



# Prepare Yourself

**How to explain and comment on writers' use of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level.**

## **What does this mean?**

- You understand that the writer chooses which words to use in their writing, and can explain how effective their choices are.
- You can explain how writers structure sentence for effect.
- You can identify where a writer changes the language they use for effect.

## **ACTIVITY ONE**

Read this extract from a short story called "Thunderbolts and Lightning!"

Joe stared out of his bedroom window which looked out onto the back garden. He loved watching the storms. There was an orange tint to the gloom of the sky and the clouds made billowy, wispy patterns which belied the violence to come. A sudden sharp wind raced through the trees; branches waved frantically at him, bending, dancing, sweeping. He heard the first, single drops of rain spattering on the skylight of the room next door, quiet and soft, slowly building... and building, to a deafening crescendo of hail stones. Then nothing. Just stillness again.

Suddenly lightning streaked the air. He counted one second, two seconds... five seconds. It was close already. He just caught a faint rumbling somewhere in the distance, then - CRASH!

The sky exploded with the roar of the thunder. More flashes. The garden lit up in fast, frantic disco spotlights. And that was when he saw the figure – looking up at him. His heart raced. Was it the same man? The one who had spoken to him yesterday? He ducked down – paused – glanced up once more. He had gone!

**How give one example of each of the following techniques from the text and write a couple of sentences to describe their effect on the reader.**

- 1. Exclamation (sentence ends with '!')**
- 2. Rhetorical question (sentence ends with '?')**
- 3. Statement (sentence ends with '.')**
- 4. Very short sentence**
- 5. Incomplete sentence**
- 6. Ellipsis (...)**
- 7. Dashes ( - )**

## ACTIVITY TWO

Look at the picture of the Cyclops and read the information about him.



He is actually called Polyphemus, one of a race of giants in Greek legends known as Cyclops. He appears in the very ancient and famous book “The Odyssey” by Homer.

The hero of the book, Odysseus, and his crew land on the island of the Cyclops and unknowingly wander into Polyphemus’ cave. He proceeds to have several of the crew members for lunch, but Odysseus escapes by giving the giant very strong wine to drink. When he falls asleep, stone drunk, Odysseus hurls a spear into the giant’s one eye and blinds him.

**Next, think of words that would make a reader think the monster was dangerous and violent.**

**When you have done that, try to think of words that would make him seem friendly and harmless – This is a bit trickier!**

Dangerous and Violent

Friendly and harmless

# Test Yourself (a)

**How to understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to the text.**

Read the following text from the short story "Rachel's House" by Ian Phillips.

**Now, answer the following questions.**

1. How has the writer used sentence length for effect in this story? Give at least one example.
2. Why has the writer chosen to use the word 'distraught' rather than 'sad'?
3. The writer has used an incomplete sentence in this story. ('Make a lot of people happy that') Why has he done this?
4. What is notable about the use of paragraphs in this extract?
5. What is the effect of this?

## Extract from "Rachel's House" by Ian Phillips

In three minutes I will begin what is known as "the long walk down". Two minutes and 59 seconds of freedom.

Followed by a sentence of fifteen years.

Or death in my case.

They call it 'life' and laugh and say, 'well him - he'll be out in ten'. But for me 'life' is in fact 'death'. Make a lot of people happy that.

But I know.  
I will die in prison.

My arms are gripped either side as my sentence is announced.  
'Easy tigers' I want to say. 'Take it easy.'

I'm not nervous. Not distraught. Not suicidal.

I am in fact, prepared.

I am led into the holding cell. Already, smells are becoming important. I will remember this smell for a while, then it will be replaced by other smells, most representing cleanliness. Funny that - how we always prepare for dirty deeds by scrubbing everything thoroughly.

'Kill someone sir? Must scrub this cell before we put you in it.... Oh, sorry, it was two, a mother and a daughter? Then we'll take you to the execution cell sir'.

Do you know they always use brand new needles when they execute by injection?  
Now where is the logic in that?

I mean, what are you going to catch?

My mind slides for a moment.