

**Grammar for Writing: Teaching Activities**

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| **Writing Learning Focus:** | | * Creating a distinctive mood and atmosphere at the start of a story | | |
| **Grammar Learning Focus:** | | * How verb choices and adverbial detail are used to describe character and setting | | |
| **Context:** | The text extract here comes from the very start of the novel where the island setting is described for the first time and the characters of Ralph and Piggy are introduced. The description is important in establishing a sense of unease and foreboding in the reader and hinting at the violence which unfolds in the novel. | | | |
| **Let’s Talk!**  Give the opening discussion enough time to allow students to explore their first impressions.  In the highlighting task:   * Check they can quickly locate the verbs, especially where these are a verb phrase rather than single words eg*; began to pick); was clambering.* Remind that ‘adverbials’ are single words, phrases and clauses modifying a verb. In this extract, adverbial detail is most often provided through prepositional phrases.   In whole-class discussion:   * Explore Golding’s initial characterisation of Ralph and Piggy by focusing on the verbs and adverbials used to describe their actions (e.g. Ralph ‘*lowered himself down...began to pick his way*... sweater *trailed* from one hand...hair *was plastered* to his forehead...he *was clambering heavily*’; Piggy ‘*came backing out*...twigs *scratched...caught and scratched* by thorns...*bent down*...*removed the thorns carefully...turned around*) * Extend understanding by noting the similarities and contrasts between the characters eg how both are physically uncomfortable and cautious but how Piggy is physically harmed (‘*caught and scratched by thorns*’) foreshadowing his victim role; * Extend understand of how Golding establishes a precise picture of the setting for the story, through choice of verbs and adverbials: *all round him; smashed into the jungle*...’; ‘*among the creepers*’; ‘*out of the undergrowth*’; ‘ *flashed upward with a witch-like cry*’; ‘*echoed by another’*. Note how the hostile nature of the surroundings in which the boys are trapped adds to the sense of threat. * Further extension: Discuss effects of withholding the boys’ names in this opening description and instead just using pronouns and anonymous noun phrase ‘labels’ eg ‘*the boy with fair hair’*; ‘*the owner of the voice’*. Does this add to our sense of unease? | | | **Activity Outline:**  Whole class: Display 3 or 4 still images from a film version of the novel, showing the island and some of the boys. (<http://lordoftheflies.org/gal/movie1.htm> is a useful source). Invite students to describe what they can literally see and what they can infer from the images. Prompt as necessary eg Why are the boys wearing school uniform? Why might they be on an island? Is it a paradise? Are they having fun? Is there a leader?  Teacher: display and read the text extract and note that as a reader this is the first view of the island and the characters. What can we infer about the setting and the characters? What makes it sound threatening rather than a paradise?  Pairs: Allocate highlighting tasks: one pair highlight the verbs and adverbial detail creating the description of Ralph (from ‘the boy with fair hair’); one pair highlight the verbs and adverbial detail creating the description of Piggy (from ‘the owner of the voice’); one pair highlight the verbs and adverbial detail relating to setting (in whole extract eg ‘the long scar *smashed into the jungle’; ‘clambering among the creepers and broken trunks’; ‘*raindrops *fell pattering’*)  Whole class: Take feedback and use highlighting on displayed text to clarify. Foster discussion about how the atmosphere of foreboding and the foreshadowing of violence and destruction is created.  Individual: Choose one of the film images from *Lord of the Flies* used at the start of the lesson. Develop a description of character and/or setting which clearly establishes a sense of threat and unease for the reader, thinking carefully about how the choice of verbs and adverbial detail supports this description. Encourage close imitation of the text model as extra support.  Pairs: Read each other’s descriptions and explain to each other what language choices you have made and how these choices establish the character and/or setting and create a sense of foreboding or unease for the reader. | **Text example:**  from *Lord of the Flies*  The boy with fair hair lowered himself down the last few feet of rock and began to pick his way toward the lagoon. Though he had taken off his school sweater and trailed it now from one hand, his grey shirt stuck to him and his hair was plastered to his forehead. All round him the long scar smashed into the jungle was a bath of heat. He was clambering heavily among the creepers and broken trunks when a  bird, a vision of red and yellow, flashed upwards with a witch-like cry; and this cry was echoed by another.  “Hi!” it said. “Wait a minute!”  The undergrowth at the side of the scar was shaken and a multitude of raindrops fell pattering.  “Wait a minute,” the voice said. “I got caught up.”  The owner of the voice came backing out of the undergrowth so that twigs scratched on a greasy wind-breaker. The naked crooks of his knees were plump, caught and scratched by thorns. He bent down, removed the thorns carefully, and turned around. He was shorter than the fair boy and very fat. | |