

Top tips:

When writing **either** a description or narrative, you'll want to highlight a range of your writing skills for the examiner.

Think about using a range of techniques across your writing, to support your communication and to create interest and effect.

The section on "shifts and structural devices" are rewarded highly on the mark scheme. They show conscious crafting of an overall piece. Attempt to use some of the suggestions, but there are others you can use too.

Don't forget the importance of varying your punctuation for effect.

Use the tasks in this booklet to plan and write a response.

You should aim to write around **2 and a half pages**.

Planning Checklist

First person	Third person/omniscient
Sound Devices – great for building atmosphere	
Onomatopoeia – words which sound like the noise they make.	Alliteration
Sibilance – repeated "s" sounds. These can create a soft, gentle sounding tone.	Cacophony – a combination of difficult / unpleasant sounding words to create an unpleasant atmosphere.
Plosives : p. t and b sounds. Aggressive mood.	
Visual Devices	
Personification – giving an object human qualities. Bringing description to life.	Metaphor
Simile : comparing two things using the word: "like" or "as"	Pathetic Fallacy : description of external environment to create mood / characterisation
Shifts/Structural Devices	
Change in weather	Zoom in – small detail Zoom out – bigger picture
Change Perspective – narrator/viewpoint	Quiet/loud
Change in mood/feeling	External/internal
Dark/light	Time shifts
Circular – having the opening mirroring the ending.	Focus – object/thing
Punctuation and Grammar	
Semi-colon :	Parenthesis () - - , ,
Colon :	"Speech,"
Short sentences	Complex sentences
Comma ,	Full stop and capitals

Narrative Writing

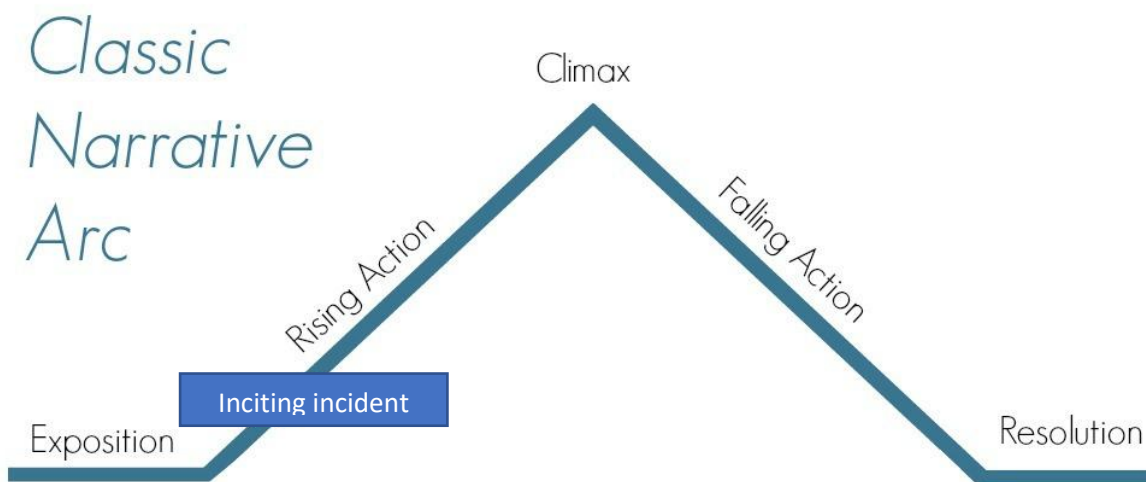
Choose your moment:

Traditionally, a narrative is associated with plot and story-telling. A narrative arc can be vast, so in an exam scenario of only 45 minutes, you are advised to choose one element of the arc. Write an exciting opening, a dramatic climax, or a poignant ending. Your narrative should be a snapshot of a particular moment in time from a wider narrative.

TOP TIP - The examiners have stated that the most successful narratives are largely descriptive in style – plot takes second place to a well-defined image or creation of mood.

Writing a narrative.

Here is a story arc:



1. **Exposition:** introduces us to the main character and their situation. This is the beginning of the story in which characters are introduced and the setting is revealed. It usually includes who, where, and when. You may also be introduced to the main conflict that will propel the story, such as issues between different characters. Keep your characters to a minimum. The best stories only have one or two characters, fleshed out in detail. If you only have one character, you can build up depth of character
2. **Setting:** offer very detailed setting description, thinking about the mood and tone you want to create. If you can, you describe the setting in such a way to help to enhance your character: for example, if your character was someone who was poor; the room you might describe might reflect this aspect of their character: a shabby couch; broken window, stained carpets.

3. **Rising action** are the events leading to the climax of the story. In this element, a series of events that complicate matters for the protagonist creates a rise in the story's suspense or tension. The rising action may further develop the conflict between the characters or the characters and the environment. It may contain a series of surprises or complications to which the protagonist must react.
4. **Climax: the main event.** This is the point of greatest tension in the story and the turning point in the narrative arc from rising action to falling action. The characters are deeply involved in the conflict. Often, the protagonist has to make a critical choice, which will guide his or her actions in the climax.
5. **Falling action: the response to the main event.** After the climax, events unfold in a story's plot and there is a release of tension leading toward the resolution. It can show how the characters have been changed due to the conflict and their actions or inactions
6. **Denouement / resolution: everything pulling to a close / resolution.** This is the end of the story, typically, in which the problems of the story and of the protagonists are resolved. The ending doesn't have to be a happy one, but in a complete story, it will be one that feels satisfying. **You can leave the story on a cliff-hanger in an exam situation.**

Tips:

1. Start by planning out the sequence of your story.
2. You will not have time in the exam to cover all sections: think about which sections could be relevant to cover in the time you have.
3. You don't need to start your story at the beginning. You can start just before the crisis/ main event, or start mid-action (in media res).
4. You can finish your story on a cliff-hanger.
5. Less is more! The examiner loves it when students move slowly through a story, drawing in plenty of detail. If your story has too much action or it is too plot-driven, you **will** lose out on marks.
6. If you are confident, you can break chronology in your story (start at the end, then flash back to the beginning). This is a higher level skill, and would be rewarded on the mark-scheme if it is done successfully.
7. In addition, your story can be fully chronological, but you can use memories to give hint towards the past.

DON'T FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSE / CAREFUL DESCRIPTION, EVEN IF YOU ARE WRITING A NARRATIVE!

Key things to include in a narrative: (you can mix up the order)

1. **Setting** – The setting of your narrative is essential in drawing your reader in to your world. Describe the scene in detail, creating mood and atmosphere by using techniques such as pathetic fallacy, metaphor, simile, and sound techniques such as onomatopoeia and alliteration.
Read the extract below and identify where the writer has used techniques to set the scene and create mood. Match up the techniques with the language and check your answers in the back of this book.

Write setting extract in here.

2. **Character** – Your character is the human focal point of your narrative. You therefore need to make your character interesting to the reader, so that they can empathise, sympathise, or take an interest in the circumstances you are presenting.

Describe your character to include their appearance, actions, and state of mind. Show, don't tell. Give hints to their personality and situation. Imagine you are describing the scene to someone who isn't there. Keep your reader interested by not giving away everything straightaway. For example, give your character an object (a bag, a box) but don't explain what it is...yet. Continue to utilise literary techniques such as contrast, metaphor, and simile to keep the reader interested in your character.

Read the extract below and identify how the writer has used the technique of showing not telling. What techniques have they used?

Write extract in here

3. **Situation** – This is the closest you will come to establishing a plot in your narrative: deciding on a situation for the character to be involved in. You can be as dramatic or as subtle as you like – from a physical description of a crime scene or accident, to an abstract explanation of someone's emotional state. You can choose to reveal the situation early on, you can drop the reader into the action, or you can describe the setting and character and then reveal at the very end the circumstances of both – this can be particularly powerful.

Read the extract below and explain how this would be an effective opening to a story. Then, consider how it could be more or less effective as an ending.

4. **Character's internal response** – Spend some time exploring your character's feelings and internal thoughts. This will give your narrative an interesting structure as the focus will move from the external to the internal. This cannot help but draw your reader in as they are given information that they could not otherwise establish from the external.

Read the extract below and identify the shift from external to internal.

5. **Resolution** – You do not have to resolve the situation in the narrative so far, but you do need to provide some sort of catharsis for your reader. A catharsis gives your reader a sense of an ending. This could take the form of a discovery, a moral message, or a circular return to the beginning. You can take this opportunity to make a change to your setting – a shift in time, or weather, or mood.

