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A message from Talk for Writing

Dear Teacher/Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the fifth and final batch of our English workbooks.

We have now produced 40 extended English units, with audio included, all available completely free.

The number of downloads of these resources has been astonishing! We're very pleased to have been able to help schools, parents and children at what we know has been a difficult time.

We also want to say a huge THANK YOU! Through your voluntary donations, we have now raised over £25,000 for Great Ormond Street Hospital and the NSPCC.

For a final time, in exchange for using these booklets, we'd be grateful if you are able to make a donation to the NSPCC.

We are asking for voluntary contributions of:

- **£5 per year group unit**

Schools using or sending the link to a unit to their pupils

- **£2 per unit**

Parents using a unit with their child, **if they can afford to do so**

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The booklets are ideal for in-school bubble sessions and home learning. If they are used at home, we recommend that children should be supported by teachers through home-school links.

With best wishes,

Pie Corbett

Talk for Writing

What is Talk for Writing?

Thousands of schools in the UK, and beyond, follow the Talk for Writing approach to teaching and learning. If you're new to Talk for Writing, find more about it [here](#).

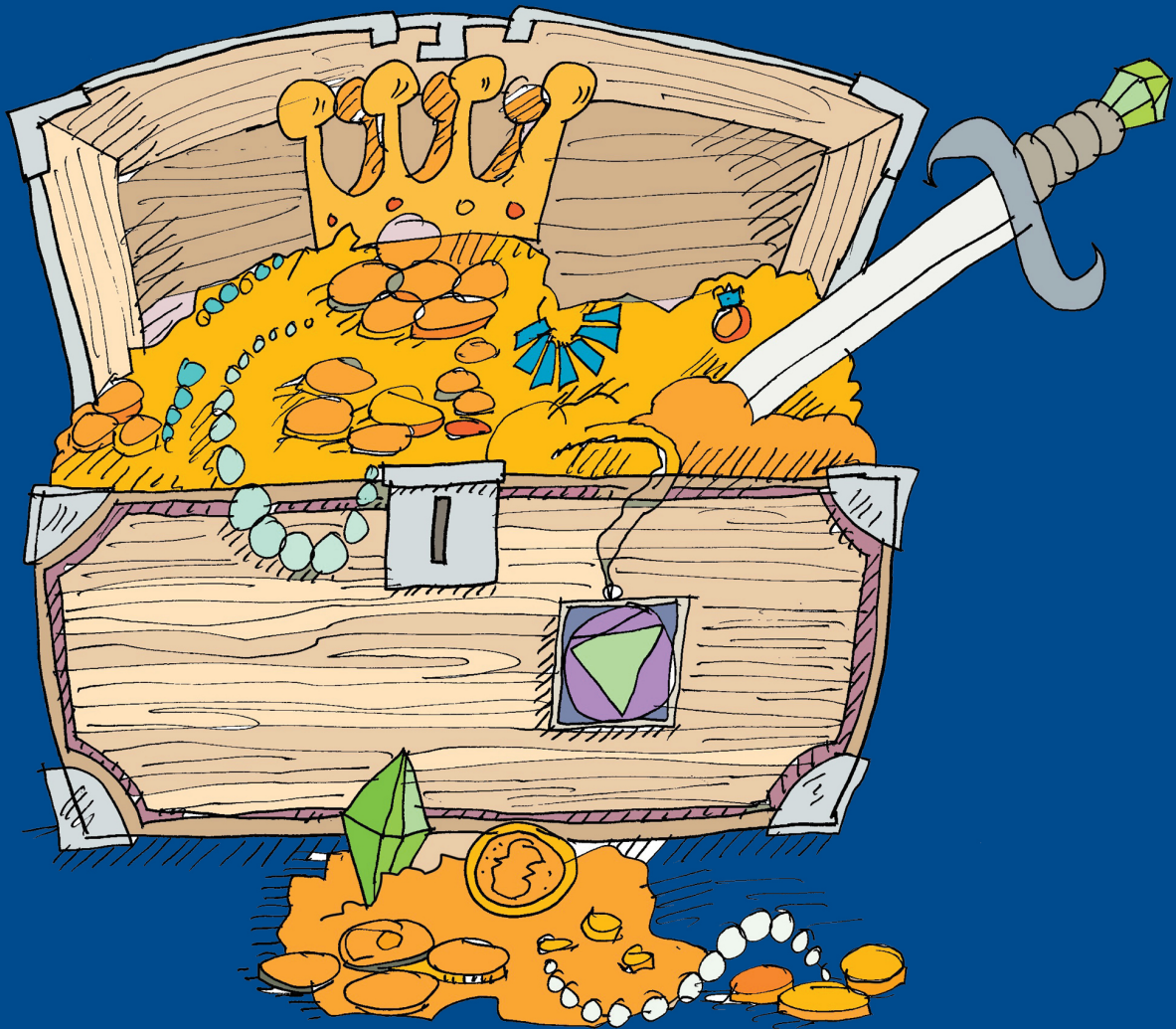


TalkforWriting™

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

Treasure

