Danger!

The Impossible directed by J Bayona (2012)

KS4 example writing journey

Structure, cohesion and sentence structure

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Overview

In this document

This short *writing journey* is intended for use at Key Stage 4, although it can profitably be adapted for Key Stage 3.

At KS4, planning for writing can be limited due to pressure on curriculum time and students' main regular experience of writing can be through exam-style task practice. The units in this series of writing journey planning for KS4 are intended to support improvements in students' writing through explicit teaching and the use of rich textual extracts as both stimulus for ideas and models for writing.

The focus for this series of KS4 writing journeys is on structural and cohesive features of texts and the adaptation of sentence structures for effect. These elements have been identified as being key to success in writing at GCSE, as well as being noted areas for improvement for many students.

Each of the KS4 writing journeys planned has a loose thematic link to the majority of the key texts specified for GCSE English Literature, meaning that these units can be integrated into planning linked to a literature text, either at a key moment in the text or once study has been completed. They can also be used as a bridging unit between two or more literature texts or adapted as stand-alone units in preparation for narrative/descriptive writing at GCSE.

In this writing journey, the stimulus text is the sequence from the film, *The Impossible*, directed by J Bayona (2012), and the exemplar texts explored during the *Capture, Sift and Sort* phase are the extract from *Jaws* by Peter Benchley (Bantam, 1974) where Alex Kitner (the boy on the lilo) is killed and the prologue from *More Than This* by Patrick Ness (Candlewick Press, 2013). These extracts are freely available online. Both texts are characterised by a focus on action and suspense; in both texts, the lead character is killed.

Points to consider when using this resource

Teachers must adapt example plans to reflect AfL, prior learning, national curriculum requirements and the needs of individuals.

It is important that students have the opportunity to apply the learning from these writing journeys to other, more independent writing tasks, including those completed under examination conditions.

Main Outcome

This writing journey is intended to lead to a stand-alone outcome in the first instance.

- Write a narrative inspired by the excerpt from the film, *The Impossible.*

Students should be encouraged to explore different viewpoints or experiences of known moments in the film.

Key features of writing expected as an element of the final written outcome:

- alternating paragraphs that switch between focus on the main character and focus on the danger
- use of 'jigsaw words' to link paragraphs and build cohesion
- use of single sentence paragraphs
- use of ambitious sentence structures, including the use of multiple verbs with a single subject, imitated from the exemplar texts

Once students have written their stories inspired by *The Impossible,* further opportunities could be created for them to apply the stylistic and structural features in another piece of writing inspired by a moment in one of their literature texts where a character is caught up in frightening events beyond their control. Equally, pupils could be asked to write a second narrative inspired by an image or with a supplied opening or end line.

Examples of potential writing tasks:

- The plane crash before the beginning of *Lord of the Flies*
- The build up to the fight scene or the fight itself (Act 3 Scene 1, *Romeo and Juliet*) from Benvolio's point of view
- Hero's experience of the aborted wedding at Act 4 Scene 1, *Much Ado About Nothing*
- etc.

Summary

Stimulate and Generate	Capture, Sift and Sort	Create, Refine, Evaluate
Explore ideas about positioning of the audience/reader **Build knowledge to inform writing** During this phase, students explore the ways the director of *The Impossible* manipulates the audience's reactions during the sequence building up to the tsunami striking the resort. Students build their vocabulary and their knowledge of the processes of tsunami formation in order to be able to write about this effectively later in the sequence.	**Explore structural and cohesive features of the texts** One distinctive element of these learning journeys is the use of a literary extract as an exemplar of expectations, or WAGOLL (*what a good one looks like*). This creates the opportunity to use the exemplar text deliberately practise comprehension strategies for unseen texts such as visualisation, prediction, summarising and questioning, as appropriate for the students in the class. If students are not familiar with these strategies, these could be modelled by the teacher using the *think aloud* approach. In this writing journey, there are two extracts used as WAGOLLs. Students explore the structural and cohesive features of the texts and use sentence imitation strategies to mimic the writer's style.	**Plan and write a story inspired by *The Impossible* using structural features of the texts explored** In the final phase, students use structural and grammatical elements from the style of the extract studied to shape their own writing. Time is spent planning and drafting in order to create a polished final written outcome. Students evaluate their writing, focusing on the impact of the structural features used to create a feeling of breathless helplessness and events out of control.

Stimulate and Generate Phase

Explore how the director shapes the audience's reactions in the opening of *The Impossible*

Show the beginning of the film 'The Impossible' (dir. J Bayona, 2012) to the end of the wave – students can watch the rest of the film as homework if preferred. Discuss how character is established quickly and the way the director shapes the audience's reactions. Organise discussion through jigsaw groups*: students focus on different aspects (e.g. character focus, focus on sensory details at scene by the pool, editing and structure of the scene, manipulation of audience reactions, perspective shifts etc) supported by images from the early part of the film or tiny texts of quotations from characters. Once students in each focus group have established their ideas, return to home group to feed back; home group then discusses and feeds back their answer to the key question, and these answers are discussed in class.