The Tasks

Plan a response to each of the following narrative titles. In your plan, decide which order you would include the five elements. Which would work best in each scenario?

Techniques to use:

- Extended metaphor
- Simile
- Sound techniques
- Personification

Extended metaphor

A metaphor is a comparison. To fully transfer an image into another person's head you need to compare it to something that they can relate to. For example, if you want someone to know just how angry and violent a sky became before a storm, you might choose to compare it to a dark, savage sea serpent.

To extend the metaphor, you need to consider other aspects of your comparison object. A sea serpent, for example, might be described as thrashing, writhing, diving, with gnashing jaws.

Example of this.

Simile

The simile is similar to a metaphor – a comparison of one object to another. The difference is the comparison is more direct; you use the words like or as. Similes can be clichéd – avoid these and try and come up with original, poetic ideas. You can avoid cliché by extending your similes, just as you would a metaphor.

Sound techniques

The choices you make in your language can add a real impact to the mood of your piece if you consider the sound they make in the mind of your reader.

Sibilance is the use of s or sh sounds in your writing. This can be used to create a range of moods, from sinister to soothing; it depends on your vocabulary.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds. This can be used to emphasise mood by highlighting a particular word – it can create a sense of mockery or sarcasm.

Fricatives are 'f' and 'c' sounds.

TOP TIPS:

Before your exam in class or at home, you can decide on a main character that you could adapt to place in **any** story / or even use as a narrator.

Flesh them out, practice writing a story with them in. This story itself could be adapted in the exam.

Think about:

- Age, background, life history
- Physical appearance, ambitions, personality

You can do the same for a story line – if you already have one planned and in the back of your mind, you can readily adapt it when it comes to the exam.



Work through the practice tasks on the next few
slides

Landscapes and nature

Write a description of a winter scene at sunrise as suggested by this picture:



Example description opening

The majestic mountains dominated the horizon. Pastel shades of purple were intermixed with vibrant oranges and gold: the sun was awakening, stretching her arms out against the dark blanket of the night. I sighed heavily. My morning breath billowed from my lungs, like miniature clouds hovering around my face, then vanishing back into the air. The morning cold caressed my bare cheek, causing flushes of red to appear. I could feel the tingling sensation of winter's frost on my reddened fingers. This was my daily morning walk: a walk that allowed me to clear my mind, and reminded me of the beauty of nature.

Things that you may wish to include in your description:

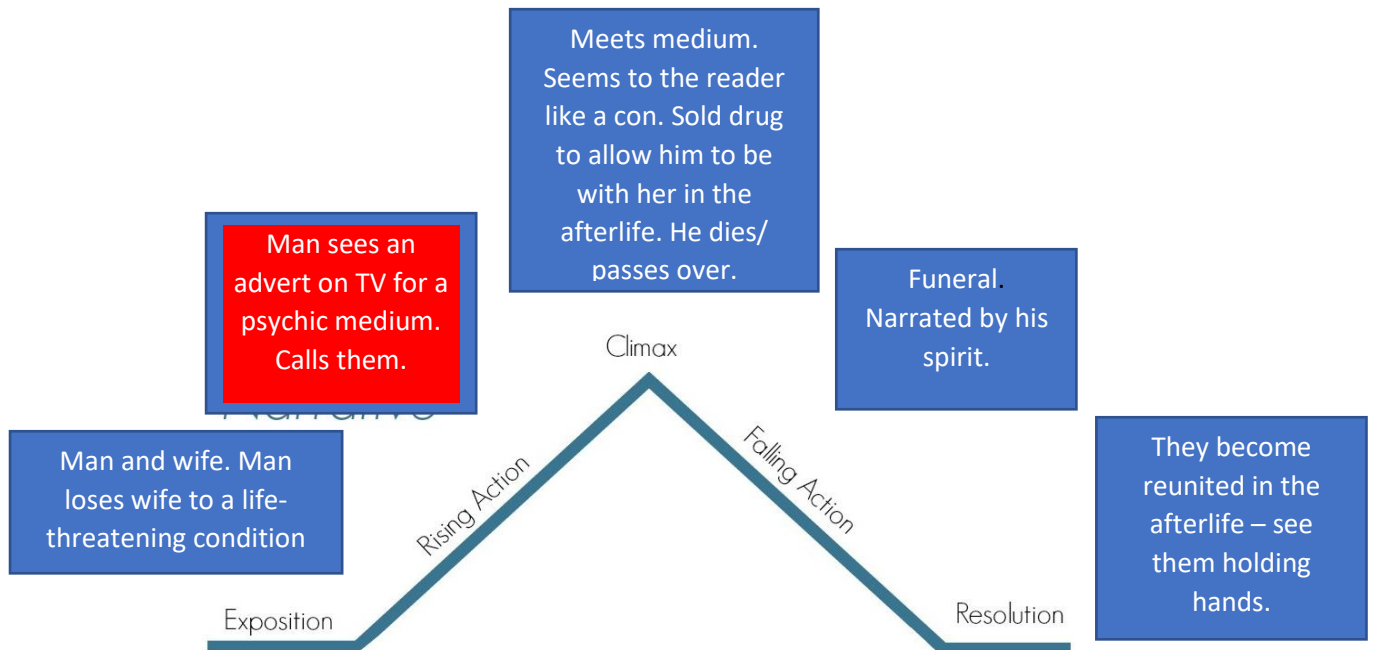
- The different colours in the sky.
- Clouds
- The sun
- Description of the oak tree: size, branches, twigs, bark
- Description of the evergreen trees (background)
- Add some birds to the description
- Temperature
- Snow
- Hills
- Move into the forest
- Change the weather (could snow, sleet or rain)
- Change in the time of day.
- Change in mood – beautiful to unpleasant.

Tip: to identify different types of trees or birds, clouds or trees see page....

After writing your piece, look at the checklist on page 1; tick off the techniques you've used.

Write a story called "New Beginnings".

Example narrative arc:



Example opening taken from the "rising action" section:

2am. His eyes were heavily lidded. He was eerily suspended between a half-sleeping, half-waking state. Neither here nor there. His life had become one long moment of half-waking terror: a nightmare he could not escape from. The television set was blaring. The advert channel had found its way to him again.

He saw *it*. The advert he had seen every night for the past week and a half. Now a familiar comfort. "Psychic medium" flashed on the screen in different colours, appearing in different locations on the screen:

Neon blue, slanted, top left.

Upside down, bright pink, top right.

In the middle of the screen, multi-coloured font. Large. Flashing.

A strange but familiar tune accompanied the words: "Psychic medium". A low, whining melody, full of dulled, sad tones stretched across the space of the empty room. With every thrum of the melody, he felt as though an invisible hand caressed his cheek, enticing him to... just call the number on the screen.

Perhaps he'd have someone to speak to at least. About her. His children didn't care to ask nowadays how he was coping with the loss. Talking brought too much back for them too. Polite smiles and euphemisms were the closest they came to open talk.

026-355-466

He dialled the number. Three rings. Then answer.

Write a description of an autumn scene as suggested by this picture:



Example description:

The golden-amber leaves dance playfully in the park, encircling each other in a whirl-wind romance. There are so many of them. I sit on the old wooden park bench that is worn by age, and noticed the moments shared by many on this bench: evidenced by the etched in names of new, you'd imagine young, lovers. The tall autumn trees tower over me, long spindly branches depositing more and more yellow leaves. And so I sit here ruminating on life. There is life everywhere: life in nature, life in the children holding hands with their parents; life in the dogs being taken on their morning walk; life in hope. My eyes rest upon a small child, perhaps the age of two, and I see the sparkle of joy in her eyes as she surveys the same scene I am looking at. The girl's big blue eyes drink in the scenery; her mouth is pursed open in glee; she wears small black wellington boots on her small feet, the boots showing evidence of her parent's anxiety of the forecast of the blustering rain – a threat that had been looming over the village park for days. This prompted me to look up to the sky: the parents' nervousness was not so misplaced. Hugh slate-coloured clouds hovered menacingly in the air, the force and strength pushing the gentle baby blue into a hiding place.

Things you might include in your description:

- The sky.
- Clouds
- The sun
- Description of the trees: leaves, size, branches, twigs, bark
- Park bench
- Leaves on the ground
- Add some birds to the description
- Temperature
- Sounds: rustling of leaves, laughter, wind etc.
- Change the weather (could rain)
- Description of people: children, parents, older people

Tip: use the colour chart on the back page to find different shades of orange.

