

Night-Time Writing Journey: example teaching resources and ideas

With grateful thanks to Caroline Waters, The Wavell School, for images and examples drawn from pilot study.



Exploration of worked examples or exemplar texts

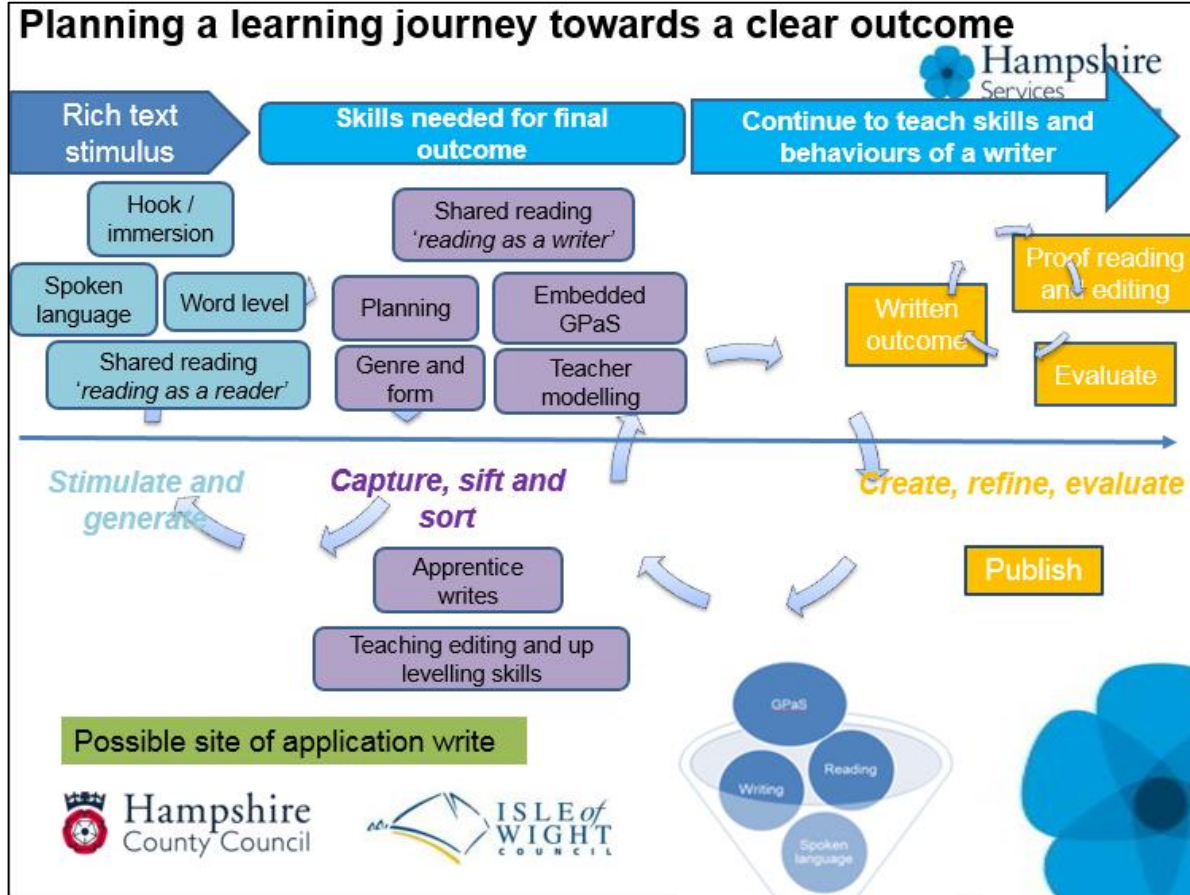
Direct instruction and modelling of writing

Deliberate practice of key elements

Dialogic talk – deep discussion around texts informed by study of literature texts

Vocabulary development

Generation of ideas



Focus on structure and planning – behaviours of a writer

Honing skills of editing and self-correction

Evaluation of own writing against purpose, audience and form

Application of prior learning in new context

Building knowledge of grammatical and literary features that can be transferred between texts and tasks

Stimulate and Generate phase

- Build in opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas and knowledge about the text/theme/topic
- Ensure that pupils have the knowledge and ‘cultural capital’ to engage with the text and the task
- Include plenty of oral work – dialogic talk, group activities,
- Word level work – vocabulary generation activities, savouring of language, playfulness



