7 Using and developing dialogue

Learning objectives

- To consider how you can use dialogue as a device in writing
- To develop planning skills in writing

The next few activities will build towards planning a narrative scene which develops using dialogue. You will then use your plan to help you write a scene containing dialogue.

The plan

Activity 1

Imagine you are involved in an argument with a friend or family member. It can be as simple or complex as you choose to make it. Decide who will be involved and what you will be arguing about. Write this down.

Activity 2

Using a spider diagram, write down as many words as you can to describe the kinds of emotions the people involved in the argument might be feeling.

Activity 3

You know the sorts of things you say and the way in which you might say them. You have also probably listened to the person involved in the argument many times during your life and are familiar with the kinds of phrases they might use. Make a list of any words or phrases that you might expect to hear in an argument, for example, a parent might use your full name in an argument – 'Stephen James Watson!' – whereas a friend might use the nickname 'Stevie'.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions.

1. How will the argument begin?
2. What are the viewpoints of the people involved in the argument?
3. Will someone win the argument or will it reach a stalemate?
4. How will the argument end?

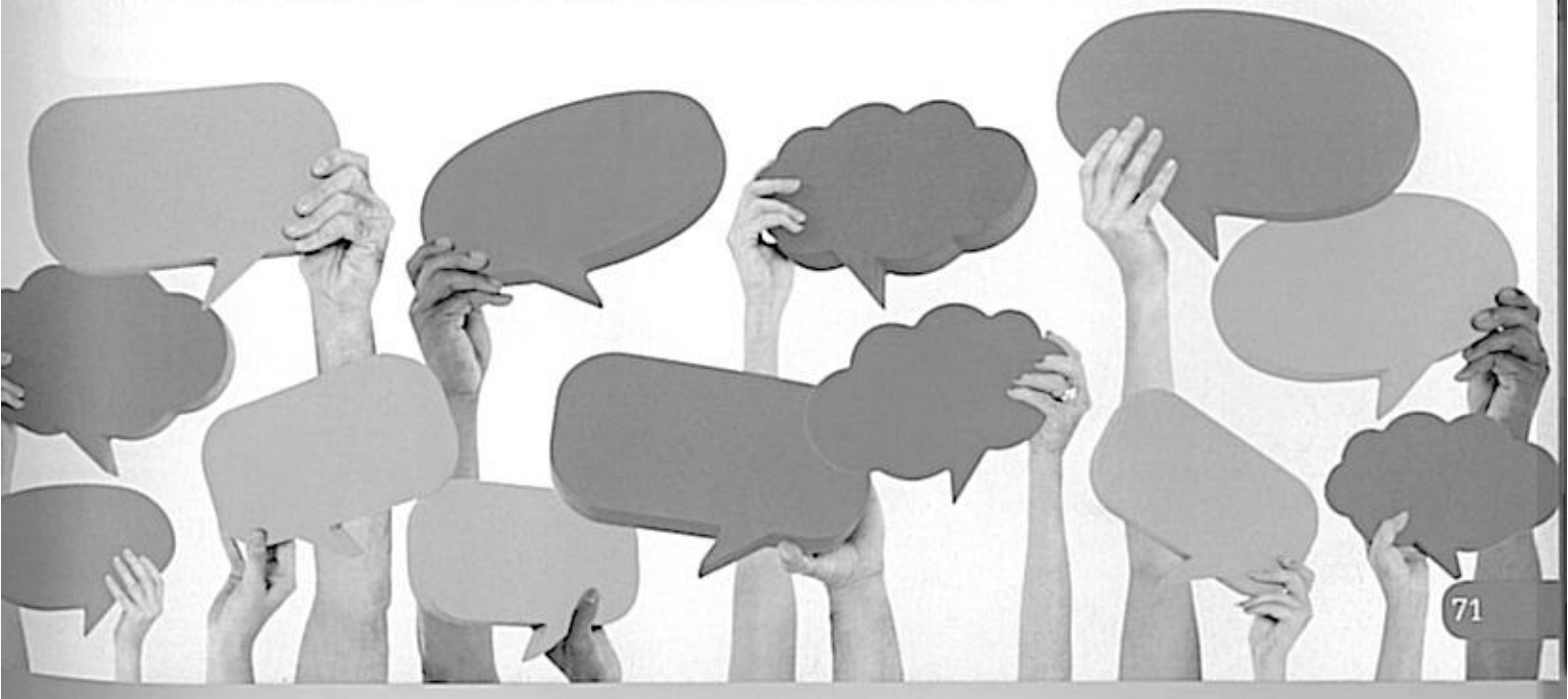
Activity 5

You have enough information now to help you begin. Write a short dialogue in which two or more characters are having an argument. This is not supposed to be a complete story; you don't need to set the argument in context or demonstrate what happens next – you are only concerned with the scene of the argument.

Progress check

Exchange your piece of writing with someone else's. You are going to check each other's work and see if you can improve it. Make notes on the following:

1. Is what happens clear? Could this be improved upon?
2. Do you get enough detail about the speakers and their emotions? If not, what else would you want to know? Could more specific vocabulary have been used?
3. Is the speech realistic? How could it be made more so?
4. Does the writer use opportunities to 'show' the reader what is happening rather than telling them? Can you suggest how this could be improved?
5. Does the argument end convincingly?
6. Is the speech written accurately? Check the layout and punctuation, and mark any errors.
7. Now look at your own work and the suggestions that have been made. Redraft your work in light of the feedback you have received.