Or

Write a story with the title: "The Fall"

Either

Describe a campsite at night as suggested by this picture.



I stared, eyes wide open, mesmerised and transfixed by the incandescent glow of the open fire. It was greedily devouring the dry wood just fed to it; remnants of the newspaper used to get it started now flaking away into the dark night sky: black butterflies escaping into the night. I watched as the fire licked the cold air, lashing here and there, then benignly quieting, making its peace as it cooled its flames once more. I fed it again. It crackled and spat like a poisonous snake, hungry and ready to snap at its prey. I liked its fury. I liked the heat of its anger.

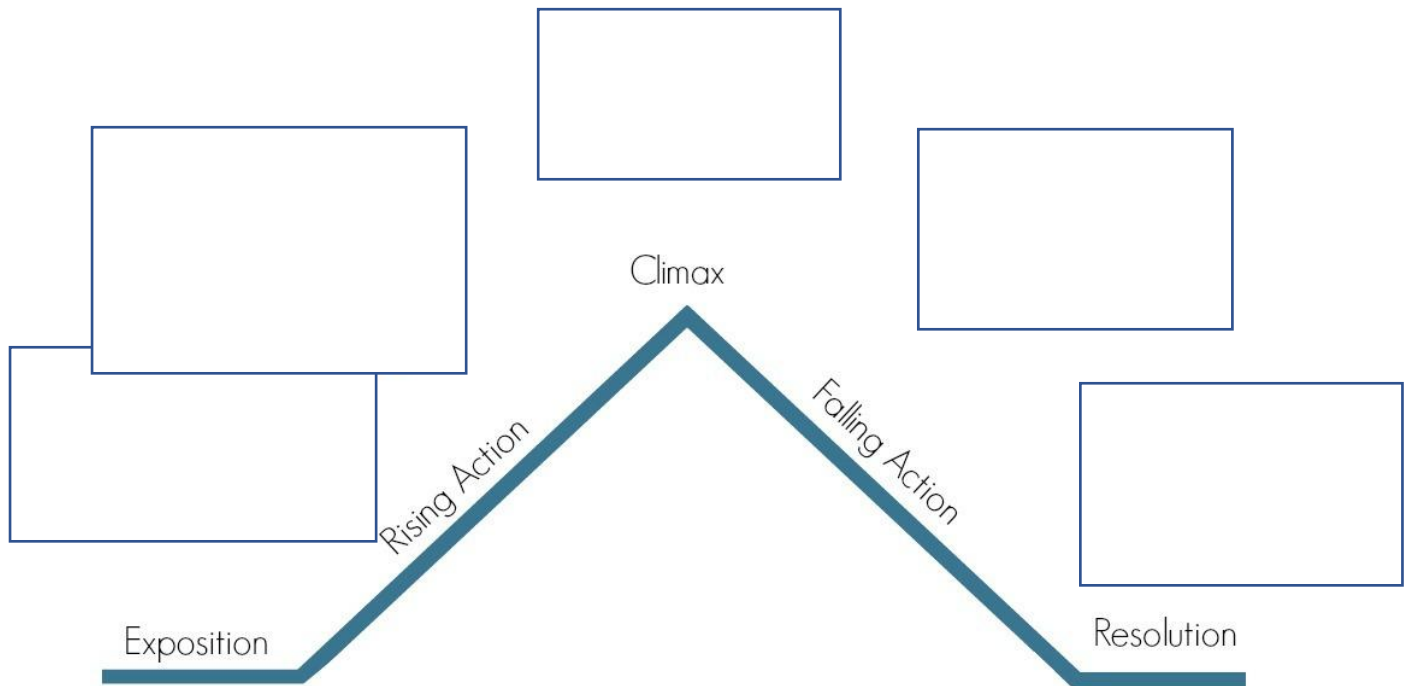
Ways you could carry on:

- Description of the night sky
- The stars
- The campsite itself
- The tents
- Moving from the fire to the tents
- The description of the lake and trees
- Change in

Or

Write a story about a secret meet-up.

Example narrative arc:



Use the above narrative arc to plan out a story that could fit the story brief.

Describe a walk in the woods as suggested by this image.



Example description:

We were walking through an umber-brown, ancient forest. It reeked of age. Its woody incense was from centuries of snapping branches crashing to the forest's floor and rotting silently. The composting, organic smell rose up in waves like a miasma. Every sprawling tree we passed under reminded me of a watchful guardian, a silent sentinel of the groves. We decided to venture deeper into the tangled heart of this primeval forest. We hoped that it would reveal its dark secrets to us.

Huge roots spread-eagled the ground, twisting like the great backs of sea dinosaurs. The foliage became thick and lush, forming an arch of fairytale-green above our heads. Arthritic boughs, gnarled with age, dripped their bounty of nuts onto the path. Briars, brambles and berry trees flanked the trail, making it impenetrable on either side. Shuffling noises came from deep in the interior, deadened by the cunningly woven web of leaves. A troupe of shambling badgers crossed the winding trail in front of us at one point. They were finishing up their early morning foraging and looked startled to see us.

We arrived at a wide glade, where the trees fell away, revealing the bespeckled sky. The last of the morning's stars were glinting like silver pin pricks, luminous and bright. An ore gold moon hung quietly in the distance, casting a honeyed sheen over the trees. We sat down with our backs against a lightning blasted tree trunk and watched it fade away. As if on cue, an avian aria erupted from the knot of trees. The solitary songbird was soon joined by his beaked companions, creating a symphony of song. The heart haunting melody was an elixir for the soul. The sap sweet fragrance of the forest washed over us and we were seduced by its comforting goodness. We placed some stinging nettle leaves into the broth we were brewing and it added a tingling, chlorophyll flavour. When we were leaving, I risked a glance over my shoulder. The forest glade looked freeze frame perfect in the enhanced light of the full dawn.

Use the "types of tree" section to help you to identify the trees in your forest.

Or

Write a story on the theme of loneliness or solitude.

See page 26 for an example story which could fit into this.

Places:

Either:

Write a description of an abandoned building as suggested by this picture:



There it stood. I had walked past it several times and I had never seen it. The idea that someone could have lived in this very building terrorised me. The walls. I noticed the empty space where a glass once, where shattered, sharp remains of glass still lie, threatening me like someone putting a knife at my throat. What could have once been a lovely rose garden was now a hostile thorn bush, and the swings where children used to spend moments of joy and innocent childhood were now creaking in the most haunted way... What terrified me the most was its isolation. I was alone. Uncovered.

Exposed to an unknown edifice that stared at me in return. As I lifted my head to defy its insubstantial stare, something caught my eye. I had not made the observation until now, as the infinitely long walls made it almost impossible to see: there was no ceiling. Where had it gone? This question made me less afraid of the building and more curious as to what had happened to it.

I walked towards the entrance door. From there, the whole structure appeared to be monstrously massive. I truly thought the feeling of inferiority would cease when I entered the building. It did not. From the inside, it looked as big as ever before, for there were no floors or ceiling. Four endless walls and a staircase leading to the cold foggy sky. It was almost as if it were a message, telling me that it was all over... but was it?

The dust, cobwebs, and graffiti on the walls and corners brought me back to reality. I was not the first to experience this unwelcoming, macabre pile of bricks. But yet the remains of furniture that lay disorderly cluttered on the floor reminded me of death, for this had once been the home of many happy lives and therefore full of life itself. And it was all gone. replaced by rats, spiders, and their cobwebs, dirt, dust, fleece and trash. And trash. How terribly sad, to be calling what had once been a cosy, comfortable sofa, trash. For it was ripped, dismantled, and stained. Abandoned...

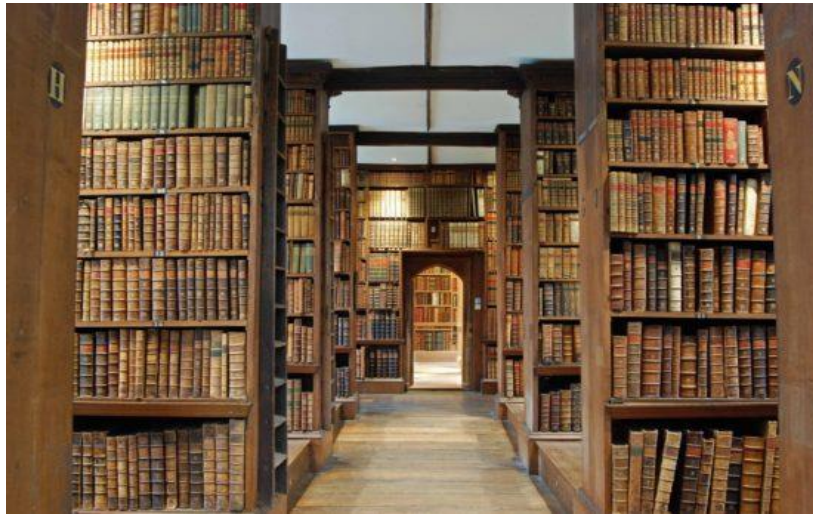
OR

Write a story about a place that has changed over time.

