes starting with an adverb, e.g. 'Carefully'; a prepositional phrase, e.g. 'At the end of the street'; a subordinate clause, e.g. 'Although she was tired, Vanya . . . ' or 'Swinging his stick in the air, he . . . '
- delaying the revealing of the 'monster' by shadows, sounds, etc.
- using ominous sounds, darkness or cold to build the tension

4. Reaction/events

- building on many of the techniques already used in the earlier part of the story
- varying sentences structures by using longer sentence to get a rhythm going to describe the increasing tension as events unfold
- using alliteration and short sentences to portray sounds within the action
- using metaphor and simile to help paint the scene and describe the feelings of the characters
- introducing further possible complications, using connecting words and phrases such as ‘unfortunately . . .’ or ‘what he hadn’t noticed was . . .’

5. Resolution and ending

Techniques for resolving the dilemma

- allowing help to arrive in an unexpected form, such as ‘It was at that moment that . . .’
- making the character(s) do something unexpected
- showing that the problem/dilemma was only in the characters’ minds and not real
- allowing the character some extra effort to overcome the problem
- only resolving a part of the dilemma so the characters learn a lesson for the future

Some possible options for closing a story

- making a comment about the resolution
- using dialogue – a comment from one of the characters
- using a question
- making a mysterious remark
- telling the reader to remember or do something
- showing how a character has changed
- using one word or an exclamation
- avoiding clichés such as ‘The end’ or ‘They all lived happily ever after’ unless it is a fabrication of a traditional story
- reflecting on events and perhaps providing a moral
- allowing the main character to think aloud
- introducing an element of mystery, e.g. ‘Vanya would never know how lucky she was that . . .’
- looking to the future
- revisiting where the story began

Mac's Short Adventure

Winston watched rain pelt down the window panes in icy cold needles. He sighed.

“This is just typical! School holidays and it rains!”

His younger sister, Hannah, didn't answer and carried on rolling around the floor with Grandma's dog, Mac, barking excitedly at her ankles.

A moment later, a key turned in the latch, the door opened and 16-year-old Sophie, headphones glued as usual to her ears, bounded upstairs shouting as she went, “Stay at the door, Trace, right.”

Mac certainly needed no second chance and was out of the lounge and into the garden before Hannah could get to her feet.

“You idiot, Sophie!” Winston yelled pointlessly at the retreating figure. “We're supposed to keep him in. He doesn't know his way around this end of town.”

Grabbing two coats, Hannah joined her brother on the step, just in time to see the black and white dog squeeze through an impossibly small gap in the hedge and start an easy amble up the road.

“No time to leave a note to Mum,” Winston decided, taking charge. “Let’s get him. The last thing Grandma needs to know when she’s in hospital is that we’ve lost her dog. Blasted thing!” he added under his breath. “Tell Sophe,” he ordered a surprised looking Tracey. “And tell her it’s all her fault!”

Splashing through puddles, the two children rushed towards Mac. That was probably the worst thing to do because he decided they had come out to play a game. Wagging his tail vigorously and sending sprays of water onto the legs of a passer-by, he raced off towards the park.

“We’ll get him,” Hannah said confidently. “He’s only got little legs.”

“He’s doing all right on them, though,” Winston puffed, rounding the corner to see Mac turn down yet another street. “I just wish it would stop raining. My glasses are covered. I can’t see properly.”

Mac led his pursuers towards the gateway to the town park and set off at once towards the duck pond. He’d not had so much fun for years.

Winston and Hannah were close behind but cannoned round the corner straight into a woman pushing a pram.

“Watch where you’re going,” she yelled, stumbling but grabbing the handle.

“Sorry,” they mumbled. Hannah got up and examined her cut knee. She looked as if she was going to cry.

“I can’t see Mac any more,” Winston announced when the woman had gone on her way. “I thought we’d catch up with him by the ducks.”

A few minutes of racing along the sodden paths in the park, finally convinced the children that they had lost Mac. But they could not give up yet. Grandma. Winston was keen to keep trying. Hannah wanted to report him missing to the police. They both wished their Mum was with them. While arguing about the best course of action, they left the park and made their way up the High Street.

“We’re never going to find him by ourselves,” Hannah persisted. “I bet he’s frightened now, poor little thing.”

“I should hope he is!” Winston said, rather unkindly. “Look at the trouble he’s put us to! Oh look,” he yelled. “A bus! Come on! Let’s go home and phone Mum.” Before Hannah could argue, he had pulled his sister onto the bus and paid their fares.

Later, Hannah did try to tell him that she had said the bus was going the wrong way but by then it was much too late. They both realised they were going east instead of west, miles away from their own estate.

Hannah burst into tears. “I’m SO fed up,” she sobbed. “AND I’m cold. AND I’m scared because we’ll be in REAL trouble now. We’ve lost Mac!” Winston tried to cheer her up but he’d never been very good at that anyway! The bus turned a corner into a small estate of retirement bungalows.

“Oh look,” said Winston. “Grandma’s house. Oh –” and his voice trailed off as he gazed in amazement at a small, very wet and bedraggled black and white dog sitting on the doorstep, waiting patiently.

The children tumbled off the bus at the next stop and charged back up the road.

“Mac!” shrieked Hannah, “we found you! You clever old thing. You came home.”

“I suppose he cut along by the old canal,” Winston said, “and that’s how he got here so quickly. Poor Mac. He must miss Grandma. Let’s get him home and dry him off.”

They didn’t have to wait long for another bus – this time going the right way – and were in the kitchen rubbing Mac dry when the phone rang. It was Grandma.

“They let me have the trolley phone by my bed,” she explained. “I just had to ring and see if poor old Mac is alright. I’m so worried about him.”