9 Identifying tension

Learning objective

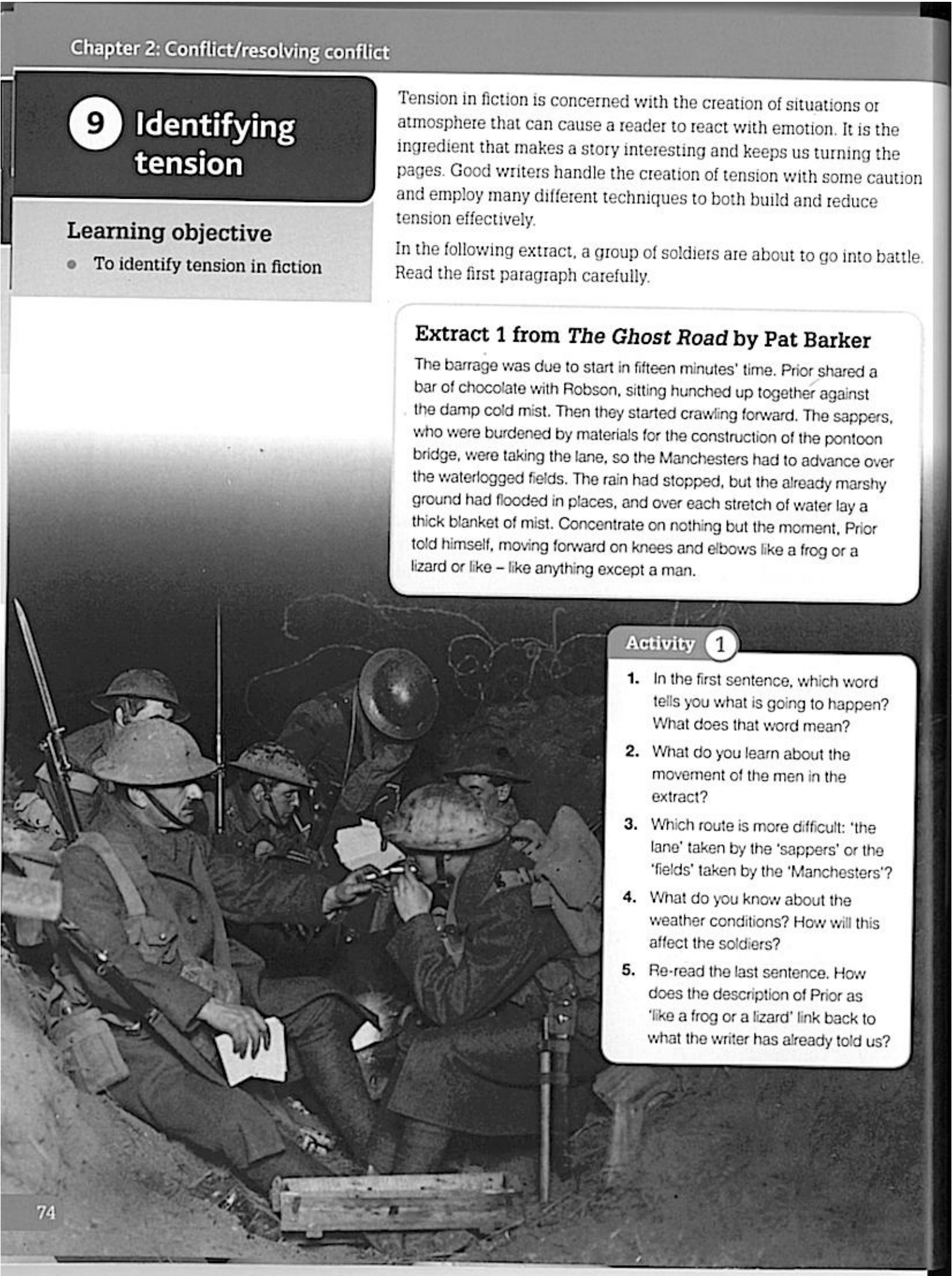
- To identify tension in fiction

Tension in fiction is concerned with the creation of situations or atmosphere that can cause a reader to react with emotion. It is the ingredient that makes a story interesting and keeps us turning the pages. Good writers handle the creation of tension with some caution and employ many different techniques to both build and reduce tension effectively.

In the following extract, a group of soldiers are about to go into battle. Read the first paragraph carefully.

Extract 1 from *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker

The barrage was due to start in fifteen minutes' time. Prior shared a bar of chocolate with Robson, sitting hunched up together against the damp cold mist. Then they started crawling forward. The sappers, who were burdened by materials for the construction of the pontoon bridge, were taking the lane, so the Manchesters had to advance over the waterlogged fields. The rain had stopped, but the already marshy ground had flooded in places, and over each stretch of water lay a thick blanket of mist. Concentrate on nothing but the moment, Prior told himself, moving forward on knees and elbows like a frog or a lizard or like – like anything except a man.



Activity 1

1. In the first sentence, which word tells you what is going to happen? What does that word mean?
2. What do you learn about the movement of the men in the extract?
3. Which route is more difficult: 'the lane' taken by the 'sappers' or the 'fields' taken by the 'Manchesters'?
4. What do you know about the weather conditions? How will this affect the soldiers?
5. Re-read the last sentence. How does the description of Prior as 'like a frog or a lizard' link back to what the writer has already told us?

Now read the second extract.

Extract 2 from *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker

There is to be no retirement under any circumstances. That was the order. They have us tied to the stake, we cannot fly, but bear-like we must fight the course. The men were silent, staring straight ahead into the mist. Talk, even in whispers, was forbidden. Prior looked at his watch, licked dry lips, watched the second hand crawl to the quarter hour. All around him was a tension of held breath. 5.43. Two more minutes. He crouched further down, whistle clenched between his teeth.

Prompt as ever, hell erupted. Shells whined over, flashes of light, plumes of water from the drainage ditches, tons of mud and earth flung into the air. A shell fell short. The ground shook beneath them and a shower of pebbles and clods of earth peppered their steel helmets.

Activity 2

Rewrite the second paragraph of Extract 2 in the **first person** as if you were there and experiencing what was taking place. Read the support box below to remind yourself of what to consider in your writing.

SPAG

Support

To write in the first person you need to show what your thoughts and feelings would be. In a scene such as this you might also pay attention to your **senses** and how they are affected by what is happening.

Key terms

First person (*I/we*): using first-person narrative allows you to tell a story from the perspective of a character in the text. In non-fiction texts it can be seen as a biased view because it only tells one side of the story

Senses: the ability to see, hear, touch, taste or smell

Assessment

Reading and understanding

Learning objectives

- To practise identifying and interpreting implicit and explicit ideas
- To begin to explain how writers use language and structure to influence

Introduction

During this chapter you have learned and practised a number of techniques that will help you investigate and explore a text. The following extract and questions will help you to put some of these into practice.

Read the following extract about a young foster girl called Liesel, living outside Munich in Nazi Germany.

Extract from *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

When school broke up briefly for *Weihnachten*, Liesel even afforded Sister Maria a 'merry Christmas' before going on her way. Knowing that the Hubermanns were essentially broke, still paying off debts and paying rent quicker than the money could come in, she was not expecting a gift of any sort. Perhaps only some better food. To her surprise, on Christmas Eve, after sitting in church at midnight with Mama, Papa, Hans Junior and Trudy, she came home to find something wrapped in newspaper under the Christmas tree.

'From Saint Niklaus,' Papa said, but the girl was not fooled. She hugged both her foster parents, with snow still laid across her shoulders.

Unfurling the paper, she unwrapped two small books. The first one, *Faust the Dog*, was written by a man named Mattheus Ottleberg. All told, she would read that book thirteen times. On Christmas Eve, she read the first twenty pages at the kitchen table while Papa and Hans Junior argued about a thing she did not understand. Something called politics.

Later, they read some more in bed, adhering to the tradition of circling the words she didn't know and writing them down. *Faust the Dog* also had pictures – lovely curves and ears and caricatures of a German Shepherd with an obscene drooling problem and the ability to talk.

The second book was called *The Lighthouse* and was written by a woman, Ingrid Rippinstein. That particular book was a little longer, so Liesel was able to get through it only nine times, her pace increasing ever so slightly by the end of such prolific readings.

It was a few days after Christmas that she asked a question regarding the books. They were eating in the kitchen. Looking at the spoonfuls of pea soup entering Mama's mouth, she decided to shift her focus to Papa. 'There's something I need to ask.'

At first, there was nothing.

'And?'

It was Mama, her mouth still half full.

'I just wanted to know how you found the money to buy my books.'

A short grin was smiled into Papa's spoon. 'You really want to know?'

'Of course.'

From his pocket, Papa took what was left of his tobacco ration and began rolling a cigarette, at which Liesel became impatient.

'Are you going to tell me or not?'

Papa laughed. 'But I *am* telling you, child.' He completed the production of one cigarette, flipped it on the table, and began on another. 'Just like this.'

That was when Mama finished her soup with a clank, suppressed a cardboard burp, and answered for him. 'That *Saukerl*,' she said. 'You know what he did? He rolled up all of his filthy cigarettes, went to the market when it was in town, and traded them with some gypsy.'

'Eight cigarettes per book.' Papa shoved one to his mouth, in triumph. He lit up and took in the smoke. 'Praise the Lord for cigarettes, huh, Mama?'