Symbolic interpretations of night and darkness

- Night-time as a cover that hides things
- Night-time as a dream space
- Night-time – restlessness and insomnia
- Night-time – nocturnal
- Night-time – wildness/excitement
- Night-time – fear, darkness and anxiety
- Night-time – beauty and romance



Exploring ideas about night-time – stimulating discussion





- VOCAB
- EMOTIONS
- VOCAB BANK TASK



Capture, Sift & Sort phase

- Explore the WAGOLL text, using the opportunities it provides to focus on key skills that need to be taught/reviewed in the unit.
- ‘Apprentice’ tasks support ongoing AFL
- Plan in a sequence of learning but not lesson by lesson. Allow time to adapt for the needs of the pupils in the class.
- The key learning is the same for all, but the route towards achieving it may need to differ for different pupils



The Night Circus

Erin Morganstern



Model comprehension – thinking aloud



The circus arrives without warning.

No announcements precede it, no paper notices on downtown posts and billboards, no mentions or advertisements in local newspapers. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not.

The towering tents are striped in white and black, no golds or crimsons to be seen. No colour at all, save for the neighbouring trees and the grass of the surrounding fields. Black-and-white stripes on grey sky; countless tents of varying shapes and sizes, with an elaborate wrought-iron fence encasing them in a colourless world. Even what little ground is visible from outside is black or white, painted or powdered, or treated with some other circus trick.

But it is not open for business. Not just yet.

Within hours everyone has heard about it. By afternoon the news has spread several towns over. Word of mouth is a more effective method of advertisement than type-set words and exclamation points on paper pamphlets or posters. It is impressive and unusual news, the sudden appearance of a mysterious circus. People marvel at the staggering height of the tallest tents. They stare at the clock that sits just inside the gates that one on can properly describe.

And the black sign painted in white letters that hangs upon the gates, the one that reads:

Opens at Nightfall

Closes at Dawn



Model noticing the shifts in your visualisation

For example:

- I am imagining a very odd, possibly menacing circus as it is black and white with ‘towering tents’ in a ‘colourless world’
- The picture in my mind then shifts to the crowds gathering
- The ‘You are among them’
- ‘First, there is a popping sound’ – the circus starts to come to life as the night falls



Model exploring the intended impact on the reader

- Overall this text seems to be building up anticipation from the moment the circus arrives to the moment the crowd are allowed to enter – it seems more and more intriguing as the writer draws out the suspense by making us wait.
- At first it seems quite detached and distant, as if you're just observing and describing from the outside – big picture description of the circus as a whole
- When it shifts and repositions the reader so that 'you are among them' the detail becomes quite sensory (temperature, smells, sounds) to emphasise the physical 'reality' of the scene
- The references to the changing light show how time is moving forward and the gathering dusk reminds me that the circus opens 'At nightfall' and that this is getting closer
- Etc



Boxing up

Details of section	Reference to light and dark	Intended effect on the reader



Sentence focus

*When the tents are all aglow, sparkling against the night sky, the sign **appears**. Stretched across the top of the gates, hidden in curls of iron, more firefly-like lights **flicker** to life.*



Killgallon's sentence imitation

Original sentence

When the tents are all aglow, sparkling against the night sky, the sign appears.

Creating a framework

When the blanks are blankety-blank, blanking against the blankety-blank, the blank blanks.

When the plinks are snorgly blort, fingling against the dingle mort, the sentire affleggs.

When the noun phrase are adjectival phrase, participle-ing against the noun phrase, the noun phrase verb



Create, Refine, Evaluate phase

- Planning
- Modelling
- Editing and refining
- Publication

Q5: A magazine has asked for contributions for their creative writing section.

Either

- Write a description of night-time as suggested by this picture
- or
- Write a story about night-time.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

[40 marks]

You are among Romeo's friends, preparing to gatecrash the Capulet party as night falls

Write the aftermath of Duncan's murder as dawn is slowly breaking



Using your mind-maps and vocabulary list etc, decide on your structure. ('Magpie' from everywhere!)

- Note: the Night Circus used a chronological structure, moving from light (daylight), to dark (evening), to light again (electric lights).

You could choose:

- Light to dark
- Dark to light
- Dark to light to dark (Or vice versa)
- cyclical



Focus on the DESIRED EFFECT on the reader – we are looking at anticipation- but anticipation of what?