Winston and Hannah looked at each other. Winston shook his head. Hannah nodded.

“Oh you mustn’t worry, Grandma,” Hannah said brightly. “He’s had a lovely day. No trouble at all!”

Sentence structure and punctuation

Commas separating names

Complex sentence containing short phrases and clauses to indicate Sophie's speed of movement. Clause, marked by commas, dropped into sentence to provide quick picture of Sophie

Vocabulary — verbs and adverbs — (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Composition and effect

Colloquial speech to portray character of teenager in a hurry commanding a close friend and to indicate the relationship of Winston with his sister.

Opening

Mac's Short Adventure

Winston watched rain pelt down the window panes in icy cold needles. He sighed.

"This is just typical! School holidays and it rains!"

His younger sister, Hannah, didn't answer and carried on rolling around the floor with Grandma's dog, Mac, barking excitedly at her ankles.

A moment later, a key turned in the latch, the door opened and 16-year-old Sophie, headphones glued as usual to her ears, bounded upstairs shouting as she went, "Stay at the door, Trace, right."

Mac certainly needed no second chance and was out of the lounge and into the garden before Hannah could get to her feet.

"You idiot, Sophie!" Winston yelled pointlessly at the retreating figure. "We're supposed to keep him in. He doesn't know his way around this end of town."

Text structure and organisation

Story opening: setting
Such a boring setting suggests that something might be going to happen

Characters quickly established:
Winston by his words, and the two girls by their actions

Phrase connecting the two paragraphs

Plot gets under way. Dilemma introduced. Reason for problem

Spelling

certainly — 'c' and 'ai'
doesn't — contraction of 'not'
answer — 'w'
excitedly — 'x' and 'c'

Sentence structure and punctuation

Subordinate clause opening sentence, reducing action to 3 succinct words to create effect of speed.
Comma between clauses

Subordinate clause opening sentence for emphasis.
Comma between clauses

Use of subordinate clause to relate two simultaneous actions.
Comma between clauses

Vocabulary — verbs and adverbs — (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Composition and effect

Reader's attention held by the chase. Implicit, rather than overt, time-consuming references, to remind the reader of the unpleasant weather.
Overall impression of action built up through the vocabulary, e.g. raced, puffed, pursuers, vigorously, wagging

Build-up — the chase

Grabbing two coats, Hannah joined her brother on the step, just in time to see the black and white dog squeeze through an impossibly small gap in the hedge and start an easy amble up the road.

"No time to leave a note to Mum," Winston decided, taking charge. "Let's get him. The last thing Grandma needs to know when she's in hospital is that we've lost her dog. Blasted thing!" he added under his breath. "Tell Sophie," he ordered a surprised looking Tracey. "And tell her it's all her fault!"

Splashing through puddles, the two children rushed towards Mac. That was probably the worst thing to do because he decided they had come out to play a game. Wagging his tail vigorously and sending sprays of water onto the legs of a passer-by, he raced off towards the park.

"We'll get him," Hannah said confidently. "He's only got little legs."

"He's doing all right on them, though," Winston puffed, rounding the corner to see Mac turn down yet another street. "I just wish it would stop raining. My glasses are covered. I can't see properly."

Mac led his pursuers towards the gateway to the town park and set off at once towards the duck pond. He'd not had so much fun for years.

Text structure and organisation

The plot has moved on without describing every small incident — reader knows Winston has followed the dog to the door

More information provided to indicate importance of the dog and heightens tension

Characters developed through their speech

Spelling

worst — 'w' special relates to word, worm, world, work
though — in the 'ough' family
grabbing and wagging — double the consonant after a short vowel
pursued — 'ur'. Not to be confused with persuade vigorously and confidently — polysyllabic words can be segmented; 'or' not 'our' even though vigour is spelled with a 'u'

Sentence structure and punctuation

Interrupts sentences with a single word — graphically emphasises the dilemma

Series of short sentences indicates a dialogue without using speech and following complex sentence shows simultaneous action — speech and change of setting

Vocabulary — verbs, adjectives and adverbs — (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Sentence starts with a subordinate clause for emphasis

Composition and effect

Implicit, rather than overt, time-consuming references, to remind the reader of the unpleasant weather.

Dilemma

Winston and Hannah were close behind but **cannoned** round the corner straight into a woman pushing a pram.

“Watch where you’re going,” she yelled, **stumbling** but **grabbing** the handle.

“Sorry,” they mumbled. Hannah got up and examined her cut knee. She looked as if she was going to cry.

“I can’t see Mac any more,” Winston announced when the woman had gone on her way. “I thought we’d catch up with him by the ducks.”

A few minutes of racing along the **sodden** paths in the park, finally convinced the children that they had lost Mac. But they could not give up yet.

Grandma. Winston was keen to keep trying. Hannah wanted to report him missing to the police. They both wished their Mum was with them. While arguing about the best course of action, they left the park and made their way up the High Street.

“We’re never going to find him by ourselves,” Hannah persisted. “I bet he’s frightened now, poor little thing.”

“I should hope he is!” Winston said, rather unkindly. “Look at the trouble he’s put us to! Oh look,” he yelled. “A bus! Come on! Let’s go home and phone Mum.” Before Hannah could argue, he had pulled his sister onto the bus and paid their fares.

Text structure and organisation

Heightening the dilemma by creating an event which causes the children to lose sight of the dog — pram incident

Characters continue to develop

Spelling

grabbed and *slipped* — double the consonant after a short vowel
woman — ‘wo’ before the word *man*
straight — in the ‘ight’ family
arguing — loses the ‘e’ before adding ‘ing’

Sentence structure and punctuation

Use of comma to separate phrase containing additional information

Events

Later, Hannah did try to tell him that she had said the bus was going the wrong way but by then it was much too late. They both realised they were going east instead of west, miles away from their own estate.