by James Walker

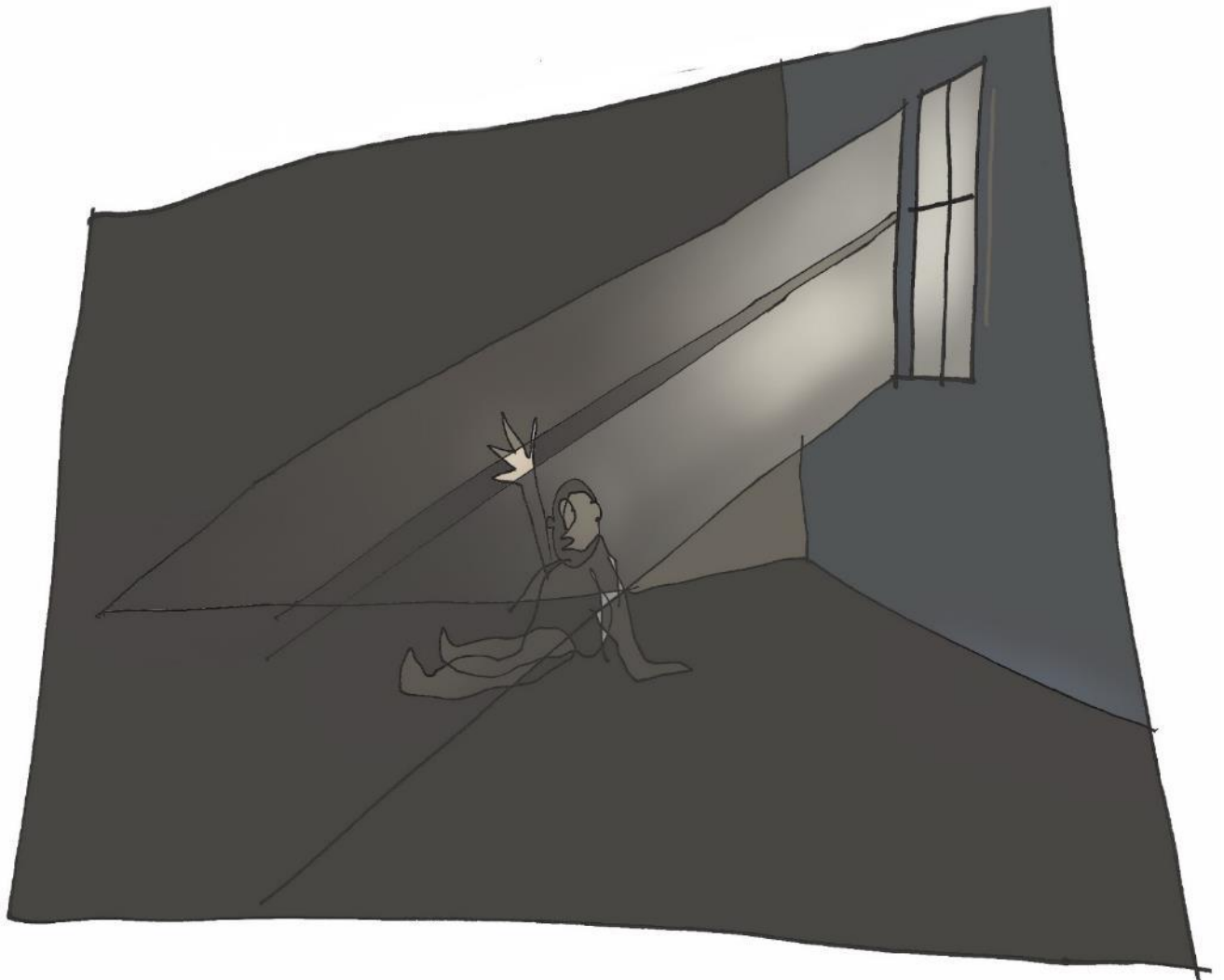


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Treasure

Imagine stumbling across hidden treasure the next time you are out on the beach or in the woods with your friends. What would you do? Open the treasure chest? Keep it all to yourself? Hand it in to the police? Show it to your family? I think we have probably all thought about this! Treasure or precious objects are often used in myth, legend, cartoons, books and films. In our unit, we will use treasure and interesting objects as the stimulus to write fantastic adventure stories.



Introducing suspense

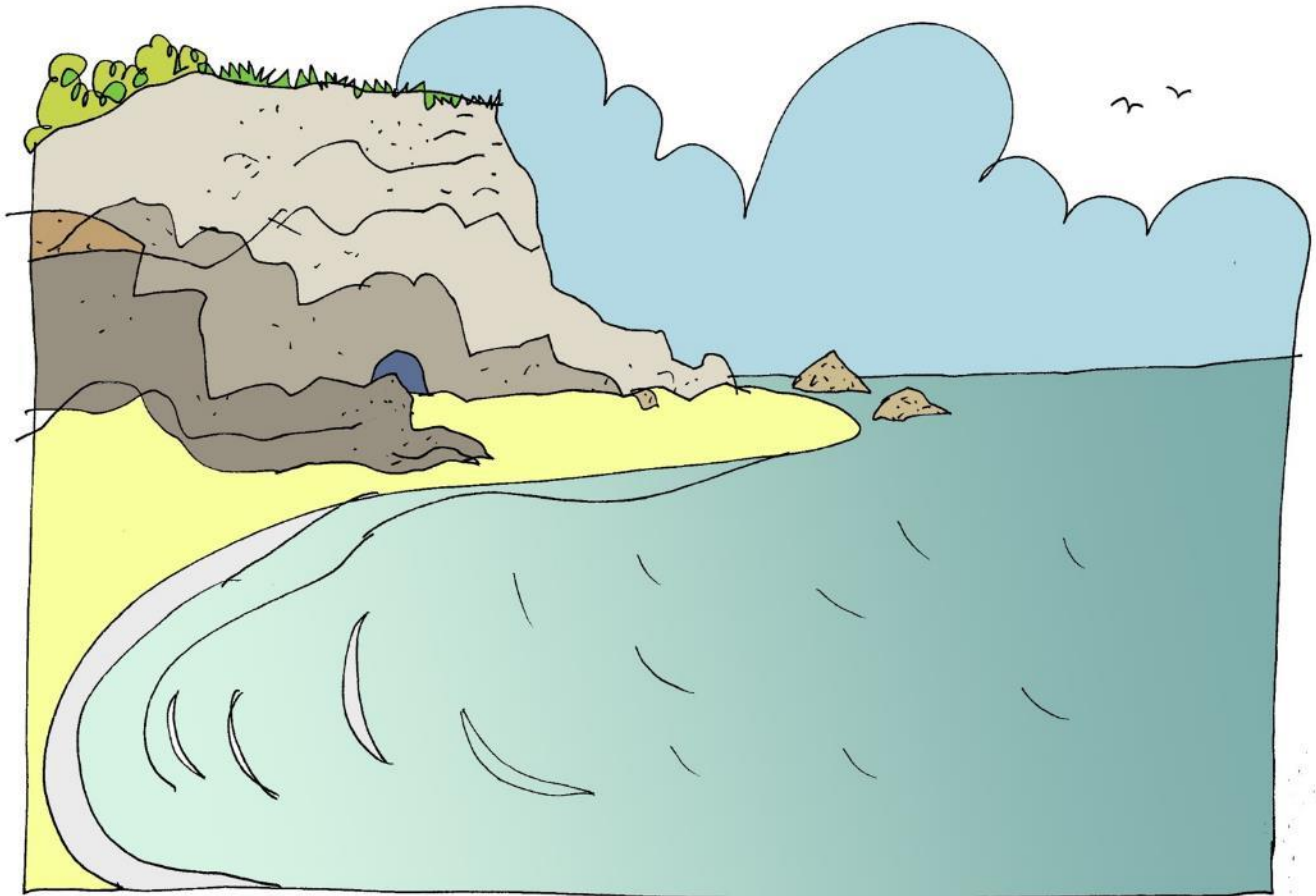
In this workbook, we are going to be writing **FINDING TALES** and our main focus is going to be **suspense** writing. You may have done some of this in school so try to tap back into the learning you have done about how to write effective suspense stories.

Model text - Adventure at Sandy Cove

Here is our model text: *Adventure at Sandy Cove* by Pie Corbett. It is a good example of a finding tale that uses suspense. Read below and have a listen here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/sandy/s-cpd0mheQjwP>

Adventure at Sandy Cove



"Hurry up," shouted Joe as he climbed over the rocks. Carefully, Rahul followed. The two boys stopped at a rock pool and began to search for shells. "Hey, what's this?" shouted Joe to Rahul. In the rock pool was a small, black box wrapped in plastic. The boys tugged it loose. What was inside? Joe pressed the silver catch and the lid popped open. The box was full of sparkling jewels!

