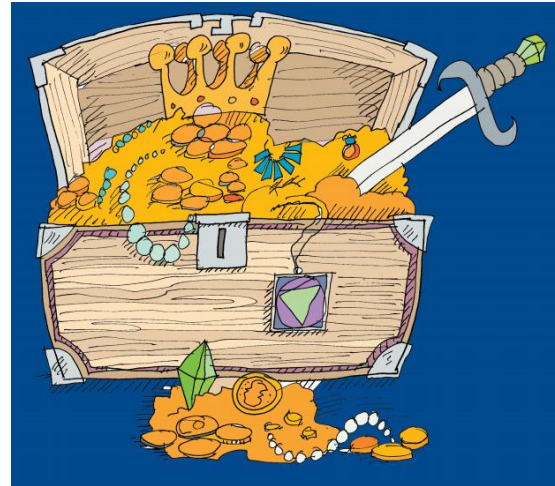


## English

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July

Before we start to plan our story, let's look at some features that help build **suspense** and make it engaging for the reader!



### To create suspense, we can use...

- **Show not tell:** Rahul gripped Joe's arms.
- **Short, snappy sentences** They froze.  
It moved. Slam!
- **Speech moves the actions on** "Quick, in here!"  
"Run!" "Get out of here!"
- **Empty words/nouns** somebody, someone, it...
- **Threatening noises** footsteps, water dripping,  
silence, creaky floorboards
- **Questions to make your reader think**  
Who was there? What was it?  
Would they make it?

## Activity: Show not tell!

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:	Showing:
<i>Zara was sad.</i>	
<i>John felt shy.</i>	
<i>Tom was angry.</i>	
<i>He felt frightened.</i>	
<i>Ernie was nervous.</i>	

### Activity: 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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: 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: *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.