Hannah burst into tears. "I'm SO fed up," she sobbed. "AND I'm cold. AND I'm scared because we'll be in REAL trouble now. We've lost Mac!" Winston tried to cheer her up but he'd never been very good at that anyway! The bus turned a corner into a small estate of retirement bungalows.

"Oh look," said Winston. "Grandma's house. Oh —" and his voice trailed off as he gazed in amazement at a small, very wet and bedraggled black and white dog sitting on the doorstep, waiting patiently.

Two-item list of actions of the dog separated by a comma — 'sitting on the doorstep, waiting patiently'

Text structure and organisation

Implies a conversation that was not written down
Dilemma worsens

Further character development

Composition and effect

Capitals to emphasise how Hannah speaks these words.

Spelling

too — double letter as opposed to to and two
patiently — 'tien'

Sentence structure and punctuation

*Vocabulary — verb —
(shaded) chosen to describe
actions precisely*

*Use of dashes instead of
commas for emphasis*

*Short sentences creating
effect of quick decision*

Resolution and ending

The children **tumbled** off the bus at the next stop and charged back up the road.

“Mac!” shrieked Hannah, “we found you! You clever old thing. You came home.”

“I suppose he cut along by the old canal,” Winston said, “and that’s how he got here so quickly. Poor Mac. He must miss Grandma. Let’s get him home and dry him off.”

They didn’t have to wait long for another bus — this time going the right way — and were in the kitchen rubbing Mac dry when the phone rang. It was Grandma.

“They let me have the trolley phone by my bed,” she explained. “I just had to ring and see if poor old Mac is alright. I’m so worried about him.”

Winston and Hannah looked at each other. Winston shook his head. Hannah nodded.

“Oh you mustn’t worry, Grandma,” Hannah said brightly. “He’s had a lovely day. No trouble at all!”

Text structure and organisation

Dilemma resolves when the children collect the dog. The phone call at the end reinforces the relief felt by the children

Cuts out detail of return home — no need to spin this out — find satisfying conclusion i.e. phone call

Composition and effect

Adaptation

Simple plot builds by each section being set up by the previous one — cause and effect, e.g. it is wet and slippery and they can’t see, so they bump into someone, have to apologise and therefore lose the dog. Coincidence is a traditional feature of narrative. Dog has gone back to its own house — so how does the author get the children there to find it? — they jump on the wrong bus.

Viewpoint

Simple narrative approach taken through narration and dialogue through which character development can be traced.

Style

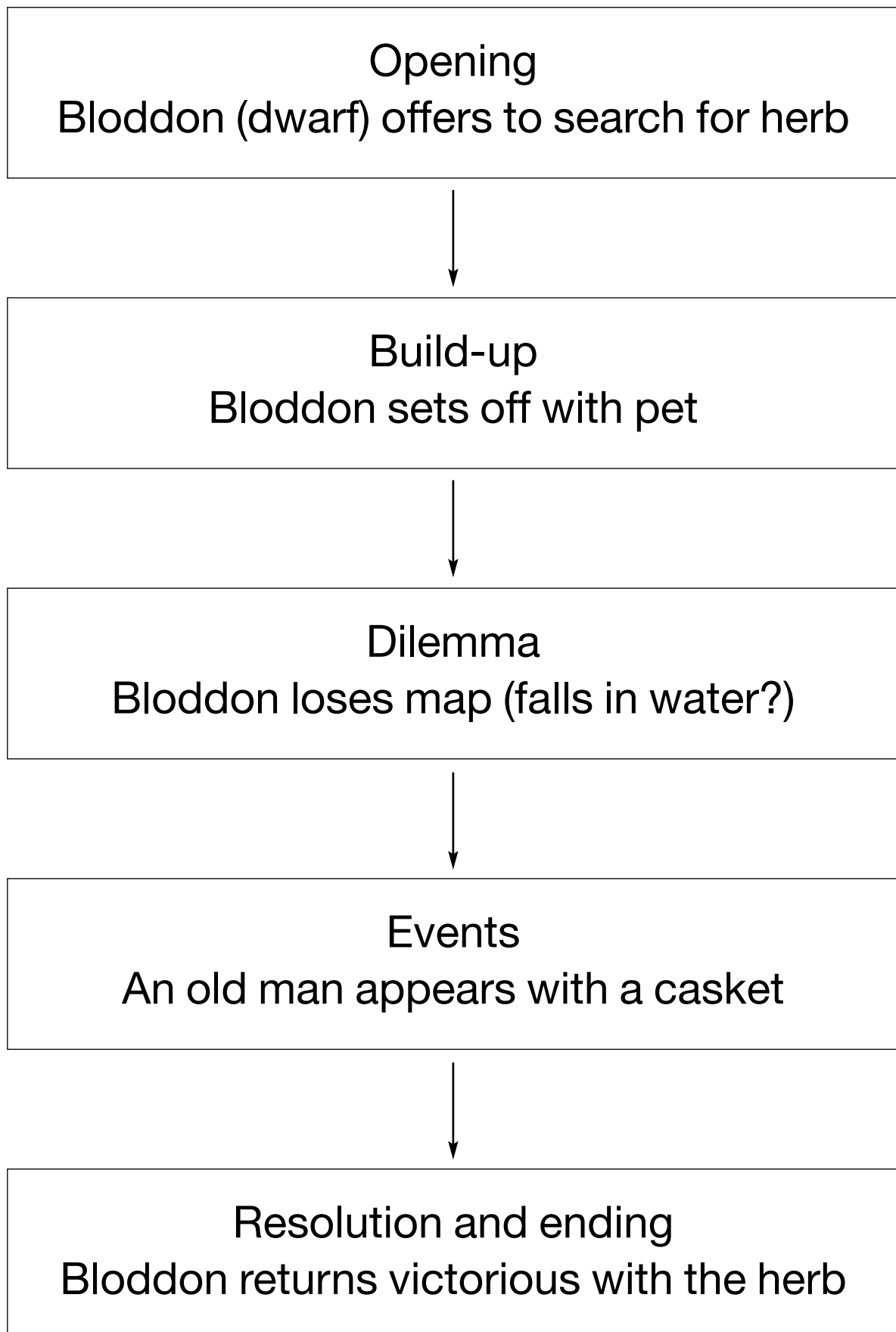
Effects created through choice of vocabulary, sentence structure and variation.