At that moment, a scruffy old man shouted at the boys. His wolf-like dog barked menacingly. Joe snapped the lid down, picked up the box and the two boys began to scramble over the rocks. They slipped and struggled towards the cliffs.

"Quick! Let's hide in here," said Joe, rushing into a cave. It was dark and damp inside and they could hear water dripping. They felt their way further in and crouched behind a rock. Rahul's heart pounded like a bass guitar. All at once, the scruffy man appeared at the cave mouth. He shone a torch around. The light cast shadows on the cave wall. The children ducked down and kept as still as stone, but the dog could sense them. It padded closer and closer, growling menacingly. Rahul gripped Joe's arm. They could see its white teeth, smell its damp hair and feel its hot meaty breath.

Suddenly, there was a distant shout. "Here, dog!" hissed the man, roughly grabbing its collar. "Those boys have got away - quick, after them!" Joe and Rahul held their breath until they could hear the sound of the man and his dog stumbling back across the rocks. They waited for a long while before creeping out. Even though the beach was empty, the boys ran home as fast as they could.

At first, Mum didn't believe them. It was only when Joe opened the box that she decided to call the police. When the police arrived, they told Mum that the big house up the road had been burgled only the night before. They had spent all day searching for a trace of the jewels. Their only clue had been the footprints of a large dog. Joe shut his eyes. He could imagine the headlines: 'PRICELESS JEWELS FOUND BY SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVES. And there was a reward too.

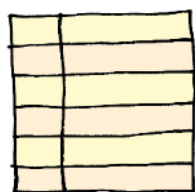
© Pie Corbett

Activity 1 - Storytelling and mapping

If you are used to retelling stories from story maps, then you could have a go at retelling the model text. Drawing a map to follow is a great idea plus identifying key actions for words like **suddenly**, **at that moment**, **carefully**, **at first**. If you have never drawn story maps to help you retell stories, look at the map as you listen to the story again and see if you can see how the images help you remember the story. Then see if you can retell it in your own words by just looking at the images. You could even draw your own map.



Activity 2: Underlying pattern of finding tales



Below, I have picked out the underlying pattern of the model text by boxing it up. This gives you the basic plan for writing your own finding tale, but remember you can change, adapt, add in more sections and change the ending if you like. It is just a guide.

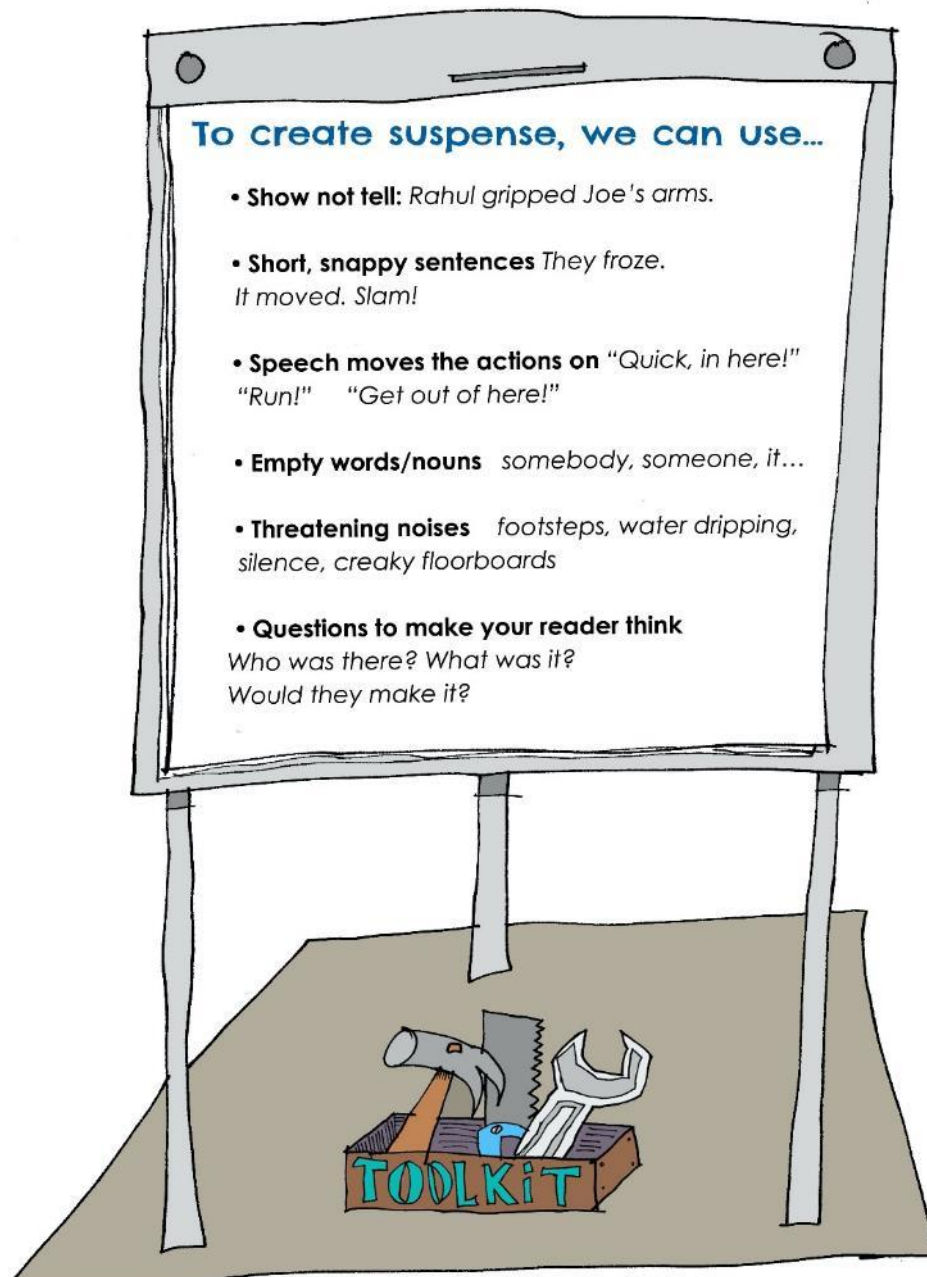
Title	Adventure at Sandy Cove
<p>Opening <i>Main characters in an everyday setting</i> <i>Find an interesting object</i></p>	<p>“Hurry up,” shouted Joe as he climbed over the rocks. Carefully, Rahul followed. The two boys stopped at a rock pool and began to search for shells. “Hey, what’s this?” shouted Joe to Rahul. In the rock pool was a small, black box wrapped in plastic. The boys tugged it loose. What was inside? Joe pressed the silver catch and the lid popped open. The box was full of sparkling jewels.</p>
<p>Build up <i>Danger arrives</i></p>	<p>At that moment, a scruffy old man shouted at the boys. His wolf-like dog barked menacingly. Joe snapped the lid down, picked up the box and the two boys began to scramble over the rocks. They slipped and struggled towards the cliffs.</p>
<p>Dilemma <i>Danger increases and it looks like there is no escape</i></p>	<p>“Quick! Let’s hide in here,” said Joe, rushing into a cave. It was dark and damp inside and they could hear water dripping. They felt their way further in and crouched behind a rock. Rahul’s heart pounded like a bass guitar. All at once, the scruffy man appeared at the cave mouth. He shone a torch around. The light cast shadows on the cave wall. The children ducked down and kept as still as stone, but the dog could sense them. It padded closer and closer, growling menacingly. Rahul gripped Joe’s arm. They could see its white teeth, smell its damp hair and feel its hot meaty breath.</p>
<p>Resolution <i>Danger overcome in some way</i></p>	<p>Suddenly, there was a distant shout. ‘Here Dog!’ hissed the man, roughly grabbing its collar. “Those boys have got away - quick, after them!” Joe and Rahul held their breath until they could hear the sound of the man and his dog stumbling back across the rocks. They waited for a long while before creeping out. Even though the beach was empty, the boys ran home as fast as they could.</p>
<p>Ending <i>Main characters safe</i> <i>More information revealed about the object/rewards</i></p>	<p>At first, Mum didn’t believe them. It was only when Joe opened the box that she decided to call the police. When the police arrived, they told Mum that the big house up the road had been burgled only the night before. They had spent all day searching for a trace of the jewels. Their only clue had been the footprints of a large dog. Joe shut his eyes. He could imagine the headlines: ‘PRICELESS JEWELS FOUND BY SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVES. And there was a reward too!</p>