See page 25 for an example story that could fit this task.

Either:

Write a description of a quiet room, as suggested by this image:

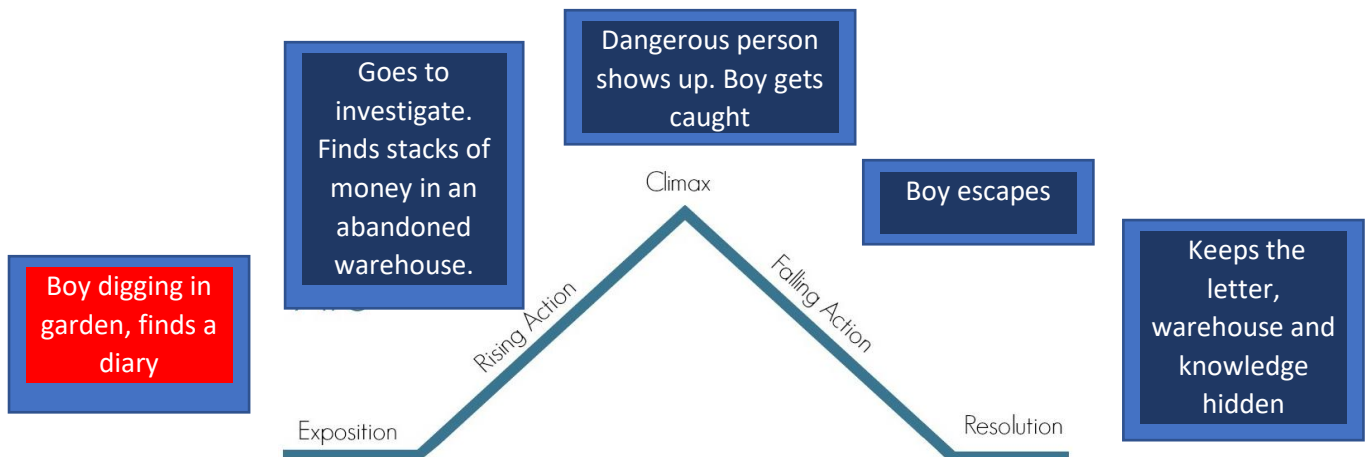


The only noise I can hear is the gentle tap tap tap of fingers against a key board. I am not sure of the source; who is typing away? Where they are sat? Or indeed what they feel the need to be writing so much. I sit at my desk, the same work station I have sat behind for the past eight months. I say 'my' desk; it is not mine at all. It is simply that no-one else chooses to sit here as I do. The tawny brown bookshelves stand with pride, head brushing the ceiling. They are sturdy, but aged, and the books they hold are even older. Much older. The straight wide corridor shows the full size of this room: a dim light hovers over an arched doorway, which, too, shows another room.

Things you may wish to include:

1. The size of the library.
2. The bookshelves: size, colour, number of books.
3. The spines of the books.
4. The lighting.
5. The librarian.
6. Other people in the library.
7. Other rooms connected.
8. Sounds: quietness; laptop keyboards; coughing / sniffing; pages being turned.
9. Smells: mustiness; dust; old books; coffee.
10. Describe the detail of a specific book: take one off the shelf.

Write a story about something hidden.



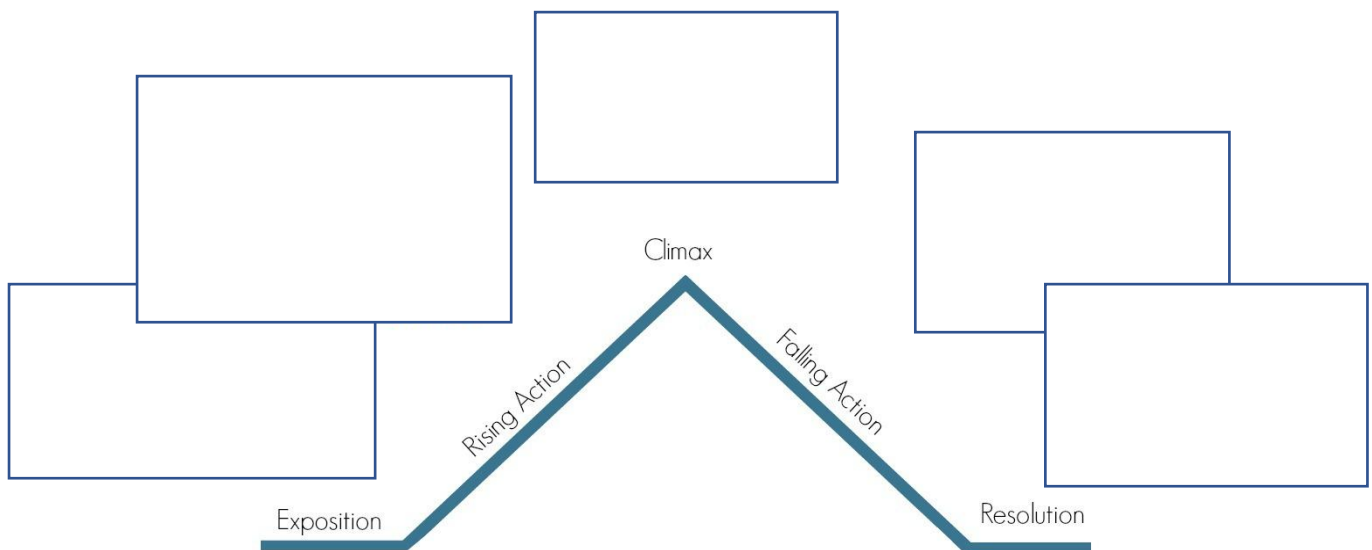
Example opening

The beginning is the exposition section of the plan.

Summer wasn't always fun as an only child. Christopher was put out in the garden to play whilst his parents went to work. Today was no different from any other day: he had a key in case he needed to go inside, and a spade to dig and a shed to play in in the garden. He looked at where he'd be spending the next eight hours of his life: the tall oak tree down the bottom of the garden gave him privacy from his neighbours. The rusty umber water tap meant he could kneel, bend his head sideways and open his mouth wide to get needed drink in this scorching July sun. And the tools in the shed meant he could explore the garden. Most importantly, the side-gate meant he could sneak out and go exploring beyond the house.

He did like exploring.

Task: complete your own plan



1. Describe a place for reflection as suggested by this image.



Example opening for description:

The man stood there in the empty church. The cold air cut against his pale skin; his blonde hairs were standing fully upright, as rigid as his body. He stepped forward. **One step. Two steps. Stop.** The peaceful quiet of the church was damaged by the soft **thud** of his shoes as they lightly **clapped** against the pristine ceramic tiles. He couldn't progress any further. As his movement stilled, the **thud, thud** of his heart beat picked up the rhythm his feet started to carry. **A thin streak of golden sunlight caught his eye**, entering the church from the far right square window, piercing his retina **like a laser thin needle**. He saw the stained glass images bursting with colour: Christ, Mary, the Angels. Their still expressions seemed to be mocking him, ridiculing his actions, threatening punishment.