Spelling

shrieked — ‘ie’

rubbing and nodded — double the consonant after a short vowel

Planning frame for *Bloddon's adventure*



Sentence structure and punctuation

Opening sentence — dialogue, straight into the middle of the action

Short sentence evokes sense of silence across hall

Although not dialogue, these short sentences give the effect of lots of talking

Vocabulary — nouns and adjectives — (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Subordinate clause to add pace to sentence suggesting Bloddon's hasty, impetuous behaviour

Composition and effect

- Opening paragraph. Dialogue used to inform reader about the quest therefore limited information given and story gets off to a pacy start;
- Fantasy adventure reinforced in reader's mind by allusions to names in other fantasy stories, invented words and fantasy subjects, e.g. enchanted forests, potions;
- Alters a well known saying by one invented word to relate to the reader but maintain the fantasy.

Opening

Bloddon's Adventure

"Stop talking, and listen!" shouted Tremdalf, shaking his **bony fist** at the assembled company of dwarfs. There was silence. "It's no use arguing among yourselves. We have to get that magic herb somehow. Terebron needs it to make his potions. The success of the whole war against the Orcs depends on it."

No-one disagreed. But who should go? The way was long and hard and success could not be guaranteed. The herb did not always flower. Everyone continued to tell his neighbour why he could not possibly be spared from his daily work. Then, into the **clamour**, a **shrill** voice sounded.

"I'll go! Let me get the herb!"

A laugh filled the cave, lit by a **thousand blinking fireflies**. "What! Bloddon! He couldn't find a piece of rofal in a paper bag!" More laughter. The little dwarf's face burned with shame, but he felt anger welling up inside too. He'd show them — and leaping to his feet he jumped forward and grabbed the map to the enchanted forest out of a surprised Tremdalf's hands.

Text structure and organisation

Fantasy setting established

Bloddon's character developed through others' behaviour to him and then through his own behaviour

Spelling

listen — 't', 'e'
laugh, laughter — 'au'
daughter — 'au'

Sentence structure and punctuation

Vocabulary — adjectives and verbs — (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Complex sentence to cover a lot of time and action quickly. This keeps the pace of the story without dwelling on the unimportant events

Passive voice puts emphasis on the gift rather than the giver

Build-up

That had been yesterday. Now, sweating under the heat of a punishing sun, his feet already sore and his shoulders aching from his rucksack, Bloddon began to regret his desire to be a hero. "At least you came with me," he said to his pet poggle, Dif, loping happily at his side. "We can find the herb together." They plodded on all that day and the next, climbing mountains, crossing valleys and passing through small hamlets where dwarfs swarmed out to greet them — news of their quest having travelled ahead. Gifts of food and wine were pressed into Bloddon's hands and that second night, he and his faithful friend slept contentedly under a starry sky!

Text structure and organisation

Build-up — plot moved on quickly, by-passing preparations for the trip

Bloddon's character develops

Invented word reinforcing the fantasy

Composition and effect

Exclamation mark appeals to the reader to visualise the scene.

Spelling

ache, aching — 'e'

plodded — double the consonant after a short vowel before 'ed'

travelled — double an 'l' before 'ed'

faithful — only one 'l' awful, spiteful, peaceful. It doubles when 'ly' is added e.g. faithfully

Sentence structure and punctuation

Short sentence indicates important stage in quest

'But' signals possible problem

(Vocabulary (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Complex sentences used to explain

Composition and effect

Speaks directly to the reader in the second person. Asks a question of the reader.

Text structure and organisation

Connective moves story on from sleeping to the journey

The characters of both travellers develop

Perpetuates fantasy

Spelling

grabbed, dropped, stubbed – double the consonant after a short vowel before 'ed'
already – one 'l' e.g. also, almost, altogether
confusion – 'sion'

It wasn't long before the adventurers reached the river which marked the boundary of the Dwarf lands with that of their neighbours. Bloddon consulted the map.

"I think we need to cross here," he told Dif. But Dif was already in the water, splashing his three tails with glee and sending multi-coloured fish into swirls of confusion.

"Come back, you stupid animal!" shouted Bloddon, in annoyance. Reaching out, he grabbed at the collar around the creature's neck but missed, stubbed his toe and slipped among the thick reeds at the water's edge.

"Oh, bother and blast!" he groaned. This was quite a bad curse for a well brought up little dwarf so you can see how upset he was! The map was sodden and, even as he lifted his hand out of the water, it began to disintegrate before his eyes. Now what were they to do?

"We'll never find the herb now," he wailed out loud. Dif looked alarmed and nuzzled up, trying to comfort his friend. But Bloddon was too upset to take any notice. "What a fool I was!" he continued. "Fancy thinking I could do such an important job." By now he had picked himself up and waded carefully to the other side with Dif following forlornly, all three tails trailing in the water. He was now in Arcedia.