Identify, select, summarise and synthesise information from a range of different sources

Students use skills of skimming, scanning, note-making and synthesis to research the causes of tsunamis (including the scientific vocabulary to describe these causes). As appropriate for the class, teacher models strategies for selection and organisation of information, eg metacognition around comprehension strategies, exploring key vocabulary through knowledge of roots of scientific words, making notes using different graphic organisers – this element of teaching will need to be adapted based on the teacher's knowledge of the class and is an opportunity to assess students' reading comprehension in action.

Students are supplied with resources for research and capture of information, eg: range of graphic organisers (www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer) for students to choose from to manage their notes; range of information texts and images around the room or in packs for students; explanatory video clips and eyewitness footage of tsunamis; personal accounts of the experiences of those caught up in tsunamis.

Students collate notes in their chosen format(s) and create a glossary of vocabulary to describe a tsunami. Check students' knowledge of the formation of tsunamis and command of key vocabulary – e.g. 'Jeopardy' style quiz, multiple choice test, quizlet, task magic etc. – teacher choice of format

Generate precise descriptive vocabulary

Using a range of images of water in different contexts and 'moods' to stimulate discussion and vocabulary generation, students work in pairs to build vocabulary. As directed by the teacher, students use a variety of vocabulary generation activities linked to these images: use of dictionary and thesaurus; zone of relevance with supplied vocabulary; shades of meaning; collation of vocabulary from sources supplied for previous activity.

*Jigsaw groups – see HIAS resource *Why Do Group Work?* for explanation of the organisation of jigsaw groups. This resource is available from the *Open Resources* area of the HIAS English moodle in the *Secondary* section under *Spoken Language.*

Capture, Sift and Sort Phase

Explain to pupils that they will be using the extracts from *Jaws* and *More Than This* as WAGOLLs, and that they will be expected to *magpie* elements from both to use in their own writing inspired by *The Impossible.*

==Analyse the effects of the writer's structural choices – alternating perspectives and cohesive devices==

Model the process of comprehension of the extract from *Jaws*: model 'thinking aloud' and annotating with doodles to track visualisation using the first two paragraphs. Students finish reading the text, annotating for meaning; this can be done collaboratively in pairs or independently, depending on students' confidence with the approach. (If students are already secure in this process, modelling may not be required but students should always be encouraged to practise and develop their comprehension strategies with any text supplied.)

Model noticing the shifts in perspective between each paragraph and responding to the mood of each paragraph; discuss the intentions of the writer in positioning the reader in this way. Note the use of 'jigsaw words' cohesive feature (words repeated or reflected/contrasted between the last sentence of one paragraph and the first sentence of the next) and comment on effect.

Students annotate the text for structural features or 'box up' the structure, noting the shifts in perspective, cohesive features and tracking the impact on the reader of each paragraph shift, focusing on how tension is built in the alternation of perspectives as the unsuspecting boy and the shark come closer together. Discuss how the perspectives combine in single paragraphs and the increasing frequency of the 'jigsaw words' as the action sequence reaches its climax.

==Explore the impact of the writer's choices of language and their links to the structure of the text==

Ask students to explore the choices of verbs (including participles) and consider their impact and increasing intensity. This can either be a straightforward instruction to look at the text with this as a focus or can be scaffolded through the use of a vocabulary activity such as bag of words where all the verbs are collected – get students to put away their copies of the text and then to sort the collated verbs, linking them to boy and shark and putting them into sequence for the narrative or plotting them on a tension graph. (If preferred, this activity *could* be used pre-reading as a predictive task.)

NB: This could be an opportunity to practise answering a GCSE structure/language and structure question if desired.

==Experiment with features of cohesion between paragraphs==

Working from a section of an exemplar plan for a narrative inspired by the opening sequence of *The Impossible*, model drafting cohesive sentences using 'jigsaw words' between last sentence of first paragraph and first sentence of the next. Students then generate at least one pair of sentences (from any point in the narrative sequence)

using 'jigsaw words' and jot down ideas for other jigsaw words that could be used to link paragraphs elsewhere in the sequence.

Build metacognition around strategies for comprehending and exploring unseen texts

Read the extract from *More Than This.* As directed by the teacher, students apply skills and strategies developed through the exploration of the extract from *Jaws* ('thinking aloud', annotation with doodles for visualisation, noting of perspective shifts and effect on the reader, boxing up the structure of the text, noting the intensity of language choices etc. The focus should always be on linking the writers' methods to the reader's response.

Support students to build their metacognition by recapping the options for approaches and getting the students to practise their choice of strategies with this text. As appropriate, model or share the reading and annotation of a section of the text if needed by the class; work with a guided group of students needing additional support to secure the strategies and build their awareness of these approaches.