Activity 3: Making a toolkit for suspense

Before we start thinking about our own ideas for our story, we need to look closely at the text and see what writing tools/tips/tricks the authors has used to create suspense. You may know some of your own too.

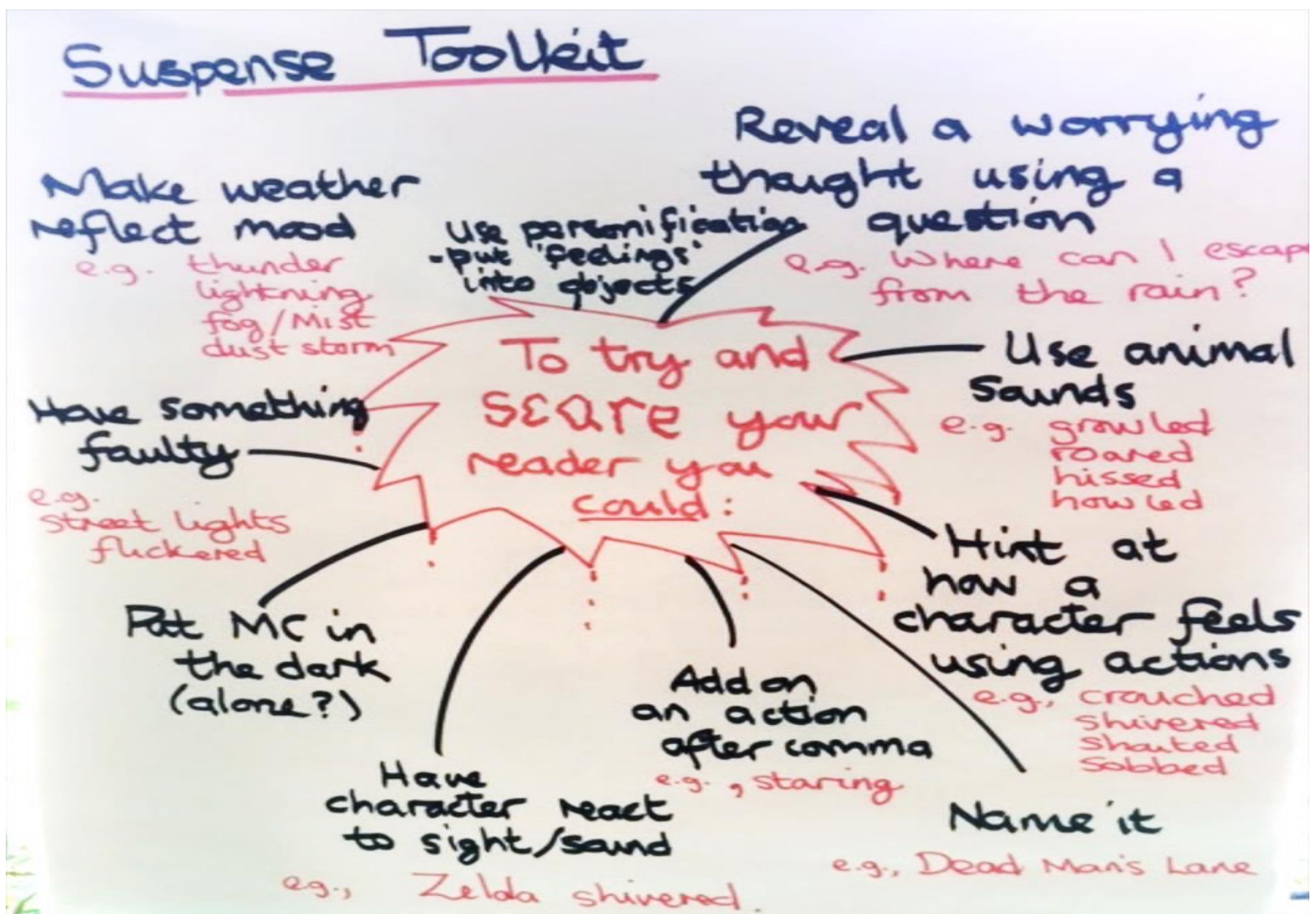
★ I've focussed just on the dilemma paragraph (no 3 in the box) to see what tools I could find that create suspense or a threatening mood



Now have a go yourself at seeing if you can spot any of these tools again in the next paragraph – the resolution one. There may be some additional ones – see if you can spot them. Use these two posters of suspense toolkits to help you.

To create **SUSPENSE** we can...
 "Watch out!"

- use speech to move the action on
 "Run!" "Careful..." "Hurry up!"
- SHOW not tell shaking/shivering
 Rahul gripped Joe's arm goosebumps
- use SCARY noises growling water dripping
 footsteps silence glockboards whispers
- use EMPTY words somebody it silhouette
- make your reader think Was it safe?
 Who was there? What was that? Should...?.
- Link our story together adverbials
 At that moment, Later on, In the end,



Activity 4: Show-not-tell practice

This is a great tool to use not only for suspense but for characterisation. We don't just want to **TELL** the reader how the character is feeling. We want to **SHOW** them by what is happening to their body, how they are talking, how they are moving or how they treat people.