Ahead of him lay a network of paths and Bloddon knew that without the map he would never find his way through because they changed themselves around frequently to confuse travellers.

"Oh bother and blast!" he said again and burst into a full flood of noisy tears.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Old man announced in short sentence and described in complex sentence

Vocabulary (shaded) chosen to describe actions precisely

Use of commas to separate opening adverb from subordinate clause and main clause. (Could play around with order of the parts here to compare effectiveness e.g. suggest The young dwarf opened it gingerly not knowing what to expect. And then move it around to get best effect.)

Composition and effect

Picks up ideas from other fantasies with which the reader may be familiar.

Events

He cried until he had no more tears left to cry and sat on the small hillock, stubby arms wrapped around even stubbier legs, sighing deeply. Suddenly, he was aware that a shadow had blocked out the sun. Looking up he saw the strangest old man. He wore a long black cloak, decorated with stars that moved around the material on their own and he held a casket of gold carefully in front of him.

“Ahh, I’ve found you!” said a thin, feeble voice. “We heard you were in trouble. Lost the map, did you?”

Bloddon stared in astonishment. “Who . . .” he began.

“Who am I?” the old man interrupted brightly. “Your lucky saviour, that’s who! Tremdalf sent an owl to let us know you were on your way. Afraid you’d get into difficulties apparently! Lucky I came along. We need you to succeed in your war against the Orcs.” His face clouded over. “They’ve done some terrible things in these lands. Here. Take this.” The old man handed Bloddon the golden casket. Gingerly, not knowing what to expect, the young dwarf opened it. Inside, lay the herb, glowing with power and magic. Bloddon smiled and opened his mouth to speak.

Text structure and organisation

Link to previous paragraph

Perpetuates the fantasy

Spelling

material – ‘al’
difficulties – plural ‘y’, ‘ies’
succeed – ‘c’ ‘ee’

Sentence structure and punctuation

Manner of speech creates
pace and sense of urgency

Vocabulary — verbs — (shaded)
chosen to describe actions precisely

Truncated sentence — 'He
was' is implied: creates
sense of relief

Repetition to build
up celebratory effect
— evocative of 'three
cheers for ...'

Resolution and ending

"No time, boy, no time, you need to get home." His wand swished around the spot, sparks flew and colours intertwined, encircling Blodddon and making him feel very dizzy. When it settled down — he was home! Back in the cave! The assembled dwarfs cheered when they saw him — and cheered even harder when they realised that he'd been successful. The herb was sent off to Terebron and Blodddon — well he didn't actually tell anyone that he'd had a bit of help with his quest. He rather enjoyed being a hero for a change!

Ending doesn't contain
unnecessary explanatory
dialogue to hold up the pace

Link back to earlier comment
about regrets about going

Text structure and organisation

Composition and effect

Adaptation

- In order to write a short story, economies are made by unfolding the plot and developing the characters through both the narration and the dialogue. The reader is expected to infer action and character from both, including the passing and condensing of time, indicated by connecting phrases such as *That had been yesterday*, and summary narrative, e.g. *They plodded on all that day and the next*.
- At one point the author appeals directly to the reader.

Viewpoint

- Author develops the characters through their action, reaction and dialogue but also through the narrator describing what the character think, e.g. *He rather enjoyed being a hero for a change*

Style

- Allusion to other texts through transformation of some names, e.g. *Tremdalf*
- Use of traditional devices and content of quest stories, e.g. bravado, accidents, hostile countryside, potions, black cloaks, creatures with multiple tails.

Spelling

- colour — 'our'
- successful — relate to succeed.
- only one 'i' *awful, faithful,*
- peaceful. It doubles when 'iy'
- is added e.g. *successfully*

This has been the most incredible day of my life. As I was doing my homework I heard this strange noise so I rushed straight to the window and I couldn't believe what I had seen. It was shining like mad in my eyes. I could hardly see it. The strange thing was shaped like an oval. I was trying to turn my head but my eyes were glued on to the spaceship. The glowing bright lights made me put my arms over my head it was also making an ear piercing sound as it was heading towards my garden the sound was getting louder as it came nearer and nearer.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Connective phrase but should be a comma after 'homework'

Variety of sentence length

Text organisation and punctuation

This has been the most incredible day of my life. As I was doing my homework I heard this strange noise so I rushed straight to the window and I couldn't believe what I had seen. It was shining like mad in my eyes. I could hardly see it. The strange thing was shaped like an oval. I was trying to turn my head but my eyes were glued on to the spaceship. The glowing bright lights made me put my arms over my head it was also making an ear piercing sound as it was heading towards my garden the sound was getting louder as it came nearer and nearer.

What 'it' is — not yet revealed to reader

Full stop needed here

Needs full stop or connective here

Powerful verb conveys sense of being overpowered

Composition and effect

Opening sentence creates sense of expectation. Mundane, safe activity interrupted by frightening attack on the senses. Ends on a threatening note to engage reader.