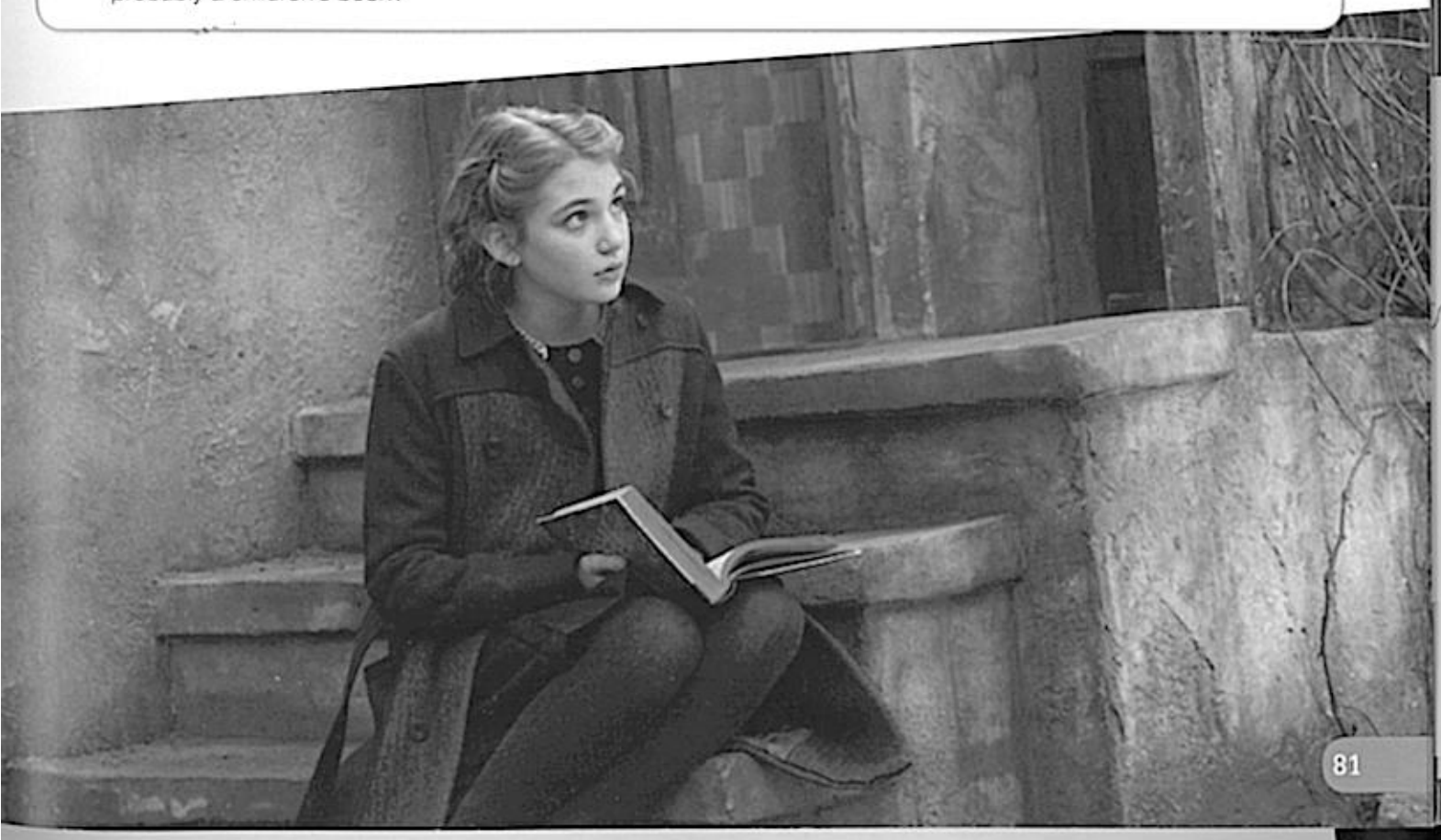
Mama only handed him one of her trademark looks of disgust, followed by the most common ration of her vocabulary. '*Saukerl*.'

Liesel swapped a customary wink with her papa and finished eating her soup. As always, one of her books was next to her. She could not deny that the answer to her question had been more than satisfactory. There were not many people who could say that their education had been paid for with cigarettes.

Activity 1

Answer the following questions. Try to make sure your answers are clear, and detailed where they need to be. Make sure you use evidence from the text to support what you say.

1. Reading it in context, what do you think the word *Weihnachten* means?
2. Can you find any clues to suggest what sort of school Liesel goes to?
3. In the first paragraph, what do you find out about the Hubermann family?
4. What did Papa and Hans Junior argue about?
5. How does the writer show us that *Faust the Dog* is probably a children's book?
6. How do you think the introduction of dialogue helps to develop the story?
7. How do Papa's answers add tension to the story?
8. What impressions do you get of Papa throughout the extract?
9. You might not know what *Saukerl* means, but how do you think Mama uses this word?
10. What are your thoughts and feelings about how Papa managed to obtain the books for Liesel?
11. How do you think Liesel and her papa feel at the end of this exchange? Write about each character separately.



Assessment

Planning to write

Learning objective

- To think about the content of a story and plan how it will unfold

Introduction

A class was set a story-writing assignment to respond to the task 'The Argument'. Below is one student's opening paragraph. It has been annotated to show you some areas that could be improved on.

A drift of white clouds was floating in sky. The rays of bright sun light were dazzling the not yet sun-kissed skin of pedestrians. I kneeled on the brown parquet floor restly, looking frighteningly at the remains of my mum's favourite photo frame. I could still make out the gemstone hearts amongst the bits of glass.

'Oooh! No! That's Mum's favourite frame gone. She's gonna kill me.' I groaned to myself. My brain began to spin frantically, trying to figure out what to do next. I could tell her the truth and hope that in her great merciful mood, she would forgive me. Or I could blame my younger brother, though he's never a suspect when anything goes wrong.

What does this have to do with the story? It's not relevant and sounds like something rehearsed that has been put in because the writer is determined to use it.

Neither word is used accurately. What meaning was the writer intending with 'restly'? Would someone be kneeling with 'rest' if they had just broken their mum's favourite photo frame?

Is this the perfect moment to introduce a bit of character detail on a younger brother who may become a key player shortly?

Show us, don't tell us!

Use this opportunity to show the character's despair. What is he or she doing?

Activity 1

Using the suggestions above and your own ideas, rewrite and improve these opening paragraphs.

Activity 2

Write a detailed plan explaining how you would develop this story. Opposite is a sample plan to give you an idea of what another student wrote for this story.

Support

- Aim to write around a side of A4.
- Think about what characters will be involved in your story. Think about the ending of your story. What would take place in order to get to that ending?
- Split your plan into sections.

Title: The Argument

Characters: Me, brother Jacob and a cross old lady

What happens:

- I break Mum's favourite photo frame.
- Jacob comes in, sees what has happened and tries to run off to tell Mum.
- I stop him and persuade him to help me shop for a replacement.
- I clear up the debris and we head into town.
- We eventually find an identical frame.
- As we check we've got enough money an old lady tries to buy it.
- We argue about who it belongs to.
- Jacob bursts into tears and the old lady takes pity on us.

Where story takes place:

Our lounge, full of mum's treasured things

Bus – detail on the length of bus journey, passing too many housing estates, panic of not going to get to town before shops shut

Department store – detail of looking at store plan, add pace by running up escalators. Some description of finding right floor and the search through shelves of frames – glass, silver, wood

Ending:

Get home, get frame into place before Mum any the wiser. Just sit down in relief, realize she has been sitting in the room watching us!