Short sentences

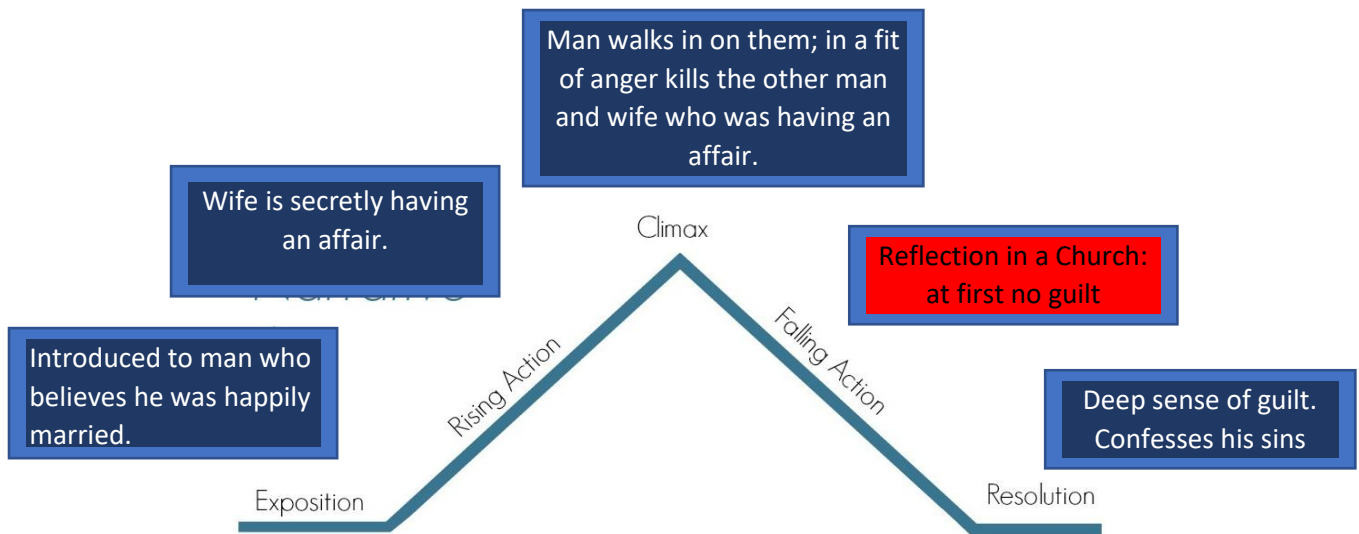
Onomatopoeia

Simile

Things you could include in your description:

1. Stained glass windows (images of Saints, Mary, Jesus, angels and rich colours)
2. Sunlight and where it falls in the Church
3. Pews (seats)
4. Altar
5. Candles / cross
6. Flooring: tiles or ledgerstones
7. High ceilings
8. Arch
9. Temperature
10. Sounds – echoes, quiet.
11. Smells – incense, oils, flowers, candles.
12. Difference between outside / inside the church

2. Write a story on the theme of guilt.



Example opening for narrative:

The story starts in the "Falling Action" in the church. It then will flash back to the rest of the story.

He sat alone in the empty church, a faint sound of birds chirping in the distance brought his thoughts back into the room. The first beam of sunlight pierced the room and illuminated the hollow, empty building revealing how alone he truly was. He never believed in a God but thought that he could clear his mind by coming here; the walls were lit up by the sunlight showing pictures and sculptures of people who mattered, people who made a difference to the world and would not be forgotten.

"They deserved it," he assured himself as his monotonous voice echoed around the room. Screams entered his memory; he knew they were in his head but that made it worse, he heard her scream and beg to be killed as he was forced to watch. He got a flashback to the moment she died, he escaped as the man who was holding him tried to run; he laughed as he thrust a needle that was on the floor into that monster's neck, watching the man drown in blood, writhing in pain on the floor he wanted more.

It all began one week ago. A drizzly day in May when he saw something that he shouldn't have seen....

People

Write a description of a boat in water, as suggested by this image.



Example opening for description

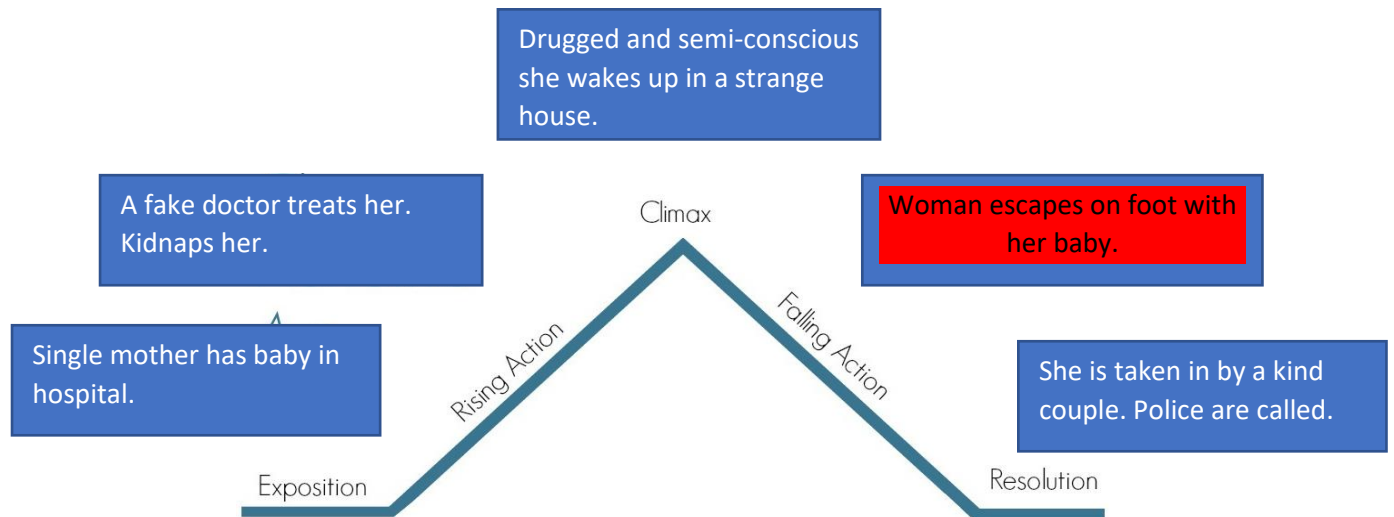
The old man watched the late afternoon sun out of the corner of his left eye, and smiled to himself as he thought that it looked like an apricot-coloured snooker-ball. He smiled at how it hung in the middle of the horizon line, between the stratosphere and sea, as though suspended by invisible string. He was finally alone on his canoe, wrapped up inside a protective ball of peace that he craved. Stood upright at the end of the canoe, the long oar extended above his head, gently dipping and rising with methodical precision as he stirred the water. Back and forth. Back and forth. He watched the oar as it pierced through the skin of the still water, mesmerised as the ripples travelled and skimmed across the top of the denim coloured surface of the river. A bead of sweat travelled down his brow, cooling his hot face, which was reddened by the exertion of his activity rather than from the sun which was now dying, fading into the sky, surrendering to the protective arms of the evening.

Things you may wish to include in your description:

1. Time of day (evening)
2. The distant horizon line
3. The still / quiet river
4. Lack of other people
5. Description of the canoe
6. The oar
7. The sun – colour
8. The motion of the boat
9. The motion of the oar in the water
10. Description of the man in the image
11. Description of the man's actions
12. Could there be a change in mood – e.g. change in weather / becomes dark

Write a story about an important journey.

Example narrative arc:



Example story opening

Story starts at the moment where she has escaped in the **Falling action section. Will use **flashbacks** / memories to piece together the rest of the story.**

With her newborn baby in her arms, she finally cried. She was free. She shivered as she realised for the first time that her baby – and body – were unprotected from the cold October air. She surveyed her new surroundings; the black night cast shadows everywhere: ebony buildings loomed and towered menacingly over her. Abandoned cars seemed to grin at her misfortune.

But she was free. She closed her eyes, wrapping her baby in the maternal warmth of her body and started to gently slip into a quiet, calm...

Her eyes involuntarily prized themselves open.

Her heart thud.

Her breathing quickened.

The memory of his face against the window, flashing that menacing smile, came back to her.

Either:

Describe a rainy platform at a station as suggested by this image.



