

Year 7 Summer 2 Homework Booklet: Writer's Use of Language

Each week you must read one extract. You must find and label any language techniques, then answer the language question which follows.

Week 1.

Her name was Mrs. Pratchett. She was a small skinny old hag with a moustache on her upper lip and a mouth as sour as a green gooseberry. She never smiled. She never welcomed us when we went in. By far the most loathsome thing about Mrs. Pratchett was the filth that clung about her. Her apron was grey and greasy. Her blouse had bits of breakfast all over it, toast-crumbs and tea stains and splotches of dried egg yolk. It was her hands, however, that disturbed us most. They were disgusting. They were black with dirt and grime. They looked as though they had been putting lumps of coal on the fire all day long. The mere sight of her grimy right hand with its black fingernails digging an ounce of Chocolate Fudge out of the jar would have caused a starving tramp to go running from the shop.

from *Boy* by Roald Dahl

How does the writer use language here to describe Mrs. Pratchett?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Week 2.

In the extract below, Kafka Tamura, a teenager, is preparing to run away from home.

I switch off the light and leave the bathroom. A heavy, damp stillness lies over the house. The whispers of people who don't exist, the breath of the dead. I look around, standing stock-still, and take a deep breath. The clock shows 3 p.m., the two hands cold and distant. They're pretending to be non-committal, but I know they're not on my side. It's nearly time for me to say goodbye. I pick up my backpack and slip it over my shoulders. I've carried it any number of times, but now it feels so much heavier.

Shikoku, I decide. That's where I'll go. There's no particular reason it has to be Shikoku, only that studying the map I got the feeling that's where I should head. The more I look at the map – actually every time I study it – the more I feel Shikoku tugging at me. It's a long way south of Tokyo, separated from the mainland by water, with a warm climate. I've never been there, have no friends or relatives there, so if somebody started looking for me – which I doubt they will – Shikoku would be the last place they'd think of.

Haruki Murakami *Kafka On The Shore*

How does the writer use language here to describe Kafka's uncertainty as he prepares to leave home?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Week 3.

London 2012 has been rightly lauded for its efforts towards gender equality. This has been the first Games in which women could compete in every sport and there are 262 women in Team GB – more than ever before. But along with this heightened visibility has come something less quantifiable: the sense, among ordinary women, that we have a new generation of role models to aspire to, whose bodies are revered for their physical abilities and not just their aesthetic qualities.

Our screens have been filled not with the usual diet of size-zero actresses and surgically enhanced reality TV stars but with women who are proud to look powerful, who have muscles and who aren't afraid to sweat and pant their way to a gold medal. And although many of these female athletes have been seen making small concessions to individual style – nails painted with a union flag or hair spritzed with glitter – we come away knowing that the way they look is secondary to how they perform. It is hard to remember a time when women were given such a resoundingly positive message. After all, outside the Olympics, only 5% of media coverage is dedicated to female sports.

How does the writer use language here to describe how London 2012 was positive for women?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Week 4.

They went to the Moon, but ended up discovering the Earth. The crew of Apollo 8 were the first people to leave Earth's orbit and pass behind the far side of the Moon. They had been drilled and trained for just about every eventuality, save one – the awe-inspiring sight of seeing our own planet hanging over an empty lunar horizon.

It later became known as "Earthrise" and the image of the world rising in the dark vastness of space over a sun-lit lunar landscape became an iconic reminder of our lonely planet's splendid isolation and delicate fragility. The image was captured during Christmas Eve 1968. It was an image that would eventually launch a thousand environmental movements, such was its impact on the public awareness.

For the first three orbits, the crew had their backs to the Earth as it re-appeared over the lunar horizon and did not see the iconic view that would change their lives. It was only on the fourth orbit that one of the men turned round and saw the spectacle for the first time. "Oh my God! Look at that picture over there! Isn't that something?" he said, his words captured for posterity on the on-board tape recorder. They quickly scrambled for a camera. It is the resulting photographs that became the iconic images of the environmental movement.

How does the writer use language here to describe the excitement of seeing the earth for the first time?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Week 5.

Exploration today is a dying art. The new feats are often about endurance as much as discovery. Firsts are ever more specialist and technically defined - first successful dive at the north pole (Joseph MacInnis), first person to jetpack across the English Channel (Yves Rossy), oldest woman to climb Everest (Tamae Watanabe).

So is there anything left to do? Something combining that potent mix of danger, novelty and a clearly defined natural barrier to overcome.

Paul Rose, vice-president of the Royal Geographical Society, agrees that most of the "blockbusters" have gone. But a huge number of unclimbed peaks and never frequented areas in Greenland, Antarctica and elsewhere remain. "It's one of the beauties of being alive - we can float down a bit of river or walk across a bit of desert where no-one has ever been," Rose says. "It's not Everest. But these days anyone can get to the top of Everest, given enough money."

Only two or three years ago a new cave system was discovered in Yorkshire. "We'll be discovering new physical challenges for the rest of humanity," he predicts.

The next big challenge is discovering the ocean depths. Look beneath the surface of the sea and mankind still knows very little. Most of the world's oceans are less mapped than the surface of Mars, Rose says.

How does the writer use language here to describe adventures?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

Week 6.

The idiosyncrasy of this town is smoke. It rolls sullenly in slow folds from the great chimneys of the iron-foundries, and settles down in black, slimy pools on the muddy streets. Smoke on the wharves, smoke on the dingy boats, on the yellow river - clinging in a coating of greasy soot to the house-front, the two faded poplars, the faces of the passers-by. The long train of mules, dragging masses of pig-iron through the narrow street, have a foul vapour hanging to their reeking sides. Here, inside, is a little broken figure of an angel pointing upward from the mantel-shelf; but even its wings are covered with smoke, clotted and black. Smoke everywhere! A dirty canary chirps desolately in a cage beside me. Its dream of green fields and sunshine is a very old dream - almost worn out, I think.

(Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills." The Atlantic Monthly, April 1861)

How does the writer use language to show her feelings about the town being described?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.