Try to identify the emotional reactions you want from your reader by the end of your narrative/description and the emotional steps the reader needs to go through to get there.

Modelling planning – teacher's example

Desired effect	Reference to light/dark	Details
Lively, exciting, enjoyable – a place you want to be. Hub of activity. Warm and friendly. Noisy.	Evening/dusk. Bright shops –London Oxford Street. Lots of people	Sparkling, illumination, flicker, twilight, aglow, lots of colour, sun had disappeared completely; towering skyscrapers. Incandescent. Like ants (simile)
Quietens down – seems peaceful then shifts to threatening- dreary & surreptitious.	Lights gradually go out as people leave. Night settles. Empty, dark etc.	Dissipate, fading, disappears, empty, deserted
Loneliness and fear. Really quiet – too quiet.	Totally dark- shadowy. Cold and miserable.	Furtive, huddled, muffled, ghostly, void, groped, blurred, shroud.

Student example: student with grade 5 target – previously disengaged and underachieving at grade 3/4

YEAR 10

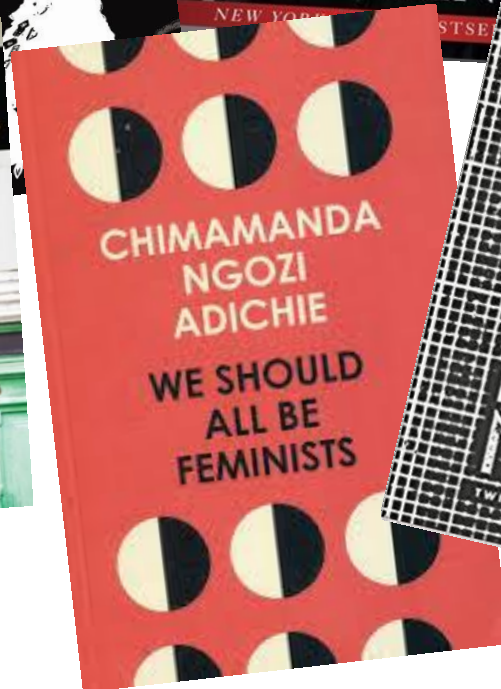
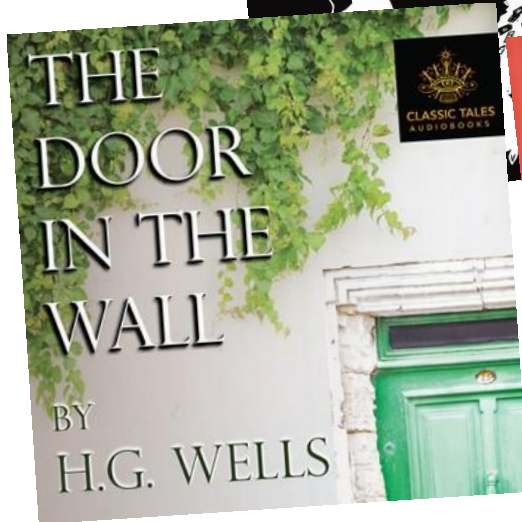
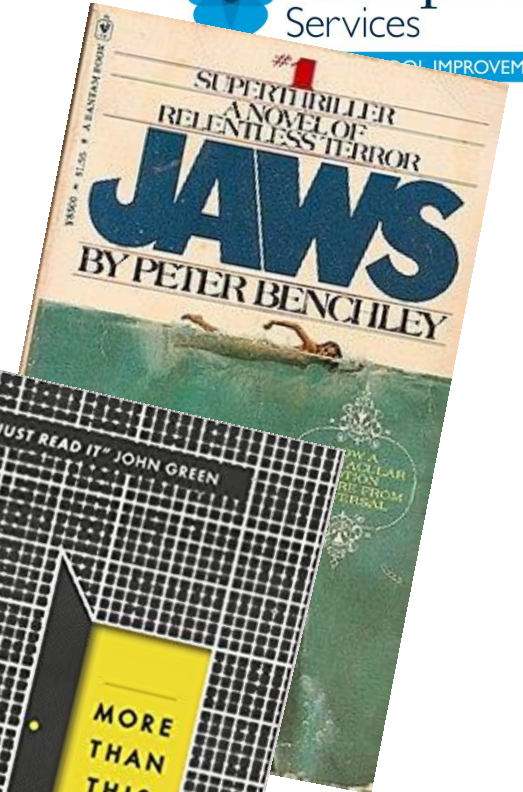
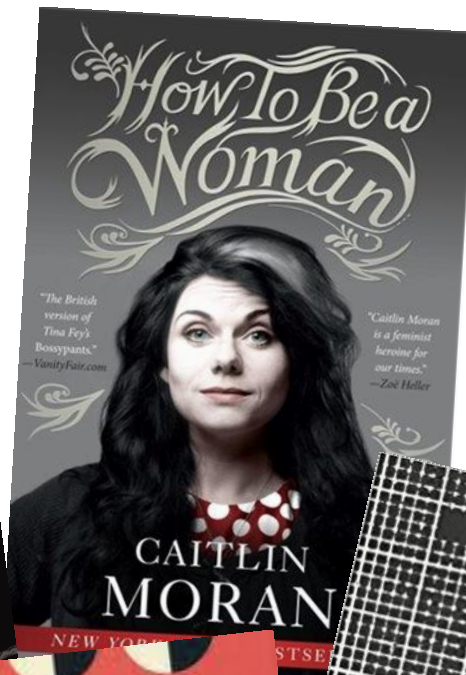
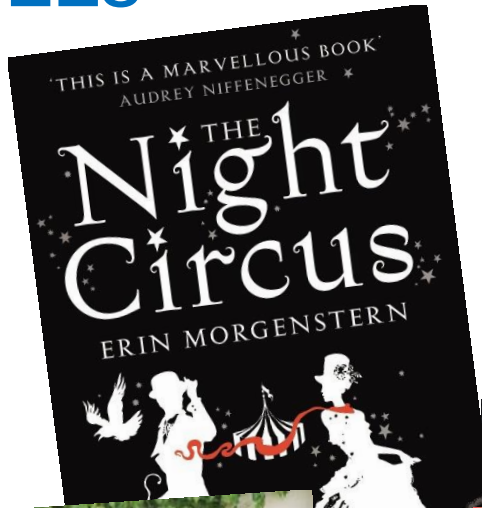
- The old man stood spectre still in the cold winters morning, alone. As the first presence of wind swept through his straw-like hair, he felt nothing. Hazel eyes with no definition. His tall ghost like outline was defined by his cheekbones, below them enormous voids of space. His beard sat long and felt like hooks of a porcupine. The dirt remained scattered across his facial structure. The bags that hang off his under eyelid remain heavy like boulders.