For example:

Telling

Joe was scared.

Showing

Joe froze.

The hair on the back of his neck stood up.

Joe's heart raced

- ★ Now it's your turn! I want you to change the telling emotions to showing. You could act out the emotions yourself or think of a time when you felt like that. What was happening to your body? Voice? Breathing?
- ★ Try and write 2 or 3 idea down under showing – you might be able to use this in your writing later on.

Telling

Zara was sad.

Showing



Jonah felt shy.



Tom was angry.



He was frightened.



Remi was nervous.



Activity 5: Empty words

Which has more suspense?

The scary monster came up the stairs

OR

It crept up the stairs

Hopefully you can see it is the 2nd one and the reason why is that we are hiding the threat from the reader. This means they have to imagine what 'it' is. Every reader will imagine something different that is really scary for them.

List of empty words to use:

someone

somewhere

something

no-one

nowhere

nobody

it

shadow

silhouette

figure

object

premonition

Activity 6: Can you spot effective suspense sentences?

Have a look at the four sentences below. Which do you think builds the most suspense and why? Remember to look back at the toolkit to see what tools help with suspense.

Lenny was petrified as the monster was scary.

Thud. He froze. Panic filled his chest. There was no escape. Would he survive?

The door in front of her screeched open. Footsteps moved towards her but she could see nothing.

This was it. They held onto each other tightly and prayed. Why did they come here?

★ Choose the sentence with the most effective suspense and say why!

Activity 7: Short-burst writing



Now we have seen the model and looked at some of the tools, I want you to have a go at a paragraph or two of suspense writing. Try to use a few tools like *empty words*, *threatening noises* or *show not tell*. Try doing this as a short-burst of writing without doing too much planning or thinking. Try and let the writing flow and tell the story of someone in a dark scary place. 5 to 10 minutes is enough and then read it back through and see if it is working.



Activity 8: New ideas for your story



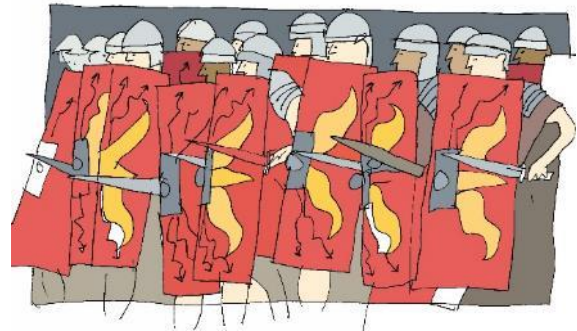
Now comes the fun part! You might already have the beginnings of an idea for your story from what you have read so far. If not, don't worry we are going to generate our ideas one step at a time.

3 MAIN CHOICES

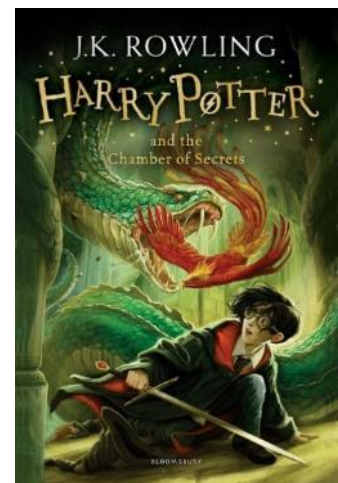
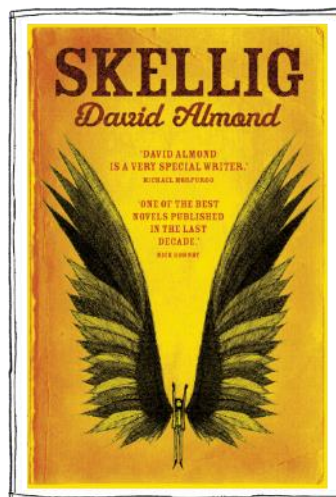
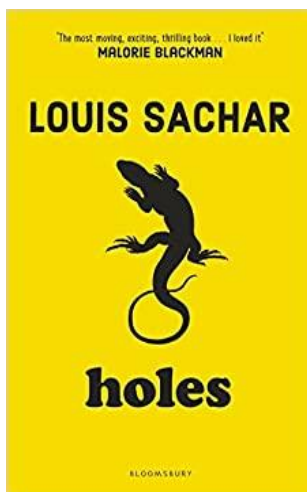
- 1) A realistic story based on Sandy Cove that could happen to you e.g. *in the woods, in the park, on holiday, at a new house ...*



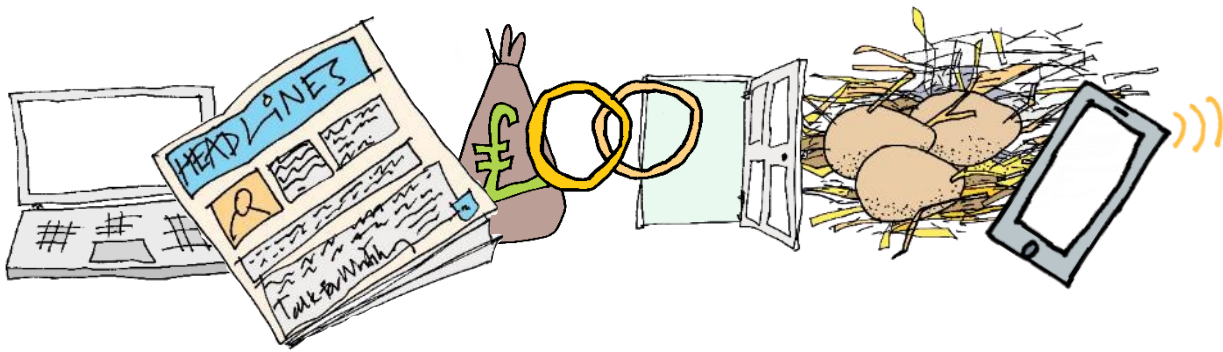
- 2) A story based on a topic you know a lot about: e.g. *Romans, Space, Vikings...*



- 3) A story based on/set in the world of a book you know. You can take some of the characters, settings and objects from the story e.g. *Holes, Harry Potter, Skellig ...*



STEP 1: Treasure/object



For a cracking finding tale you are going to need an object that interests both the characters in your story and your reader. Here are some categories and examples of objects to choose from:

Treasure

gold, money, jewels,
locket, coins ...

Technology

mobile phone, laptop ...

Writing

scroll, letter, newspaper,
book, coded message ...

Bags

suitcase, rucksack ...

Locked

door, locker, chest ...

History

medals, time capsule ...

Images

painting, photograph ...