I had an electrifying experience earlier today when I saw a spaceship, an alien spaceship can you believe it. It landed just outside Mr Jackson's farm. Me and my dad went up there for some eggs and there it was - *a spaceship!!* Mr Jackson didn't see it because he was out but when he got back he fainted. It looked as if it had been damaged my dad said because he's an engineer, but this is different it's an alien spaceship. The police came to the scene and cleared it up. They thought it was part of a plane crash but me and my dad knew better. When we got home I told my mum but she got the better of us and convinced my dad he was seeing things but I knew my theory was the truth.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Effective adjective

Complex sentence. Connective phrase
'when I' = economical writing

Repeat of 'spaceship' for emphasis
and to create excitement

My dad and I

Use of connective phrase

I had an electrifying experience earlier today when I saw a spaceship, an alien spaceship can you believe it. It landed just outside Mr Jackson's farm. Me and my dad went up there for some eggs and there it was - a spaceship!! Mr Jackson didn't see it because he was out but when he got back he fainted. It looked as if it had been damaged my dad said because he's an engineer, but this is different it's an alien spaceship. The police came to the scene and cleared it up. They thought it was part of a plane crash but me and my dad knew better. When we got home I told my mum but she got the better of us and convinced my dad he was seeing things but I knew my theory was the truth.

Text organisation and punctuation

Might be more effective if it was a separate sentence addressing reader (with a question mark)

Variety of punctuation used for effect

Tense confusion — probably caused by element of dialogue (underlined) not developed or in speech marks

This could be different paragraph

Could have a full stop to create final sentence for impact

Composition and effect

Addresses reader directly to engage them. Lack of description of spaceship, or explanation of how they alone knew what it was, weakens purpose of describing an incident succinctly. A number of ideas here which could have been developed, e.g. the damage.

From *Why the Whales Came*

by Michael Morpurgo (Egmont Publishers), pages 4 and 5.

The little I saw of the Birdman was enough to convince me that all the stories we heard about him must be true. He was more like an owl, a flitting creature of the dark, the dawn and the dusk. He would be seen outside only rarely in the daylight, perhaps out in his rowing boat around the island or sitting high on his cart; and even in the hottest summers he would always wear a black cape over his shoulders and a pointed sou'wester on his head. From a distance you could hear him talking loudly to himself in a strange, unearthly monotone. Maybe it was not to himself that he talked but to the kittiwake that sat always on his shoulder or to the black jack donkey that pulled his cart wherever he went, or maybe it was to the great woolly dog with the greying muzzle that loped along beside him. The Birdman went everywhere barefoot, even in winter, a stooped black figure that lurched as he walked, one step always shorter than the other. And wherever he went he would be surrounded by a flock of screaming seagulls that circled and floated above him, tirelessly vigilant, almost as if they were protecting him. He rarely spoke to anyone, indeed he scarcely even looked at anyone.

Sentence structure and punctuation

- Simile, amplified by adjectival phrase marked off by comma
- Comma separating off clause
- Semicolon to separate two related main clauses
- Connective phrase
- Comma between adjectives slows pace of sentence
- Adjectival phrase — economical writing
- Adverbial phrase — economical writing

The little I saw of the Birdman was enough to convince me that all the stories we heard about him must be true. He was more like an owl, a flitting creature of the dark, the dawn and the dusk. He would be seen outside only rarely in the daylight, perhaps out in his rowing boat around the island or sitting high on his cart; and even in the hottest summers he would always wear a black cape over his shoulders and a pointed sou'wester on his head. From a distance you could hear him talking loudly to himself in a strange, unearthly monotone. Maybe it was not to himself that he talked but to the kittiwake that sat always on his shoulder or to the black jack donkey that pulled his cart wherever he went, or maybe it was to the great woolly dog with the greying muzzle that loped along beside him. The Birdman went everywhere barefoot, even in winter, a stooped black figure that lurched as he walked, one step always shorter than the other. And wherever he went he would be surrounded by a flock of screaming seagulls that circled and floated above him, tirelessly vigilant, almost as if they were protecting him. He rarely spoke to anyone, indeed he scarcely even looked at anyone.

Text organisation and punctuation

Character first heard about, then seen far away, then heard, then seen slightly closer. Reinforces idea of his remoteness

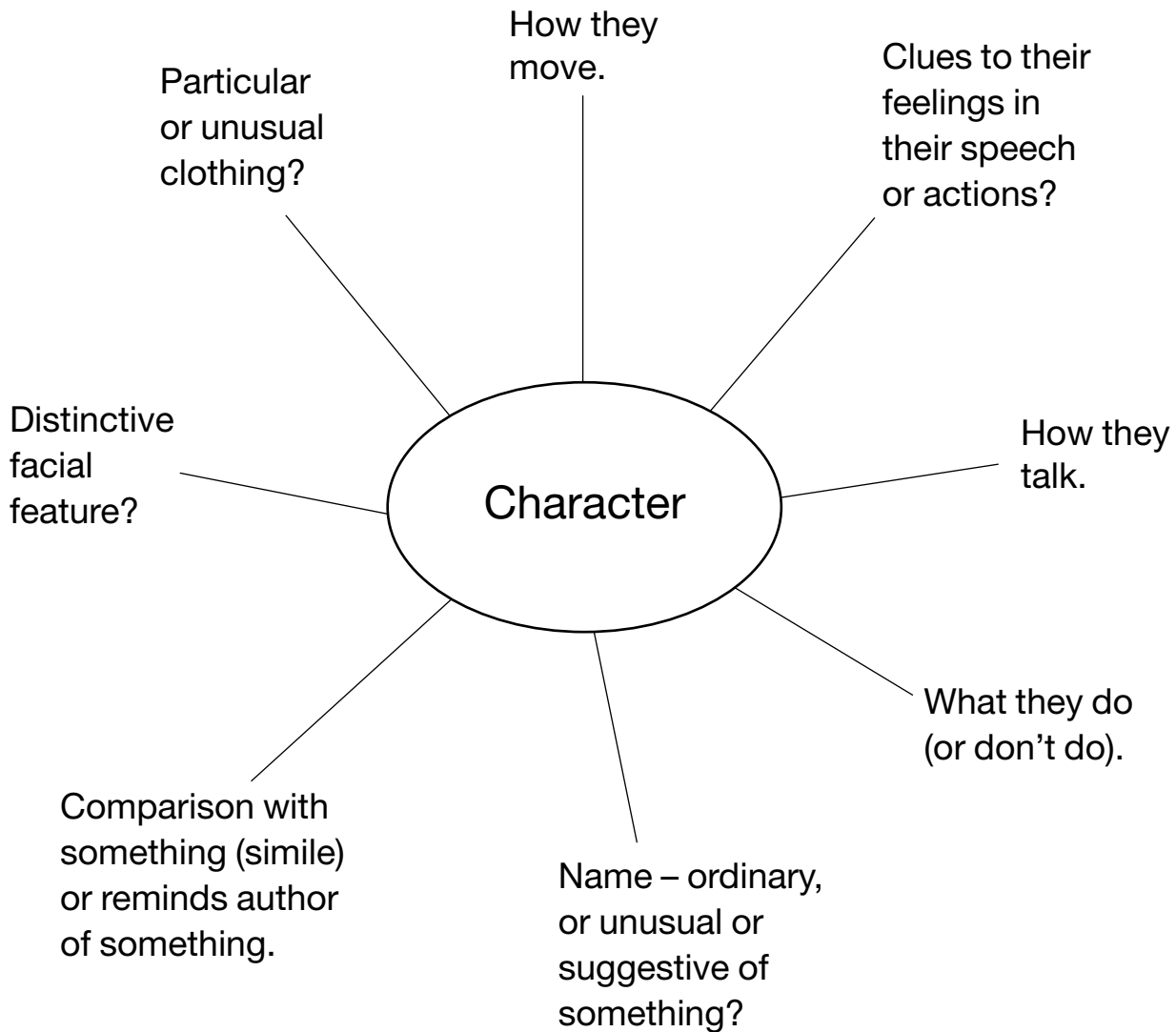
Use of 'and' to begin sentence suggests something strange or unusual will be revealed