Example description:

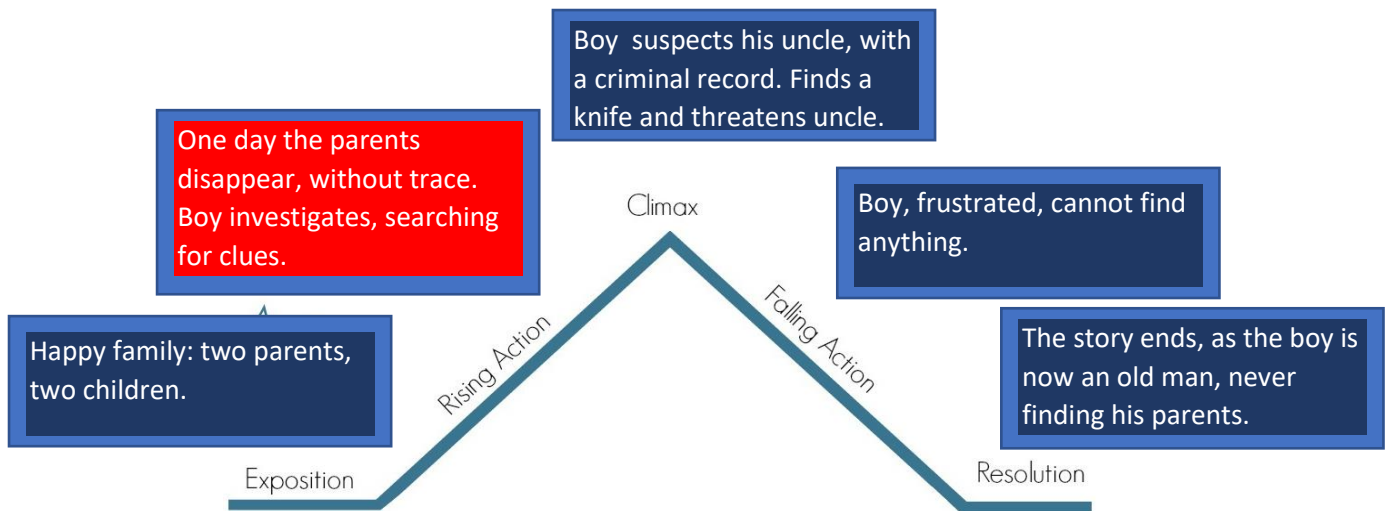
Inky black shadows dominated the platform, surrounding the solitary boy. The shadows spilled over his boots as he stood in the liquid darkness. The light from the oncoming train sliced a silvery strip out of the darkness, illuminating the boy so his shadow formed an exclamation mark. His umbrella became a musical instrument, a melody of raindrops pelting against the surface of the nylon fabric of the umbrella. In another scenario, perhaps a warm bedroom, the sound would be comforting but in the biting chill of this night the sound was unsettling and its constant rattle mirrored and exacerbated the muddle in his mind.

Things you could include:

1. The boy: physical and / or emotional description.
2. The boy's umbrella.
3. The other people who are waiting (use your imagination).
4. The concrete ground of the waiting area.
5. The light from the on-coming train.
6. The rain.
7. The train when it arrives.
8. The sounds at the station.
9. The night sky.

Write a story about a long wait.

Example narrative arc:



Example narrative opening:

This story begins in the rising action.

The young boy sat by the window pane, looking out to the garden. He could only see the cold bitter winter. A thin sheet of snow coated the grass in the garden; the growing darkness of the evening made the white of the snow seem somehow brighter, more radiant.

Tears stung his eyes. He gulped back a deep breath as his thoughts returned to his parents.

“Where’s mum and dad?” A lingering malaise was interrupted by the sound of his brother; now those innocent eyes were plastered to him. It was the same question that he asked the day after it happened; the same phrasing; the same words. And now he gave the same answer:

“I – just – don’t know”, he eventually replied, wishing he could say something different.

Josh realised he was bored of winter; bored of the tedium of being trapped in his grandparent’s house, never being allowed out. Bored of just staring out of the window at the endless snow. His mind returned involuntarily to that warm day in June, many months ago when he spent his last car journey with his mother and father.

In a flash, Josh was transported back there – back in that moment. He could hear the rattling of the damaged engine as it whirled and clanked, whirled and clanked, rhythmically, gently, then noisily. He remembered the deep sigh of his mother, as though she knew she may not see him again...

No.

He stopped *that* thought. Of course she didn’t know. Someone had kidnapped them.

Write a description of Christmas Eve: either a family home or a different scene.



Example description:

Christmas. The time of year for laughter, food and family. The young girl woke up at 6.03 am, eager for the day to start. The house was still quiet. The only noise she could hear was the deep snoring of her father, and the gentle paws of the family cat as it moved across the carpet. Christmas! She thought. Tiptoeing downstairs to the kitchen she could smell the gammon that had been cooking the night before; this was intermingled with the smell of cranberry and raisin biscuits and the smell of sugar and cinnamon spice.

The house was still dark.

She walked into the living room and saw the multi-coloured twinkling of Christmas stars from the light decorations around the room. She followed the trail and her eyes ended up on the Christmas tree: magnificent in size and stature.

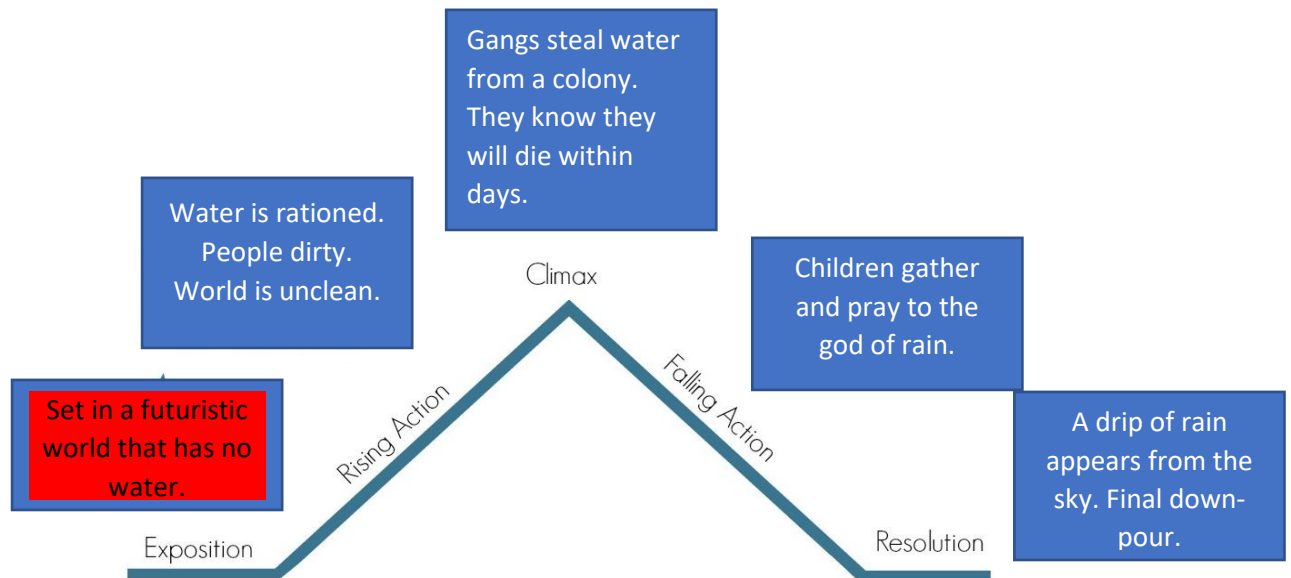
Things you may wish to include:

1. A description of the emotional experience of Christmas: excitement, family, togetherness, anticipation.
2. Christmas tree: real or fake.
3. Christmas decorations and lights / toys.
4. Different rooms in the house.
5. Christmas music.
6. Smell of Christmas foods: chestnuts, gammon, turkey, minced pies, treats, pine-needles etc.
7. Fire-place.
8. Contrast between the warmth of inside and the coldness of outside.
9. Description of outside: frost, snow, cold, evergreens, bare trees, robins.
10. You could contrast a family with plenty, with a family with very little.

11. You could contrast the quiet of a house before relatives arrive and the busy bustle of when they do arrive.

OR

Write a story called "Expectations".



Example opening. Taken from the exposition section.

The bleak overcast skies perpetually seem to threaten rain. If anyone was familiar with the world of "before", they would know that dark skies mean rainclouds. Rain clouds mean water. Water means drink. Drink means life. Life means happiness.

These dark skies do not mean this at all.

I look up to the sky and see grey upon grey: slate grey interlocked with charcoal. These are signs of pollution; they signify an earth which no longer has room to store its water in the skies, not able to release its stores to replenish the thirsty earth. As a result, there is little colour in this world: no greens from plant life, no clean blues in the skies; the golden glow of the sun is hidden behind black opaque clouds, ever so often peering its dirtied face to offer a us a weak but warming- and always welcome - smile.

We do have water here, but it is rationed and measured by the drops. We do not need many drops to survive, but it means that we exist in a perpetual state of discomfort. Our organs do not work, I am told, in the normal way. Tiredness is all we know.

