

Toolkit Focus: Suspense + Dilemma

In reading, it is often those books that leave us on a cliff hanger or wondering that make us want to read on.

Year R,	Year 1, 2	Year 3, 4	Year 5, 6
<p>- Describe the problem with scary adjectives. <i>e.g. But in the forest lived a huge, hairy troll.</i></p> <p>- Explain why something is a problem/scary. <i>e.g. The wolf was very hungry.</i></p> <p>- Use adverbial openers to signal that there is a problem, <i>e.g. Unfortunately... Suddenly...</i></p>	<p>Building on Year R work:</p> <p>- Put the main character in a dark setting <i>e.g. the lights flickered on and off, the clouds surrounded the last shards of moonlight.</i></p> <p>- Use a sound effect to hear the problem <i>e.g. there was a growl, footsteps were coming.</i></p> <p>- Put the character/characters in a lonely place. <i>e.g. The door slammed behind her, she was trapped. She wandered too far from the group...</i></p> <p>- Use adverbial openers which signal that there is a problem. <i>e.g. Unluckily..., Suddenly..., Unfortunately...</i></p> <p>- Emphasise the problem using repetition. <i>e.g. a crazy troll, a lazy troll</i></p>	<p>Building on Year 1/2 work:</p> <p>- Sound effects to create atmosphere <i>e.g. The window creaked open, a whisper crept through the wind, there was a distant rustle of leaves, a branch snapped nearby.</i></p> <p>- Use 'empty words' to introduce a problem <i>e.g. Glowing eyes peered at him. Something was behind him. It was waiting.</i></p> <p>- Change the setting (place, time of day, weather) to change the mood. <i>e.g. moving from a the forest into a dark and gloomy cave. A crackle of thunder roared overhead.</i></p> <p>- Use a greater range of dramatic adverbial openers which signal that there is a problem. <i>e.g. Without warning..., All of a sudden..., Just then..., Out of nowhere,</i></p> <p>- Use the character's reaction to the situation. <i>e.g. his palms started to sweat, his heart raced.</i></p> <p>- Use short sentences for impact and to quicken pace. <i>e.g. They ran! He froze. Silence.</i></p> <p>- Explain the implications of the problem by adding extra detail (double drama/dilemma) <i>e.g. Charlie was stuck in the magic box and there was no-one to help him escape. He flew too far, he was lost.</i></p>	<p>Building on Year 3/4 work:</p> <p>- Use a more sophisticated range of adverbial openers which signal that there is a problem. <i>e.g. In a flash..., Out of the blue..., With a scream..., Silently..., Nobody saw...</i></p> <p>- Use a cliff hanger to hook the reader. <i>e.g. Cliff hanger steps... 1. Create a sense of safety/relief, 2. Show a slight concern/worry, 3. Create a false sense of security, 4. Create the cliff hanger/danger in the last line.</i></p> <p>- Use a small detail to create a glimpse of the threat. <i>e.g. Something darted behind a tree.</i></p> <p>- Use carefully selected verbs to build tension. <i>e.g. edged, grabbed, scabbled, whispered, brushed against, hissed.</i></p> <p>- Use a rhetorical question <i>e.g. Had it seen her? Would the light ever return?</i></p> <p>- Use sibilance or alliteration to add effect. <i>e.g. Using the 's' sound to create a hissing feeling/sound. 'k' 'p' 't' sounds to create action or loudness.</i></p> <p>- Use a more sophisticated range of character reactions to the problem. <i>e.g. His pupils dilated, her lips went dry, the room started to spin, making Kat dizzy.</i></p> <p>- Vary sentence lengths and types for effect <i>e.g. longer sentences to add detail, short sentences to quicken the pace.</i></p> <p>- Create a false sense of security and then introduce an element of unease.</p>

			<p><i>e.g. Hannah leant on the trunk of the tree and took in her surroundings. What was that in the distance?</i></p> <p>- Use subtle hints to how the problem could be solved. <i>e.g. He would not be seeing his friends again unless he could think of a way to escape.</i></p>
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