Single paragraph builds up cumulative effect of description

Composition and effect

- Comparisons and associations with animals create a distinctive picture.
- Alliteration (dark, dawn, dusk) and repetition (maybe . . . maybe) give a poetic feel. Inversion of usual sentence construction ('it was not to himself') adds to literary effect.

Character web: choose 3, 4 or 5 aspects to work on to create your own character



Mrs Wentleberry is one of the most memorable people that I have ever met. Every year we used to go round to her house for one of her ‘special’ teas – thunder and lightning, she called it. The thunder was a large dollop of cream and the lightning was a twist of golden syrup. This mixture was piled onto a homemade scone. My four brothers and I sat in silence, eyes agog, already almost tasting the sweet, thick mixture in our mouths.

She was a large lady. Her round, red face had puffy cheeks. She used too much make-up which made her lips look rather startling, bright as a guard’s uniform that I had seen at Buckingham Palace. Her hair was piled up and held in place by a small, thin net. She always wore large dresses with bright floral patterns that flopped around her. It was like watching a large curtain moving about. I tried not to stare.

Sentence structure and punctuation

- Connective phrase tunes reader in*
- Punctuation used for specific effect*
- Compound sentence to elaborate on previous phrase*
- Adjectival phrase dropped in*
- Simple sentence for effect*
- Specific adjective*
- Similes to help reader visualise*
- Specific verb to help visualise*
- Contrasting adjectives*
- Verb suggests vivid*
- Punctuation for effect*
- Short sentence starting with conjunction for emphasis*

Story opening: character

Mrs Wentleberry is one of the most memorable people that I have ever met. Every year we used to go round to her house for one of her 'special' teas – thunder and lightning, she called it. The thunder was a large dollop of cream and the lightning was a twist of golden syrup. This mixture was piled onto a homemade scone. My four brothers and I sat in silence, eyes agog, already almost tasting the sweet, thick mixture in our mouths.

She was a large lady. Her round, red face had puffy cheeks. She used too much make-up which made her lips look rather startling, bright as a guard's uniform that I had seen at Buckingham Palace. Her hair was piled up and held in place by a small, thin net. She always wore large dresses with bright floral patterns that flopped around her. It was like watching a large curtain moving about. I tried not to stare.

For such a large lady, she had a very small voice. "Who's for thunder?" she trilled. My brothers and I were famous for giggling but on these occasions we had sworn a pact of total silence. No-one dared look at anyone else in case a snigger began to spread. We knew what it would mean – no tea!

She would pass out the plates, pile high the cream and syrup, pour tea. She had a thin gold ring on her left hand. But no husband. I think having us to tea was her treat as much as ours.

Text organisation and punctuation

Each paragraph starts with the character, and opening words of middle two paragraphs focus on her size for emphasis

Read

Demonstration-write

Composition and effect

Introductory sentence sets up expectation, which is delayed until next paragraph. Descriptions include her appearance, voice and manner, and the effect she had on the author. Reflective comment at end links back to beginning.

The wind whipped the snow across the roads. Already you could barely see anything in front of you. It was too cold to be out. The snowstorm blindfolded the town, muffling the world in white silence.

At first, it was quite dark inside the warehouse. Years of dust had covered the windows with a thin layer and only a faint light filtered through. Each footstep echoed, leaving behind a trail of footprints through the dust. Boxes of different sizes were piled high, like strange towers. Cobwebs hung between the boxes like lace nets.

Sentence structure and punctuation

Alliteration for effect

Personification suggests capture, imprisonment

Specific verb
Complex sentence, emphasising sound and sight

Opening sentences with nouns gives effect of reader's eyes travelling the room

Alliterative sentence — implies he's been running Adds to sense of mystery

Truncated sentence for suspense

Clause dropped in to summarise his feelings

Ellipsis for suspense

Story opening: setting

The wind whipped the snow across the roads. Already you could barely see anything in front of you. It was too cold to be out. The snowstorm blinfolded the town, muffling the world in white silence.