Character detail needed:

Me
- quite feisty/argumentative
- good with a plan
- clumsy
- in a world of my own

Jacob
- a bit wet but does well in a crisis
- goody two shoes, tells me off before agreeing to help
- typical brother, needs bribing to stop him telling in first place

Old lady
- quite grumpy
- makes lots of comments on 'youth of today'
- pinched mouth and eyes
- quite shrunken in height
- softens at end

Exploring change

Learning objectives

- To consider why change is often an interesting topic for writers
- To explore the ideas of perspective and context, and how they affect our reading of a text

Introduction

There's no denying that life can be pretty fast-paced sometimes, and changes can happen to us without us even noticing. The people who often notice us changing are those who we don't see for a period of time. Writers are interested in how these changes happen too. They can use their characters or settings to explore what happens when things change.

Activity 1

Discuss with a partner anything that has happened recently and changed you. It might be something positive like passing a test or your team winning a really important game. It might be something which made you feel sad, like finding out that something you had been looking forward to was now not going to happen. It could be something where you had mixed emotions, like moving house. What emotions might we feel when things change?

Stretch

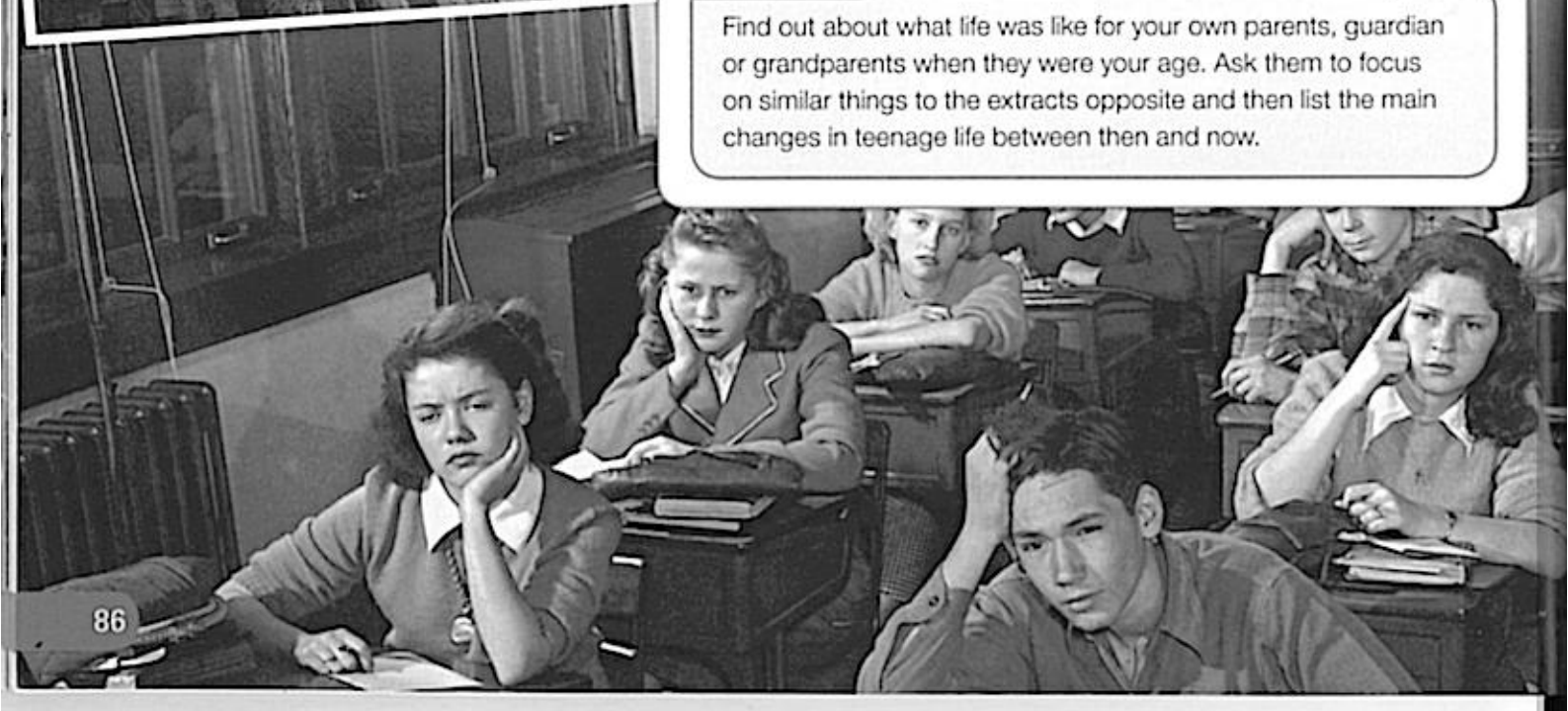
Look back at the quotations on page 84 which introduce this section. Two of them comment on pain. Why do you think pain is often an emotion associated with change?

Activity 2

The two extracts on page 87 give views about what it was like to be 15 in 1960. In what ways are these experiences of teenage life similar to and different from yours?

Stretch

Find out about what life was like for your own parents, guardian or grandparents when they were your age. Ask them to focus on similar things to the extracts opposite and then list the main changes in teenage life between then and now.



Extract 1

Having left a sheltered school environment one month earlier, and facing up to a real adult world, I accepted the first job I was offered, which I regretted. Not having passed any exams, I decided to attend college. My evenings were spent studying: I went to college three evenings per week, taking lessons in shorthand, typing and English (O Level), and had one extra shorthand lesson. I attended church on Sundays, visited grandparents and did homework. Occasional cinema visits and cycling with friends filled some time at weekends. I didn't have much money as I was on a low wage. What I did have I put towards clothing and shoes. Being a teenager I felt lonely at times – not an adult – not a child. It was hard work with a job and college. I was always wanting something better!

Extract 2

Aged 15, I was still travelling 9 miles on the bus to the grammar school, so I was up fairly early in the morning and home later than some. My family were fairly poor so I didn't live a lavish lifestyle. In the evenings, I did my school homework and watched some TV at an aunt and uncle's house as we didn't own one! I played tennis and football on the local Miner's Welfare facilities at weekends, went cycling and coarse fishing in the local canal. My Saturday job doing a baker's round meant I worked from early morning to evening. I spent my money on model railway sets, AIRFIX kits and model gliders. I had a few really good local friends so time passed quite quickly.

It is important to think about who you are and what you value when you read a text. The words of a text don't change according to who reads it, but a reader might see different meanings according to their own **values** or mood. For example, being religious might make you see references to God or heaven which another reader might not notice; being in a good mood might make you see the positive things in a text.

In Activity 2, you were looking at the world from the **perspective** or viewpoint of another person. Throughout this chapter you will read texts which have been written in a different time. **Contextual** information can help you understand how the writing has been shaped by issues surrounding the writer or the topic. Your initial response to the text might change once you see what was important to the writer at the time.

Key terms

Values: standards or principles considered important in life
Perspective: a particular way of thinking about something
Contextual: relating to the circumstances or background in which something happens

Activity 3

Write down definitions of 'perspective' and 'change'. In your own words, and using information on these pages, explain how these ideas are going to be important through your reading of pre-1900 texts.

Personal change

1 Changing perspectives over time

Learning objective

- To consider how the time when a text is written affects the views/ideas within it.