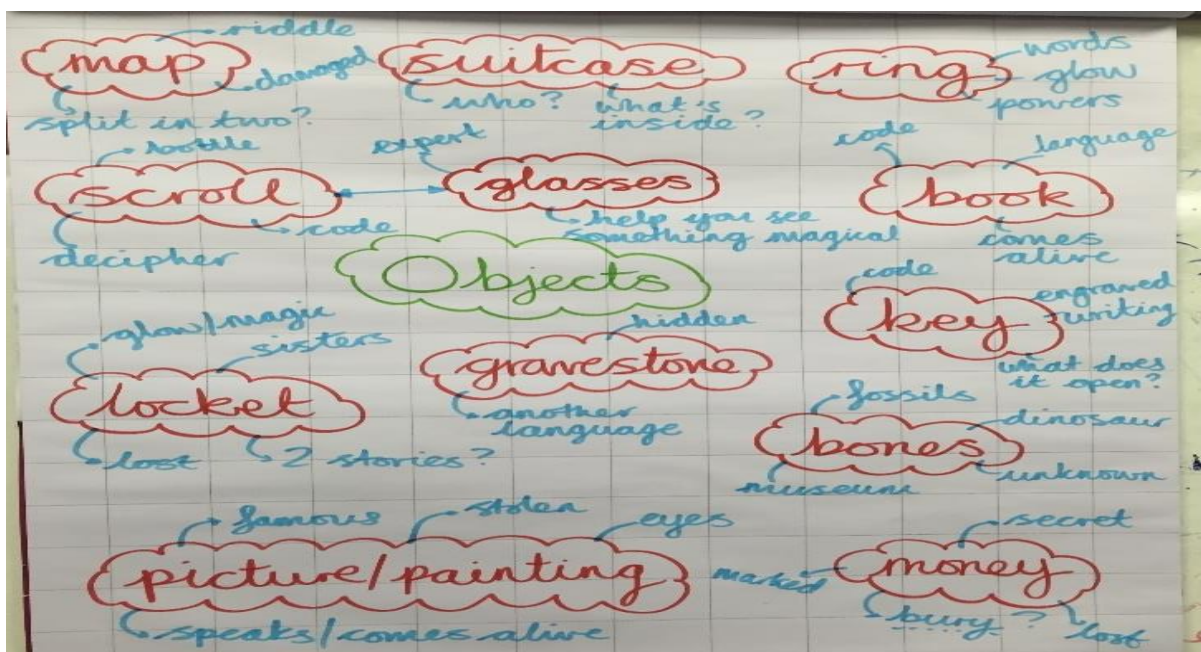
Possessions

glasses, locket, ring ...

Living

egg, bones, fossils ...

Here is a photo of the list I made with my class:



Now repeat the process for these key areas for your story – remember to think how they all link together. Jot down your ideas so you have some things to choose from.

STEP 1: MY OBJECT:

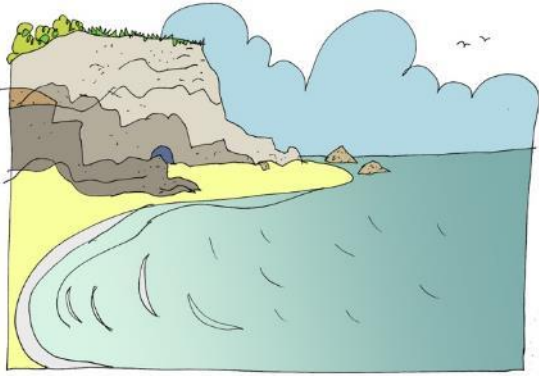
STEP 2: Main Characters (*one person, brothers, sisters, friends, twins, a group*)

STEP 3: Danger (*weather, lost, trap, enemy*)

STEP 4: Setting (*woods, junkyard, abandoned fairground*)

STEP 5: Reward/Next Day (*in the paper, exhibit named after you in the museum, money*)

Activity 9: Drawing your setting



After listening to many authors interviews on RadioBlogging, many of them – especially Abi Elphinstone – said that they drew pictures of their settings, main characters and scenes from the stories.

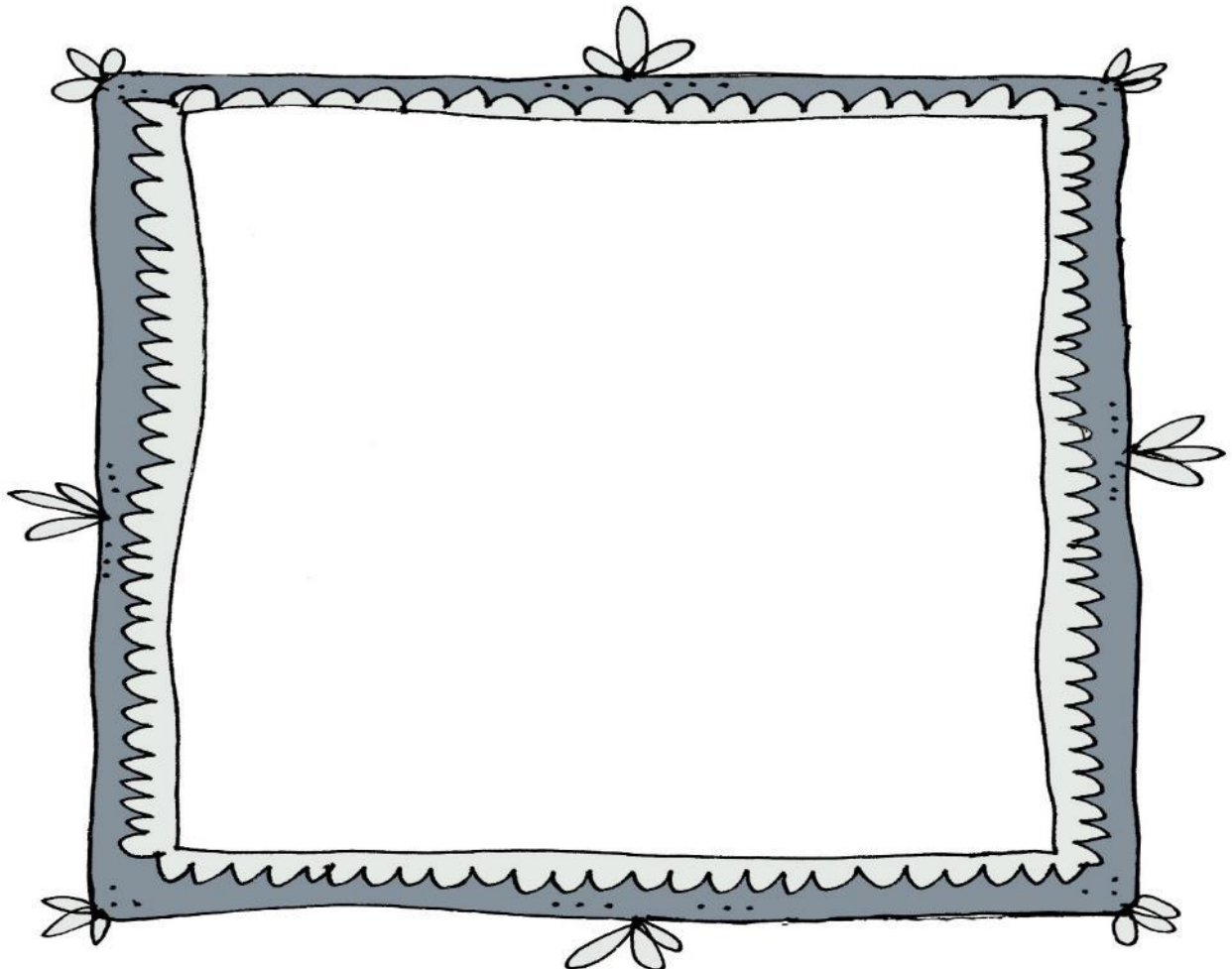
To really help picture your main scene, have a go at sketching it out below. It doesn't really matter what it looks like (this isn't an art lesson!) but it

may help you to really picture what is going on and give you a reference point to look back on when writing.