At first, it was quite dark inside the warehouse. Years of dust had covered the windows with a thin layer and only a faint light filtered through. Each footstep echoed, leaving behind a trail of footprints through the dust. Boxes of different sizes were piled high, like strange towers. Cobwebs hung between the boxes like lace nets. An abandoned ladder lay at an awkward angle across what looked like an old television set. Its wires spilled out. Marriott stood still for a moment and let his breathing settle.

It was then that he heard it. The faintest of sounds — a floorboard creaked. Then, another. He stood quite still, his senses alert, straining to listen. For a long while there was quite quiet — only the distant murmurings of the wind drifting snow. Then somebody coughed . . .

Text organisation and punctuation

Opening paragraph: weather outside to establish tone of piece and effect on senses

2nd paragraph moves inside to describe main setting

3rd paragraph sets up the action in the setting

Composition and effect

Emphasis throughout on what can (and can't) be seen and heard. Introduction of character and why he's there delayed to build suspense.

Without hesitating, Jude ran. Almost immediately, she could hear the sound of someone shouting and then the barking of the dog. Her feet pounded on the pavement, her heart thudded. She felt sick. They would be after her by now. In her mind's eye, she could see the dog, straining on the leash ready to leap, its powerful body tugging forwards. Desperately, she ran on, fear driving her.

Sentence structure and punctuation

- Adverbial phrase at start emphasises pace*
- Pronoun hides agent*
- Specific verbs suggest sound and rhythm to emphasise speed*
- Short sentence for effect*
- Commas separate clauses to help reader*
- Adverb to stress her plight*
- Concise sentence moves action on*
- Evocative name adds to fear*
- Conditional verbs suggest possibilities*
- Succession of verbs helps maintain action while suggesting a slowing of pace*

Story opening: action

Without hesitating, Jude ran. Almost immediately, she could hear the sound of someone shouting and then the barking of the dog. Her feet pounded on the pavement, her heart thudded. She felt sick. They would be after her by now. In her mind's eye, she could see the dog, straining on the leash ready to leap, its powerful body tugging forwards. Desperately, she ran on, fear driving her.

At the end of the alley, Jude scrambled over the fence and headed across Witchet's field towards the wood. There were trees to climb there and the stream might throw the dog off the scent. If only she could beat them to it. As she reached the first few trees she slowed down, looking for a place to hide. She paused by a large oak, stared up into its branches, wondering if she could climb it.

Text organisation and punctuation

1st paragraph focuses on pace and flight.
2nd introduces hope of escape

Composition and effect

Action burst on to the page, establishing clear scenario – character needs to escape. Real sounds and imaginary sights make the action realistic.

It was half an hour after leaving Witchet's Wood when Jude reached home. No-one had followed her. She was certain of that. Sitting in the back of the bus, she had been able to look back and double check. Jude grinned to herself, wondering if they were still inside the wood, still searching the bushes, peering into the trees, frightening pheasants, probably lost . . .

A nasty surprise waited her when she got home. Her mother was standing by the front door.

“Where have you been?” she snapped, folding her arms and staring at her daughter. It was an awkward moment. After all, her mother had forbidden her to go anywhere near the park at the old Grange.

“I met Trish and we went back to her house,” she lied. Her Mother gave her one of her special ‘looks’, then turned and went into the house. Relieved, Jude watched her back disappearing. She had been lucky – she had escaped her pursuers and fooled her mother. But she still had no idea why anyone wanted to ban visitors to the old park at the Grange. What was their secret?

But it was too high and she could already hear them stumbling into the wood, calling for her. Jude dashed on, thrusting brambles aside, thin branches whipping into her face. Hide, I must hide, she thought. At that moment she noticed a slight dip in the ground, covered in ferns and old branches. Without thinking about it she dived in, pulling the ferns over her.

It was dark in the ditch – and damp. She could smell the earth and the wet leaves. Sunlight filtered through the branches and ferns that covered her. She tried to steady her breathing but her heart thudded so loudly that she was sure that someone else could hear it.

At that moment the dog padded over to her. It stopped by the ditch. Jude held her breath and froze, still as stone. The dog stuck its nose through the branches and sniffed her leg. “Good boy,” whispered Jude. To her amazement, it wagged its tail. Its pink tongue hung down, dripping saliva onto her jeans.

A voice shouted and the dog turned, leaving Jude behind and setting off in another direction. Jude lay there, staring through the branches up into the sky. Breath whistled through her lips as she let out a sigh of relief. All bark and no bite, she thought to herself. It was quiet now. They had moved on.

Wriggling out of the ditch, Jude made her way back to the edge of the wood where there was a lane that curved round the field and down to the Grange. She glanced both ways and as the road was empty she dashed up the lane to the bus stop. One was due in five minutes. From the other side of the wood she could hear barking and voices shouting. Then a pheasant took off in a clatter of wings . . .

Read

Demonstration-write

Sentence structure and punctuation

Adverbial opening to
signify surprise

Specific verb

Simile + alliteration makes
effective image

Connective phrase at start of
sentence emphasises surprise

Subordinate clause
suggesting pence

Use of idiomatic phrase refers
to dog and pursuers?

Simple sentence to end
description of pursuit

Complex sentence moves
the action on

Subordinate clause is a
concise way of conveying lots
of information that would
detract from the plot

Ellipsis implies they are still
seeking her

Text organisation and punctuation

Each paragraph deals with a
separate phase of the action

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