Key terms

Imagery: the use of figurative language or other special language to convey an idea to an audience
Purpose: something you intend to do or achieve; an intention or aim. All writers will have a clear aim or purpose when they produce a text. The purpose of a text is what the writer deliberately sets out to achieve. They may wish to persuade, encourage, advise or even anger their reader, or a mixture of these
Society: an organized community of people in a particular country or region

Introduction

As the world changes, so do people's views about the world. This might seem like a philosophical idea that belongs in a literature textbook. However as the texts you will study in this chapter are essentially from a different time to the one you live in now, it is sensible to begin by thinking about how the changing world shapes the words and **imagery** a writer uses to present their ideas. In this unit, you will consider how writers can change or add to a reader's ideas about something by presenting it using a group of words with a similar meaning or through extended metaphor.

Over time, many things have changed the way adults treat children. You might have heard the expression 'children should be seen and not heard'. This seems like an odd concept to us today, with many families putting their children at the forefront of their lives. This change in the way children are viewed is evidenced in the text you will study on page 89.

Activity 1

1. With a partner, role-play a conversation where one of you is a child who has a bad habit and the other is an adult trying to reform the child's behaviour. First, decide on what the bad habit is and then think about what tactics the adult might use.
2. After you have carried out your role-play, judge which were the most successful tactics used by the adult and give some reasons why.

The extract on page 89 is from *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, published in 1859. The audience for the text is the mistress of a fairly wealthy house. The **purpose** of the book is to give advice about how she should run her home to maximize 'the happiness, comfort, and well-being of a family'.

Activity 2

1. Before you read, discuss whether you think a book with this purpose might exist today. Give reasons why or why not.
2. Where do people turn now for help or advice? Do you think anything has changed in **society** to make you have these views? Think about servants, roles/expectations of men and women, the influence of newspapers, the Internet and TV, for example.

Extract from *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* by Isabella Beeton

Most children have some bad habit, of which they must be broken; but this is never accomplished by harshness without developing worse evils: kindness, perseverance, and patience in the nurse, are here of the utmost importance. When finger-sucking is one of these habits, the fingers are sometimes rubbed with bitter aloes*, or some equally disagreeable substance. Others have dirty habits, which are only to be changed by patience, perseverance, and, above all, by regularity in the nurse. She should never be permitted to inflict punishment on these occasions, or, indeed, on any occasion. But, if punishment is to be avoided, it is still more necessary that all kinds of indulgences and flattery be equally forbidden. Yielding to all the whims of a child, – picking up its toys when thrown away in mere wantonness, would be intolerable. A child should never be led to think others inferior to it, to beat a dog, or even the stone against which it falls, as some children are taught to do by silly nurses. Neither should the nurse affect or show alarm at any of the little accidents which must inevitably happen: if it falls, treat it as a trifle; otherwise she encourages a spirit of cowardice and timidity. But she will take care that such accidents are not of frequent occurrence, or the result of neglect.

*bitter aloes – the juice from aloe plants, which has an unpleasant taste

Activity 3

After you have read the extract carefully, complete the following tasks. They will help you practise a key exam skill: finding specific information in a text.

1. A mistress of the time would have decided how the nurse, the equivalent of a modern nanny, should look after the children in her care. List five types of behaviour a nurse should show to help a child break a bad habit.
2. What advice is given about accidents that children might have? What do you think about this advice? Would you give the same advice? Give reasons for your answers.

Stretch

Other topics covered in Mrs Beeton's book concern how the household budget should be spent, employing and managing servants, food storage and recipes. This advice on how to change the bad habits of a child is included towards the end of the book. What might this say about how children were viewed or valued at this time? Give evidence for your ideas.

2 Changing the ordinary to the extraordinary: extended metaphors

Learning objectives

- To explore layers of meaning in extended metaphors used in pre-1900 non-fiction texts
- To evaluate possible reasons for metaphor choice

Key terms

Metaphor: a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used to describe an object or an action without using *as* or *like*, e.g. *The clouds are taking the sun away to bed* (a child's description of a sunset)

Extended metaphor: a longer or more detailed metaphor, often with a description that extends over several sentences

You will be familiar with **metaphor** from your study of literary texts at Key Stage 3, especially poetry. Here you will study non-fiction extracts that use similar **extended metaphors** to create an image which simultaneously concentrates on a number of different features. You will also consider how writers use metaphors to make readers change their thoughts about something that initially seemed fairly ordinary or simple.

Activity 1

Read the two extracts from Mrs Beeton and Florence Nightingale (below and on page 91), and identify the subjects or things being compared. What are the links between the subjects and the images that the authors create?

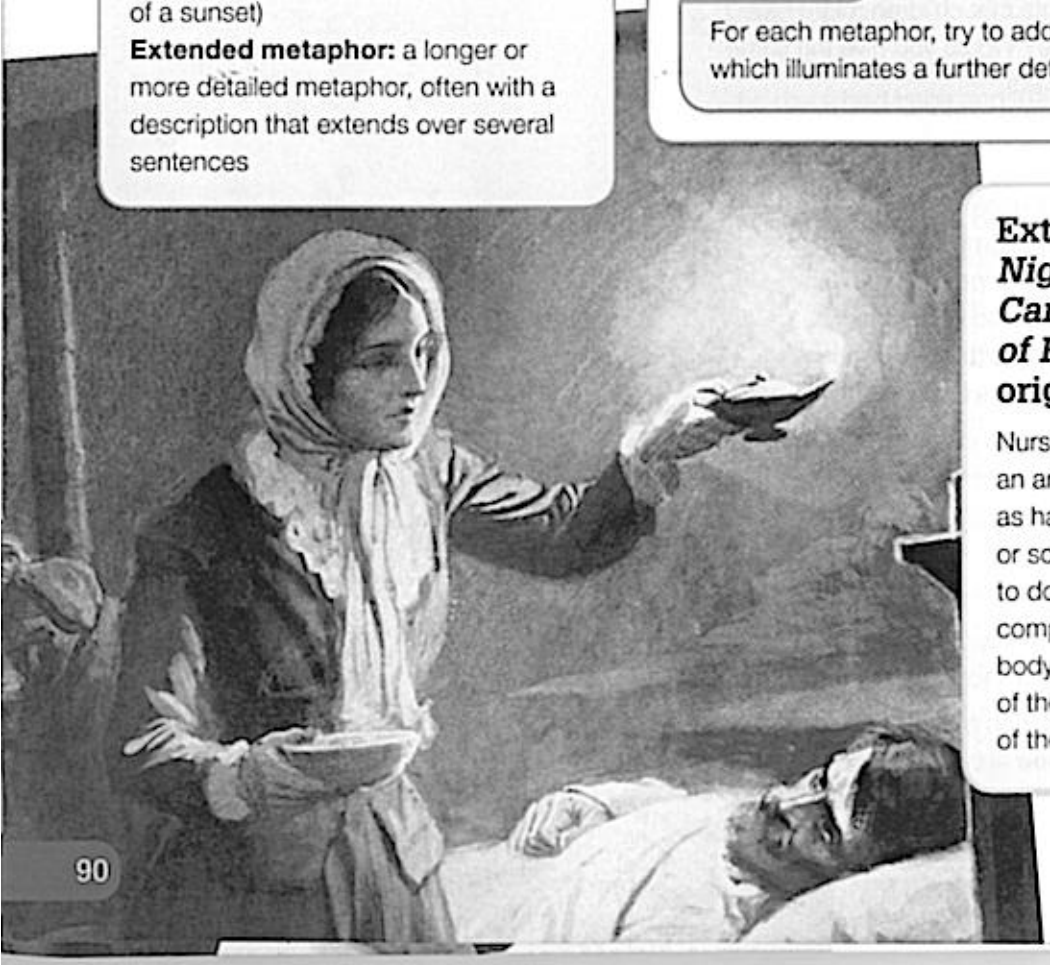
Support

Use the structures below to help you explain your ideas.