Explore the impact of a writer's choice of sentence structures on the reader

Highlight the following sentences for the students:
- They spin him round, topple him over, force him deeper down and down.
- It isn't enough, grows less each time, and he feels a terrible yearning in his chest as he aches, fruitlessly, for more.
- He forces his legs to kick, forces his arms to heave himself upward, to at least get his body the right way round, to try and grasp another breath just inches away –
- He is unable to even try and swim now, unable to brace himself as the waves turn him over once more.

Model identifying the subject of the first sentence and then the multiple verbs linked to that subject; note the openings to clauses and discuss the intended impact of the sentence as a whole on the reader. Ask students to annotate the other sentences and describe what they have in common. How does Ness's use of these sentence structures create a feeling of breathless helplessness and movement? Draw attention to the contrast between these and the stark use of simple sentences and deliberately incomplete sentences used in the narrative. Discuss how these sentence structures might be used in students' own writing inspired by *The Impossible.*

Use a range of clause/phrase structures for deliberate effect on the reader

Use Killgallon's sentence imitation and sentence expanding strategies to craft sentences. Model this through use of key sentences from both *Jaws* and *More Than This.* Show students how to create sentence frameworks for themselves using the extracts. Students then use these strategies to create sentences appropriate for the beginning, build up and climax of their *Impossible* narratives.

Create, Refine, Evaluate Phase

==Experiment with imitation of key elements of writers' styles, creating a distinctive narrative voice by piecing together elements from different writers==

Re-watch opening scene from *The Impossible.* Students map out a planned structure for a narrative based on this sequence, using a graphic organiser such as boxing up or other preferred planning format. Consider where to mimic structural features from both extracts, eg identifying how the perspective of the hazard (the wave) might be used in alternation with the perspective of one (or more) characters; planning where a sequence of single sentence paragraphs might be used to allow a key moment of horror or realisation to sink in; noting intended impact on the reader and potential verbs to be used at key moments.

==Craft writing for impact on the reader, building tension and manipulating the reader's responses==

Students write their narrative sequence, crafting their work carefully and deliberately mimicking sentence structures and structural/cohesive features from both texts, as needed.

==Propose changes to enhance effects==

Use editing strategies appropriate for the experience of the pupils in self- and peer-assessment and editing of work. Options include:

- Proof-reading and self-correction or peer-correction
- Modelled/shared editing of prepared example
- Editing stations
- Explaining own work to a partner
- Gallery critique
- Prompted feedback using success criteria and other prompt questions or talk stems

Editing should not only focus on secretarial editing but should ensure that pupils have incorporated the key learning in their writing and – importantly – that it is coherent, believable and fluent.

==Capture and celebrate pupils' successes==

There are also opportunities to link a further written outcome to literature texts where an action sequence narrative would be appropriate and would deepen students' understanding of events and character eg:

- The plane crash from Lord of the Flies
- Macbeth's murder of Duncan or the climactic battle with Macduff
- Any of the fight sequences from Romeo and Juliet
- etc

HIAS English Glossary of Terms

Apprentice Write – a short writing opportunity to apply a new skill/s with a clear objective e.g. a 'give-it-go' sentences or paragraph of a grammar technique, should always be within the context of the unit.

Book Talk – A grid for pupils to record their likes/ dislikes/ connections/ puzzles following the reading of a text.

Modelled Writing – Adult thinks through the writing process out loud, modelling the thought process of a writer/ talking as a writer. Focus on clear objective.

Show Me, Don't Tell Me (show not tell) – Ask the children to create inference opportunities through their writing for their reader e.g. describe how a character is selfish through actions / dialogue / description without using the word selfish.

Story Map – A technique for planning writing, where children draw the key moments/events in the story as well as key words on a pathway/line.

Story Walk – In pairs, children guide each other through a familiar story, using images and key words from the text as a prompt, this can be laid out in a large space so that children physically walk through the story, retelling it aloud.

Talk to the Hand – Children use 6 question stems (*who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why* and *how*) to ask questions about a story, setting or character.

Read Aloud, Think Aloud –As the pupils read a new text, write/label/draw any questions or thoughts they are having as they read related to the objective given

Role on the wall – Using an outline of a human, children gather evidence on a focus character. Outside of the character focuses on their physical appearance, and inside the character is what can be inferred.

Shades of Meaning – children order vocabulary in degrees of intensity

Site of Application Write – an opportunity to apply previously taught genre / form in a new context

Talk Partners/Talking Triads – Partners/ group of 3, with whom ideas/ opinions are shared before feeding back to the class.

Teacher-in-Role – Teacher takes on the role of a character from the text / context.

Teacher as Scribe/ Shared Writing – Pupils participate with the teacher as editor and scribe, focused clearly on the objective.

WAGOLL (What A Good One Looks Like) – a model text that exemplifies the objectives being taught

Working Wall – An ongoing, interactive display inside the classroom, where the process of writing is demonstrated through the addition of examples of writing and visuals.

Writing-in-Role – from a viewpoint of a character in the story / non-fiction scenario.

Zones of Relevance – Students are given a selection of words that describe a setting or character. Depending on the relevance of the word to the context, it is placed in the centre of concentric circles, on the outside, or in-between. Students should justify their decisions.

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