YEAR 11

- As the sun rose above the horizon, the dewy morning began. Alarm clocks awoke their customers and they rose from their slumber. The trees were all crisp from the subtle sweetness of the night before. The sun began to rise higher and higher, the blanket of mist which lay was taken away. All was happy, all was calm. The sun illuminated more, revealing the shadows which lay below. The sun's rays radiated across the early morning landscape of the town.



WAGOLLS



Identity, self and choices

- Links to *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Lord of the Flies*, *An Inspector Calls*, *A Christmas Carol*
- Caitlin Moran – *How to be a Woman*
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – *We Should All Be Feminists*
- Focus on structural features at paragraph level:
 - Extended metaphor to develop and link ideas
 - ‘Jigsaw words’ to link sentences
 - Introduce, explain, expand

To be yourself
in a world that is
constantly trying to
make you something
else is the greatest
accomplishment.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Doors and thresholds

- Links to *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Macbeth*, *An Inspector Calls*
- HG Wells *The Door in the Wall*
- Focus on structural features at whole text level:
 - Symbolism of objects – doorways and crossing points
 - Framing devices
 - Segues into flashback
 - Management of verb tenses



Fear and helplessness

- Links to *Lord of the Flies*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Much Ado About Nothing*
- Peter Benchley – *Jaws*
- Patrick Ness – *More than This*
- *The Impossible* (2012)
- Focus on structural features at whole text level:
 - Split perspectives – alternating paragraphs
 - Shaping of paragraphs for effect
 - Positioning of the reader
 - Intensification of verbs



Outcomes

- Awareness of the writer's craft
- Manageable integration of high-quality writing teaching at KS4 – going beyond exam practice
- Deepening understanding of literary texts at thematic level – improved literary analysis
- Greatly improved outcomes on English Language reading questions (structure particularly)
- Significant improvement in writing outcomes – transferable between tasks and texts