- Mrs Beeton compares _____ with _____. She says that the _____ is like the _____ because _____.
- Moreover, the _____ can be linked to the _____ as _____. This is an interesting way of looking at _____ because _____.

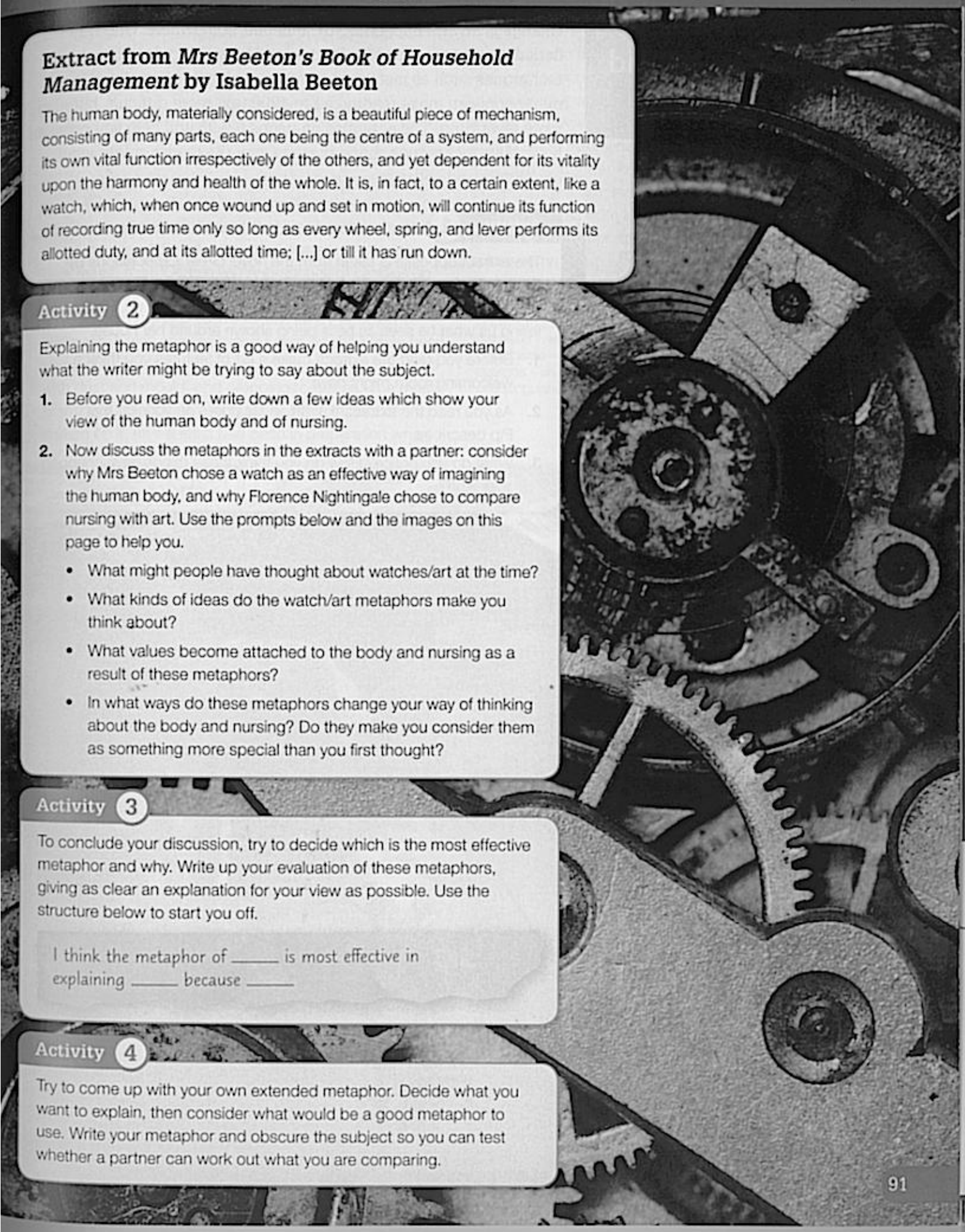
Stretch

For each metaphor, try to add another feature to the image which illuminates a further detail about the subject.



Extract from *Florence Nightingale on Public Health Care: Collected Works of Florence Nightingale*, originally published in 1845

Nursing is an art; and if it is to be made an art, requires as exclusive a devotion, as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or cold marble compared with having to do with the living body, the temple of God's Spirit? It is one of the fine arts; I had almost said, the finest of the fine arts.



Extract from *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* by Isabella Beeton

The human body, materially considered, is a beautiful piece of mechanism, consisting of many parts, each one being the centre of a system, and performing its own vital function irrespectively of the others, and yet dependent for its vitality upon the harmony and health of the whole. It is, in fact, to a certain extent, like a watch, which, when once wound up and set in motion, will continue its function of recording true time only so long as every wheel, spring, and lever performs its allotted duty, and at its allotted time; [...] or till it has run down.

Activity 2

Explaining the metaphor is a good way of helping you understand what the writer might be trying to say about the subject.

1. Before you read on, write down a few ideas which show your view of the human body and of nursing.
2. Now discuss the metaphors in the extracts with a partner: consider why Mrs Beeton chose a watch as an effective way of imagining the human body, and why Florence Nightingale chose to compare nursing with art. Use the prompts below and the images on this page to help you.
   - What might people have thought about watches/art at the time?
   - What kinds of ideas do the watch/art metaphors make you think about?
   - What values become attached to the body and nursing as a result of these metaphors?
   - In what ways do these metaphors change your way of thinking about the body and nursing? Do they make you consider them as something more special than you first thought?

Activity 3

To conclude your discussion, try to decide which is the most effective metaphor and why. Write up your evaluation of these metaphors, giving as clear an explanation for your view as possible. Use the structure below to start you off.

I think the metaphor of _____ is most effective in explaining _____ because _____

Activity 4

Try to come up with your own extended metaphor. Decide what you want to explain, then consider what would be a good metaphor to use. Write your metaphor and obscure the subject so you can test whether a partner can work out what you are comparing.

3 Metaphors and prediction

Learning objectives

- To consider how impressions and layers of meaning are created by extended metaphor
- To consider how description and metaphor can aid a reader in making predictions

Change is always happening to someone, somewhere. One way fiction writers can show these changes is by using descriptive techniques such as metaphor. The layers of meaning created by metaphors can make reading a pre-1900 text more difficult, but also more rewarding. The activities on pages 92–95 will help you consider how these techniques shape the way you, the reader, might view characters and settings.