Here are some things you might want to include in your drawing:

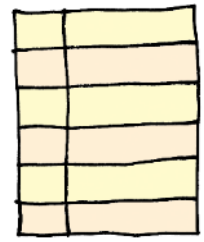
Where is your treasure/object?

- Where are your main characters and what are they doing?
- Where or what is your danger?
- What is the weather/time of the day like?



Activity 10: Planning

Now it is time to do! You can just write your ideas in bullet points or try to draft your writing in sentences. The more you get on your plan, the easier your writing will be! If you want more paragraphs or sections you could split some of the boxes in two.



Underlying pattern of a FINDING TALE	Plan of your ideas/innovation
Opening <i>Main characters in an everyday setting</i> <i>Find an interesting object</i>	
Build up <i>Danger arrives</i>	
Dilemma <i>Danger increases and it looks like there is no escape</i>	
Resolution <i>Danger overcome in some way</i>	
Ending <i>Main characters safe</i> <i>More information revealed about the object/rewards.</i>	

Here's an example of a plan that I did with my Year 6 pupils:

Structure	Original	Your own
<u>Opening</u> MCs find something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joe & Rahul - beach • Searching for shells • Find small black box • Tug it loose • Sparkling jewels inside. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 14 older brother - younger brother 9 (Marc) (Zak) dog sniffs out (and digs) dinosaur bones neighbours garden - panel
<u>Build up</u> Someone sees them. MCs escape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scruffy, old man shouts at boys. • Dog barks at them. • Joe picks up box and they run! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • old grumpy comes out of the house and shouts at the boys • hide in the garden shed
<u>Problem</u> MCs hide somewhere. Someone follows, comes close.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide in a dark, damp cave. • Man and dog appear at cave mouth and look for them. • Dog comes into cave. • Boys are really scared. • Dog gets close. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shed → cobwebs, jars bottles - snake in a tank - man comes in to look for them - TRAP DOOR - hold their breath (hand over dog) - footsteps of men above them
<u>Resolution</u> Someone leaves MCs escape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man shouts for dog to leave and they look for boys on the beach. • Boys wait and then run towards home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - phone rings (mobile/home) - man goes to answer it - they creep out/tiptoe back through the fence - run home, dog on lead.
<u>Ending</u> MCs find out about object. MCs become heroes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mum doesn't believe them but then sees the box and calls the police. • Police have been searching as a big house was burgled last night. • Clue - footprints. • Joe's sunglasses newspaper report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dad works at museum so recognises the box as Velociraptor so takes to museum. → Named after them and mentioned in school assembly

Activity 11: Talk your plan through

It is really important to have a good read through your plan to make sure that it makes sense. Why not read it aloud to someone in your house and see if they have any suggestions for how to improve it.

Activity 12: It's time to write your story

To help you with your writing, you have lots of different things to help you now:

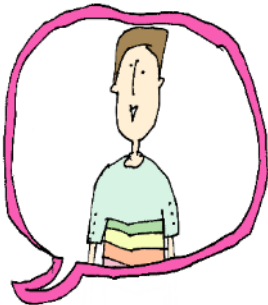
- ✓ The model text – *Adventure at Sandy Cove*
- ✓ The toolkit for suspense
- ✓ The grammar/toolkit games
- ✓ Your ideas page
- ✓ The drawing you did of your setting
- ✓ And, most importantly, your plan!

Activity 13: INVENTION/EXTENSION WRITING

If you are up for a challenge, then have a look at this next section as we are going to start tinkering with the structure/underlying pattern of our story. Below is a story mountain which has been changed to:

- DILEMMA
- FLASHBACK
- OPENING
- BUILD UP
- FLASH FORWARD
- DILEMMA (continued)
- RESOLUTION
- ENDING

The reason this works is that we jump straight into the action! The reader is left wondering how the characters got into that situation. Then you flashback to the opening to then explain the back story. Films and books often do this to interest and excite the reader rather than just the normal story arc:



- opening
- build-up
- dilemma
- resolution
- ending.

Have a go at planning such a story and then see if you can write it.

Activity 14: Discussion writing

Below is a model of a piece of discussion writing based on *Adventure at Sandy Cove*. It presents the reasons on both sides of the debate:

Should you keep a box of sparkling jewels for yourself or hand them in?

Is honesty the best policy?

Have you heard about the boys who found a box full of sparkling jewels? Their mum phoned the police and it was returned to its rightful owner; should they have kept it for themselves? We all agree that stealing is wrong but what about finding? Some people still believe in the old saying, 'finders keepers, losers weepers'. However, there are others who argue, 'honesty is the best policy'. What would you do?

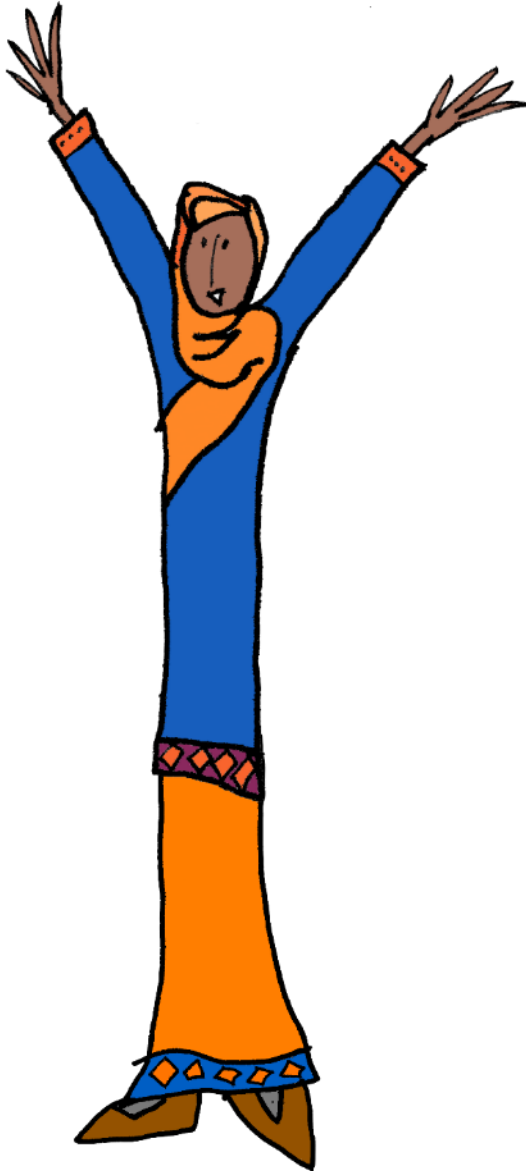
Many people, including Rahul, believe that taking property that doesn't belong to you is wrong. Firstly, they argue that if you didn't pay for it then it isn't yours. Furthermore, they advise that mislaid property should be returned to the owner - or even to the police. Finally, and most importantly, just think of the owners who have lost their precious property. How would you feel if that was you?