Narrator type:

First person narrator

Describe a person deep in reflection.



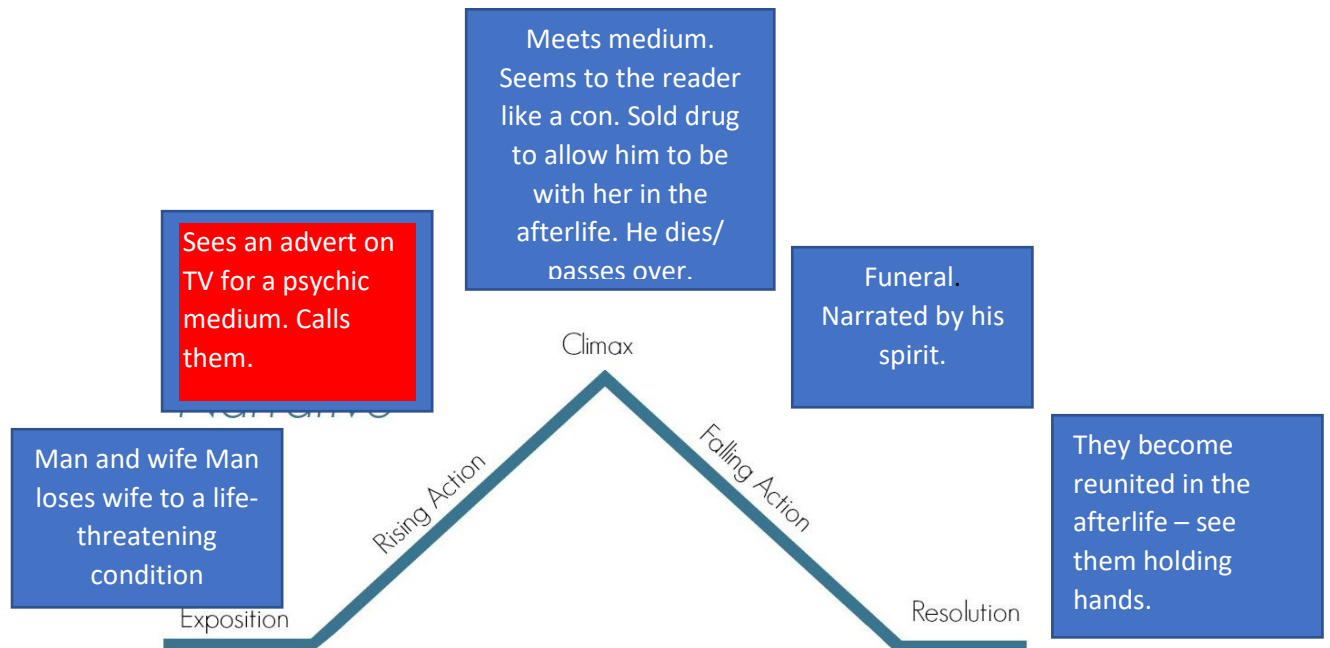
She stood there, ghost-like as she stared out of the window. Her eyes were downcast as she watched the people and traffic beneath her, each soul trapped in their own isolated world, either coming or going: some with purpose, some without. She thought she saw *him*. She thought.... But changed her mind. The man she had been absent-mindedly studying was not him, not at all. She sharpened her focus to the black leather jacket he was wearing – it was just like his – but then saw the thick amber bush of his beard and realised it was someone else entirely. A seagull caught her eye: its outstretched wings, orange beak and white and grey feathers made her think of freedom. She turned her back to the world at last. She turned her back to the window. She turned back to her room. The black metallic bedframe was so uninviting, as were the bedsheets that hadn't been cleaned for many months. She saw the stacks of dirty plates; the milk cartons and tissues covered in tears. She truly felt alone.

Things you could include in your description:

1. Physical and/or emotional description of the woman.
2. A description of the world inside her mind.
3. A description of what she could be looking at: the traffic, specific people, shops etc.
4. Description of the sky: sun, clouds, birds.
5. Description of the outside of the house, including the window.
6. Description of the room she is stood in: for example, the bed, table, clothes, food, curtains.
7. The smells inside her room.
8. The sounds inside / outside her room.

Write a story about loss.

Example narrative arc:



Example opening taken from the “rising action” section:

2am. His eyes were heavily lidded. He was eerily suspended between a half-sleeping, half-waking state. Neither here nor there. His life had become one long moment of half-waking terror: a nightmare he could not escape from. The television set was blaring. The advert channel had found its way to him again.

He saw *it*. The advert he had seen every night for the past week and a half. Now a familiar comfort. “Psychic medium” flashed on the screen in different colours, appearing in different locations on the screen:

Neon blue, slanted, top left.

Upside down, bright pink, top right.

In the middle of the screen, multi-coloured font. Large. Flashing.

A strange but familiar tune accompanied the words: “Psychic medium”. A low, whining melody, full of dulled, sad tones stretched across the space of the empty room. With every thrum of the melody, he felt as though an invisible hand caressed his cheek, enticing him to... just call the number on the screen.

Perhaps he’d have someone to speak to at least. About her. His children didn’t care to ask nowadays how he was coping with the loss. Talking brought too much back for them too. Polite smiles and euphemisms were the closest they came to open talk.

026-355-466

He dialled the number. Three rings. Then answer.

Narrator type: omniscient

Write a description about an event with crowded people, as suggested by this image.



Description example:

I stood in the centre position of the crowd. Around me there were thousands of people. All ages had come to participate in our fight for freedom. My eyes rested on a seven year old girl who had her face painted purple; the letters: "Stop" were smeared in black across her tiny face; to my right was a large man, his grisly beard hanging down past his chin. I stared intently at his fiery ginger hair which matched the fiery glow of sun on this hot summer's day. Although empowered by this march, in this moment I felt trapped. Confined. Suffocated. The cacophony of noise reminded me of swarms: swarms of bees; swarms of insects; swarms of swarms. Intermingled with the noise was the smell of sweat: heavy, hanging, grimy. There was no exiting; no turning back now, even if I wanted to leave. I screamed, alongside the thousands of others: "It will stop. It will stop".

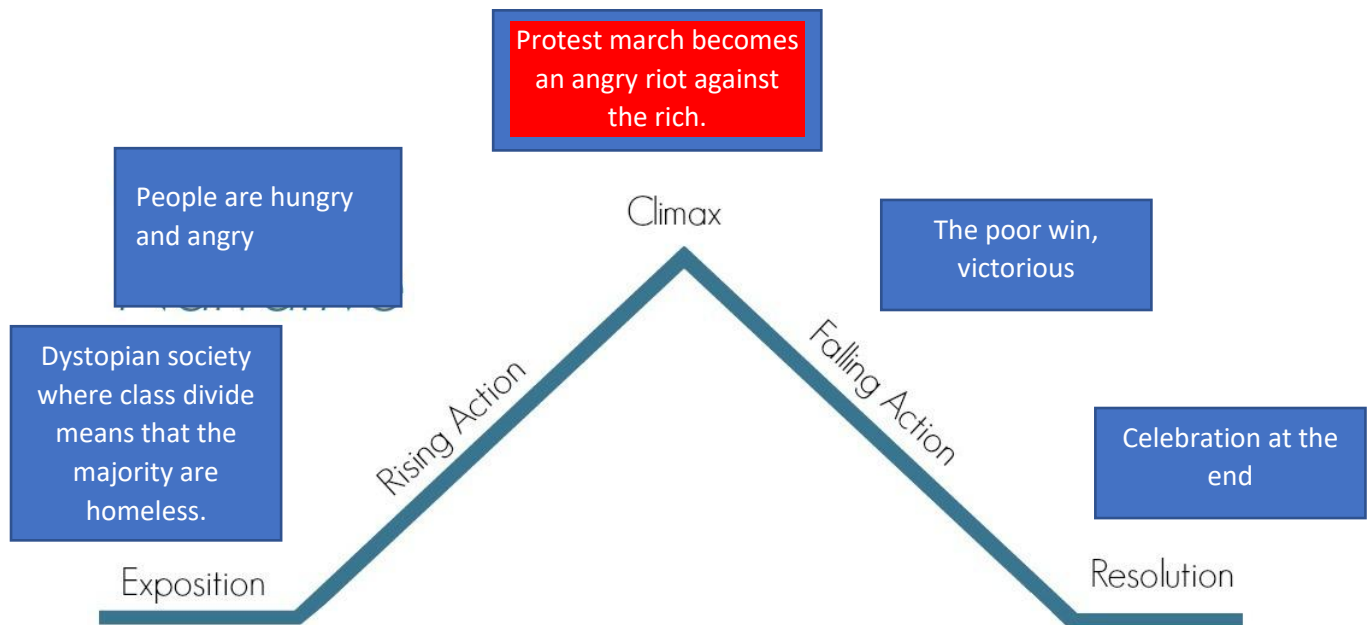
An eruption of thunder provided the low bass undercutting our protest symphony. Clear blue skies became grey. Grey turned to slate. Slate turned to obsidian black.