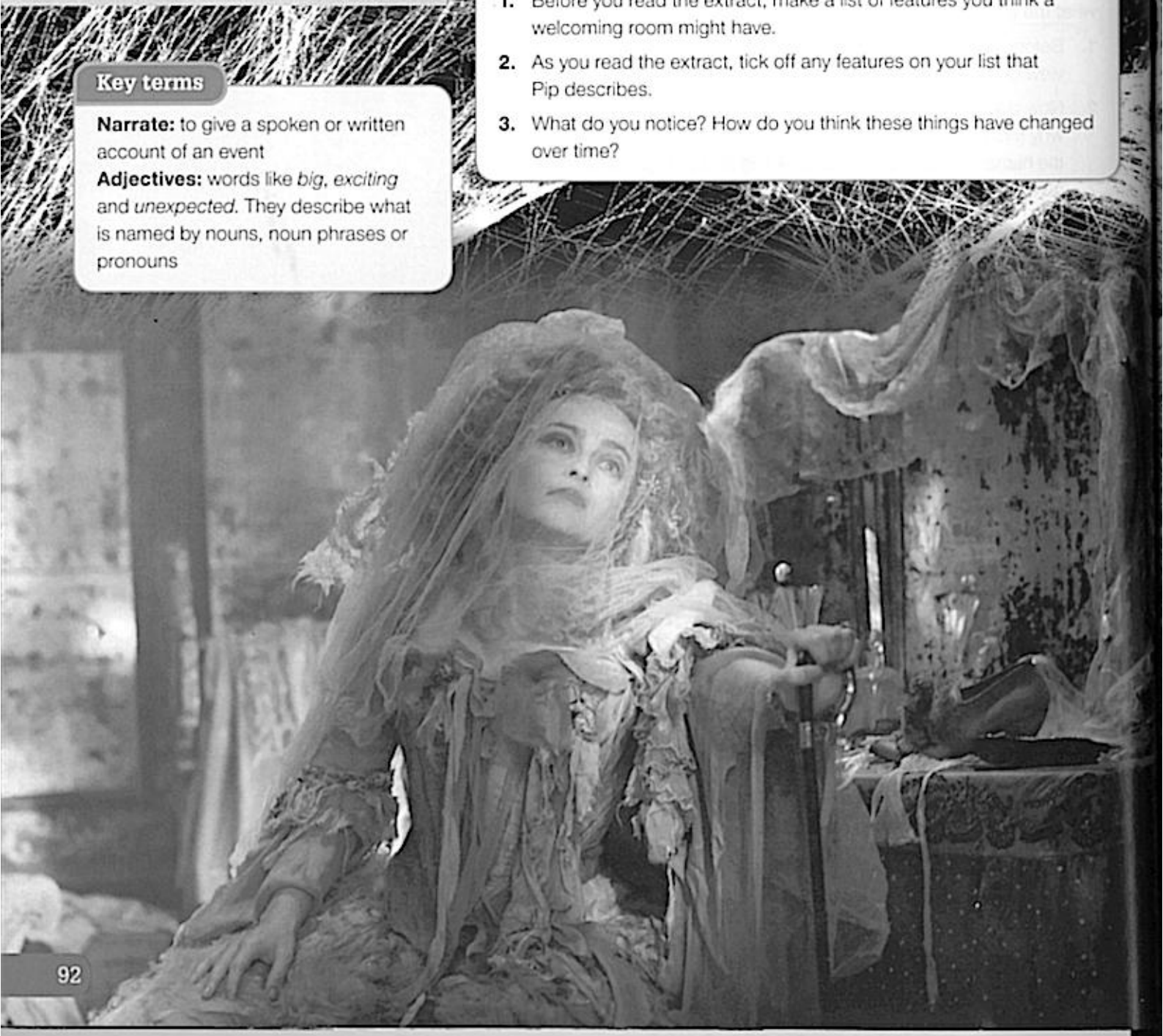
Key terms

Narrate: to give a spoken or written account of an event
Adjectives: words like *big*, *exciting* and *unexpected*. They describe what is named by nouns, noun phrases or pronouns

Activity 1

The extract opposite is taken from the novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. It is **narrated** by a young boy named Pip, whose life changes after he meets a wealthy old lady, Miss Havisham. Here he is telling us what he sees as he is being shown around her house.

1. Before you read the extract, make a list of features you think a welcoming room might have.
2. As you read the extract, tick off any features on your list that Pip describes.
3. What do you notice? How do you think these things have changed over time?



Extract from *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

I crossed the staircase landing, and entered the room she indicated. From that room, too, the daylight was completely excluded, and it had an airless smell that was oppressive[1]. A fire had been lately kindled[2] in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed[3] to go out than to burn up, and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air – like our own marsh mist. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimneypiece faintly lighted the chamber: or, it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. It was spacious, and I dare say had once been handsome, but every discernible[4] thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces. The most prominent object was a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne[5] or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite undistinguishable[6]; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it, as if some circumstance of the greatest public importance had just transpired in the spider community.

[1] oppressive – worrying and difficult to bear, or cruel or harsh
[2] kindle – to set light to something, to start a fire burning
[3] disposed – willing or inclined to do something
[4] discernable – capable of being recognized or perceived clearly
[5] epergne – an ornamental centrepiece for a dining table
[6] undistinguishable – not able to be seen clearly

Activity 2

1. Some of the descriptions in the passage use **adjectives** to shape what you think about what has happened in the room. In the list of phrases below, explain what you think is meant by each adjective.
   - airless, oppressive (smell)
   - damp old-fashioned (fire grate)
   - wintry (branches of candles)
2. Once you have thought about the meaning of the adjectives, consider possible deeper layers of meaning. For example, 'wintry' is fairly obvious in its dictionary meaning, but what could the writer be trying to say about how the passage of time affects the items in the room? Discuss your ideas with a partner. Think about:
   - What happens in nature at wintertime – what changes take place?
   - Are there different possible meanings?
   - Which meaning seems the best fit for the changes that are described?

SPAG

Support

You could use a dictionary to help you. For example, *wintry* is defined as 'characteristic of winter, especially in being very cold or bleak'. By going on to look up *bleak*, you will be able to see further layers of potential meaning intended by an author. Not every meaning will be relevant, but a dictionary can help you broaden your understanding.

In the writing exam, the accuracy of your writing is very important. It is important to remember that, for each writing piece, 40% of the marks are allocated to assess the quality of your vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation, so make sure you look at the spelling of new words in a dictionary, as well as their meaning.

It is likely that you have already formed some opinions about the room described in the extract and how it has changed over time. Dickens has used a variety of comparisons to help focus his description on concrete things, like the spiders and, in turn, shape the way a reader thinks about these things and Miss Havisham.

Activity 3

1. Read the sample student answer on the right. This explanation suggests how readers might view the image of the spiders as a way of seeing the changes that are happening. Discuss your response to these ideas with a partner.
2. Do you agree with the ideas suggested? Are there other ways of interpreting the image?

In the extract, the spiders are said to make the table centrepiece their 'home', which might give us the impression that they have lived there a long time because they have had long enough to spin a web. The movement of the spiders is compared to 'a black fungus'. This simile allows the writer to focus our attention on the growth and collection of unhygienic things on the dining table like mould, dust and cobwebs, which might make us feel repulsed or disgusted. Yet it also makes us wonder what has happened to this woman for her to allow these things to take place. What changed this room from being the scene of a celebratory 'feast' to a cold, cobwebbed place, paused in time?

Activity 4

1. What question do you think the student writing above was answering?
2. Make a list of other questions you might have thought of while reading about Miss Havisham's dining room.
3. Try to suggest answers to your questions and then judge which answer is most likely by supporting it with evidence from the extract.

Asking questions of a text is something which informs your reading because you want to find the answers as you read on. In Activity 4, you might have asked, 'What changes might happen later in the story?' or 'How might Miss Havisham have been changed too?' Therefore, metaphor is not only something which helps you to imagine a scene – it also invites you into the story to predict or question what is to come.