On the other hand, others believe that if you find something, you should keep it. Additionally, many state that it is impossible to return a lost item; you don't know who it belongs to. Joe Smith (aged 10 from Devon) gave us his opinion: "I found those jewels and possession is nine tenths of the law." Ultimately, it could be argued that it is the owner's fault for losing the item in the first place!

Having weighed up the points both for and against, it is clear missing objects should be returned to their rightful owners. Therefore, their mum made the right decision. If you were to lose a precious item, wouldn't you want it to be returned?

★ **Now have a go at writing a discussion either based on *Adventure at Sandy Cove* or, even better, the story that you have written.**

Activity 15: Performing your writing



Top tips for performing your writing:

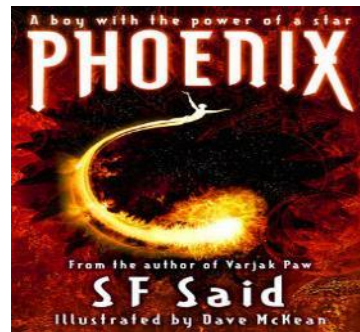
- a. **Know your writing really well so you can focus on the performance – practise a few times before you record it.**
- b. **As we are trying to create suspense in our writing, you could use some music or sounds to increase the tension! This could be footsteps, a drum, or anything else you think might make a creepy sound.**
- c. **Think about the tone of voice you are going to use on certain words or lines. Remember the threat level is different at different parts of the story so you can slow down your reading or speed it up when things get tense!**
- d. **If you have more than one character in your story, you could use different voices, like your teachers do in class, or convince a family member or school friend to help you out.**
- e. **Be confident and enjoy it! Try not to re-record yourself 1,000 times trying to make it perfect.**

Book recommendations

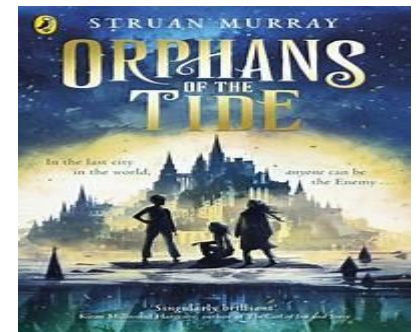
Below are some books that I would recommend for anyone in Years 5, 6 or 7 who likes an adventure story or one that has treasure in it.



Cogheart
by Peter Bunzl



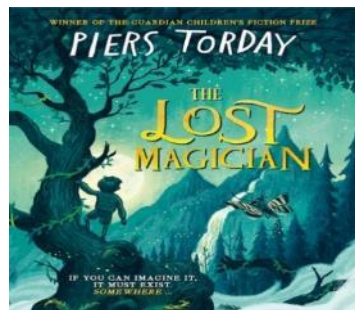
Phoenix
by S F Said



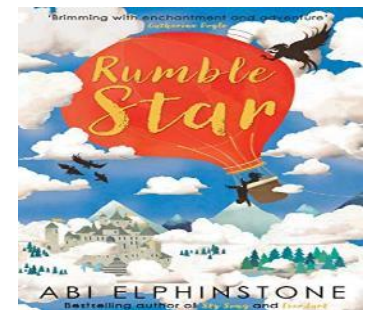
Orphans of the Tide
by Struan Murray



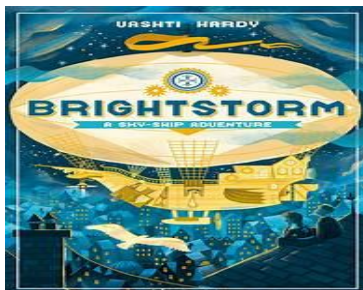
Mortal Engines
by Philip Reeve



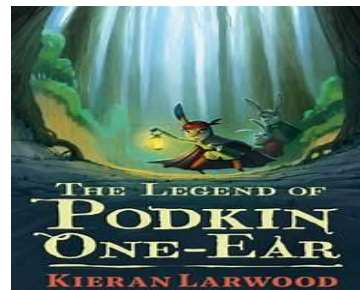
The Lost Magician
by Piers Torday



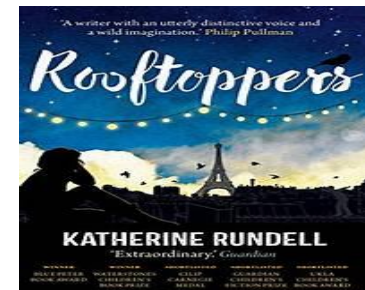
Rumblestar
by Abi Elphinstone



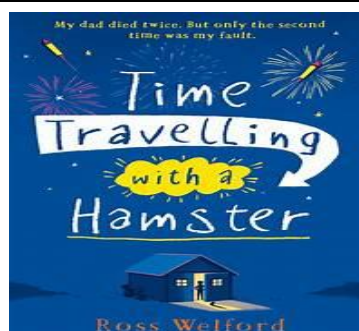
Brightstorm
by Vashti Hardy



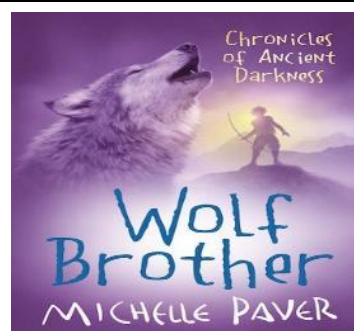
Podkin One-Ear
by Kieran Larwood



Rooftoppers
by Katherine Rundell



Time Travelling with a Hamster
by Ross Welford



Wolf Brother
by Michelle Paver



The Invention of Hugo Cabret
by Brian Selnick

I hope you have enjoyed working through this workbook. Please share any work produced by tweeting me @MrWalkerPrimary

James Walker is a Year 6 teacher from Bristol who also works as a trainer with Talk for Writing to help schools develop the approach.

**Edited and designed by Julia Strong
Prepared for online distribution by Nick Batty**

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Thanks to Jon Ralphs for the cartoons: jonralphs.com