Activity 5

1. Draw the room as it is described on page 93 and label it with quotations from the extract. Try to summarize how you feel about the room and what creates that feeling.
2. In this extract, apart from the table centrepiece which is explored on page 94, there are three other main images: the fire, the candles and the table. Choose one of these and explain what you think it means. Look at the explanation of the spiders in Activity 3 to help you. What does your image make you feel or think about Miss Havisham's room and the changes taking place within it?
3. Share your explanations with a partner and see if there are any similarities or differences in what you have said.

Support

Use the stages listed below to help you explore your chosen image.

1. Say what you see. The fire is described as...
2. Give a dictionary meaning for the key words in the image. The word... means...
3. What does this make you think about? This might make a reader think about...
4. Now think about the impact of this image. What are the main messages or meanings? The writer is perhaps trying to show how...
5. Finally, think about the item as part of the whole extract. What links of similarity or difference can you draw? A reader might draw links with...

Progress check

What have you learned in this unit about the ways writers use imagery to change our ideas about something? Work through the following prompts to consider how much you have understood. For each prompt, decide which statement most applies to you.

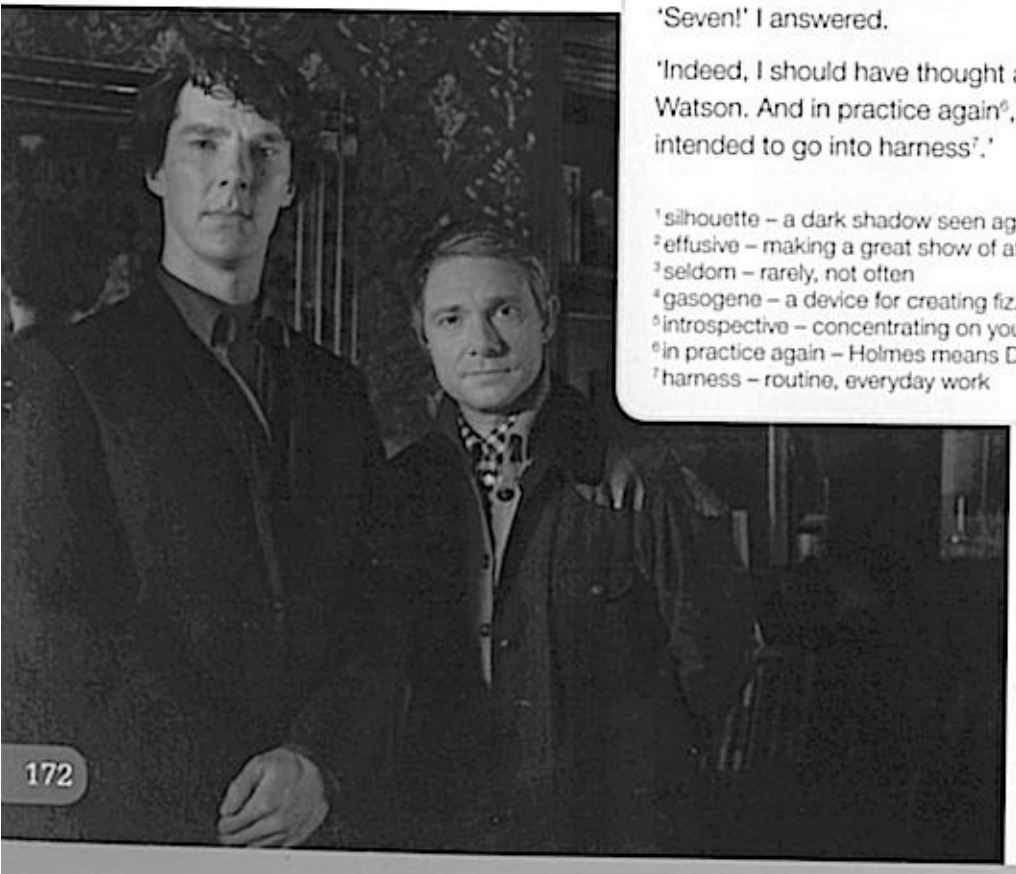
	I need to look back over this or ask for help.	I think I'm OK with this.	I feel fairly confident with this.	I feel really confident with this and could happily explain it to someone else.
I can spot when an extended metaphor/imagery is being used in a text.				
I can use a structure to explain how the imagery makes me read the item being described.				
I can comment on how an image might say something about the values held at the time when the text was written.				
I can evaluate the effectiveness of an image.				
I can read imagery as a tool to help me predict what will happen in a text.				

2 Evaluating thoughts and feelings

Learning objectives

- To explore your reactions to a piece of text
- To evaluate your reactions to a character within a text

Tip If you are asked to evaluate your thoughts and feelings, you can use the first person to help you frame your answer (*I think..., I feel...*). If you are asked to evaluate the character or writer's thoughts and feelings, you can use the third person to help you frame your answer (*He thinks..., She feels...*).



When evaluating a text you may be asked to give a personal response. You should track through a text and consider your thoughts and feelings at various points to enable you to give a balanced personal evaluation. You might be asked to consider how a character is thinking or feeling in an extract – you need to track through the extract, collecting evidence and considering what the character might be feeling at specific points.

Read the following extract from a Sherlock Holmes short story.

Extract from 'A Scandal in Bohemia' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette[1] against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive[2]. It seldom[3] was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene[4] in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective[5] fashion.

'Wedlock suits you,' he remarked. 'I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.'

'Seven!' I answered.

'Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again[6], I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness[7].'

[1] silhouette – a dark shadow seen against a light background
[2] effusive – making a great show of affection or enthusiasm
[3] seldom – rarely, not often
[4] gasogene – a device for creating fizzy water
[5] introspective – concentrating on your own thoughts and feelings
[6] in practice again – Holmes means Dr Watson is working as a doctor again
[7] harness – routine, everyday work

Activity 1

1. In the extract, Dr Watson has decided to visit Sherlock Holmes. To help you develop your ability to produce an **overview**, write down, in not more than 30 words, a summary of what happens in the extract.
2. With a partner, discuss your initial reactions to Sherlock Holmes. What type of person is he?

Key term

Overview: a general summary, explanation or outline of a situation

Activity 2

This activity will help you to build up your own thoughts about what type of person Sherlock Holmes is. Follow the steps below:

1. Go through the passage and highlight any phrases that you think give information about Sherlock Holmes. The first two have been done for you.
2. Write down the phrases you have selected in a table like the one below.

Evidence	What does this suggest?
'He was pacing the room'	He seems preoccupied or restless.
'head sunk upon his chest'	He seems dejected, troubled or deep in thought.

Activity 3

Use the table you completed in Activity 2 to help you answer the following question:

What are your thoughts and feelings about Sherlock Holmes?

To answer a question like this, you need to work through the extract in order (tracking the text), picking out any words and phrases that give you clues about his character. Cover the whole extract and do not repeat any ideas. Constantly ask yourself what you think and feel about him.

Support

The first few sentences have been done for you. Complete the answer using your own ideas and evidence.

I think that Sherlock Holmes is a preoccupied or restless individual. 'He was pacing the room' suggests he could be trying to collect his thoughts or solve a problem. Sherlock Holmes' head is 'sunk upon his chest' and I feel that this suggests he is deep in thought or reflection.

Activity 4

Look at your answer and use three highlighter pens to indicate the following:

- evidence
- your explanation
- the words 'think' or 'feel'.

You should see a balance of these three bullet points in your answer to ensure your response is focused and clear. If it is not balanced, go back and adjust your writing.