What you may wish to include:

1. The sound of the crowd.
2. The crowd and what it looks like from a birds eye view.
3. A closer look at specific people in the crowd.
4. The sounds of the crowd.
5. The general feelings of the crowd: anger, hostility, pride, optimism, strength etc.
6. What it might feel like to be stood in the centre of the crowd.
7. The smell of other people: sweat, perfume, vomit, blood etc.
8. The season / time of day.
9. The sky / birds / sun.
10. Can there be a change in mood / tone: can the crowd move from peaceful to angry? Can the crowd become dangerously out of control?
11. Can the weather change? From sunny to raining etc.

Or write a story about fighting for justice.

Example Narrative arc:



Example opening

Story opens in the climax section:

"Fight!" The group leader bellowed.

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" Echoed the crowd. The deep bellow of raw anger erupted through the crowd, vibrating with an urgency, voices strained by hunger and irritation and low energy. It had to happen and it had to happen now.

Mothers had babies strapped to their backs. Some barely alive. A drum beat in the background.

Describe a busy high street, as suggested by this picture:



Example description:

The security man sat at his post, watching the world in the usual way. Inside his room were screens upon screens, each capturing different aspects of the high-street. He was watching the high street at a quieter moment of the afternoon: the 3 pm lull after people had finished eating and were sluggishly moving from shop to shop.

One screen focussed on the plane besides the bank; another surveyed the child-like red and white stalls of the town market place; the camera hovered on the fish monger's little stall, who was teeming with fresh produce – so fresh that the security made could almost smell the prawns and lobsters; and taste the saltiness of the sea-side.

Another screen was on the old Church building, which was now used as a charity shop. The security man looked at the stone wall of the church, now undone and decaying from the hands of time. The steeple still, however, proudly displayed a cross, a reminder of the deity in this modern, materialistic world.

No-one realised they were being seen. No-one realised that he was watching their tortured facial expressions. He realised for the first time as he watched the detail so intently that no-one seemed happy: one woman grimacing as she nearly fell over from the weight of all of her shopping bags, thousands of pounds bulging through the thin plastic carrier bags: each bag a different colour, each with a logo strewn across it: she was a walking advert of success. Another man walked very slowly down the high street, hands in pockets, eyes cast downwards, fearful of being seen.

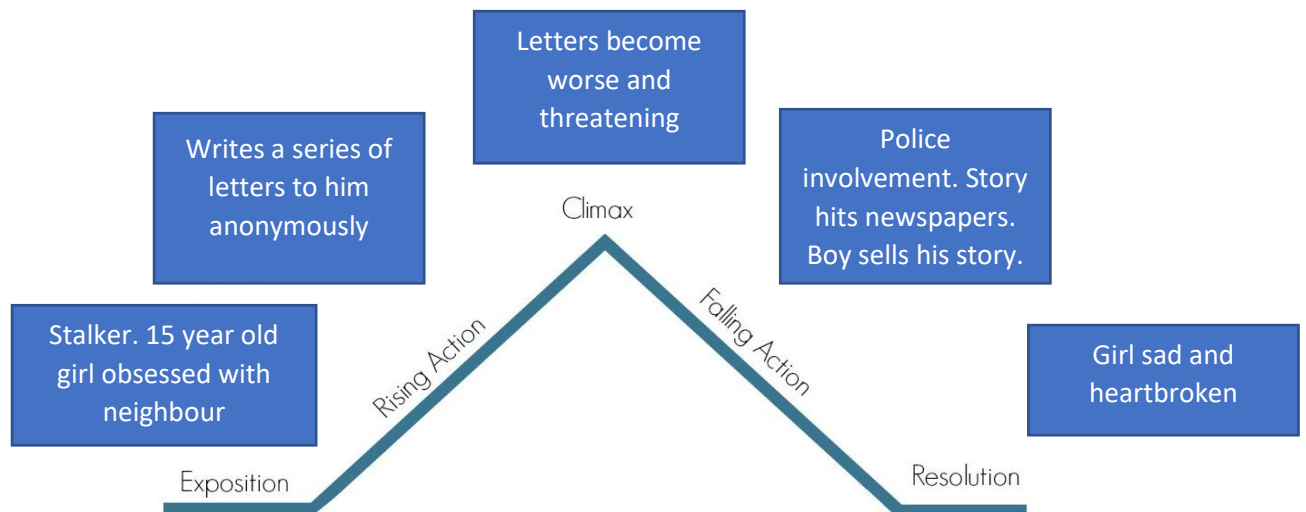
You may wish to include some of the following:

1. Shops in the high street?
2. Specific people as they move: physical / emotional description.
3. Noises on the high street? Footsteps, shouting, traffic (buses and cars), buskers etc.
4. Season / weather / time of day.
5. Street lights
6. Bins
7. Rubbish
8. Homeless people
9. Charity workers
10. Buskers
11. Buses, cars, cyclists.

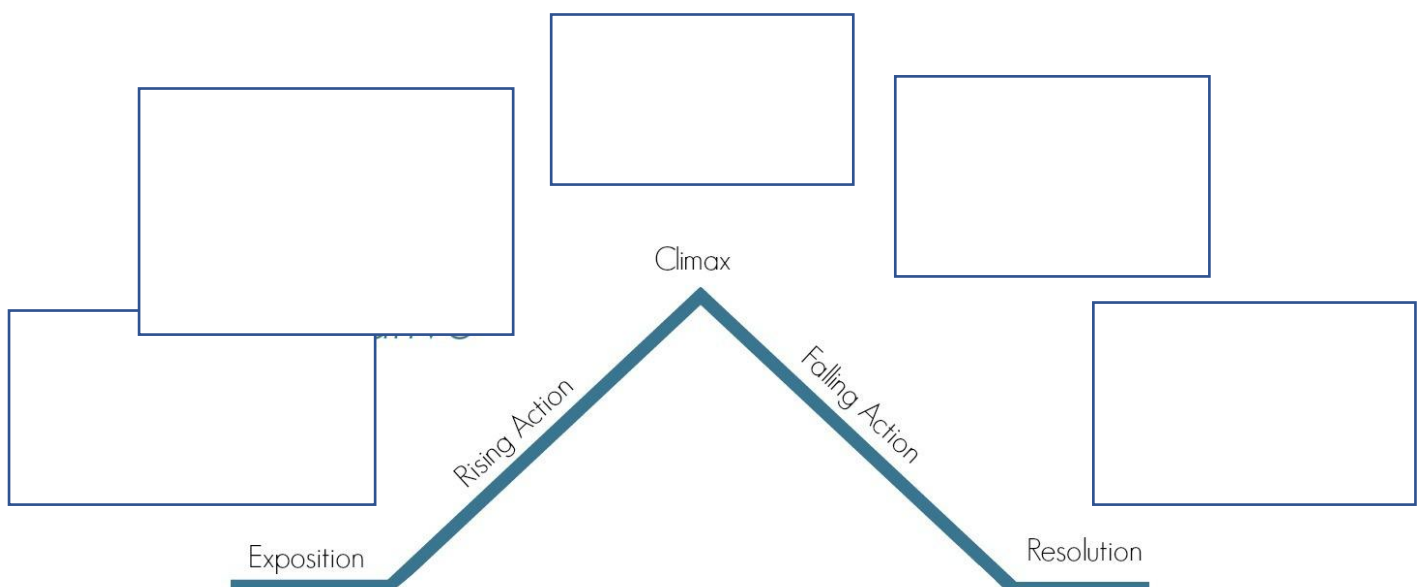
Or

Write a story using the title: “watching”

Example narrative arc:



Task: create your own plan for this story using the narrative arc.



Describe an outside event as suggested by this picture:



Example description

As night falls, the fairground glows luminous against the black sky. The fair is a myriad of colours: dazzling lights flash and flicker; rides accelerate, hurtling through the air; rich scents of candy-floss, hotdogs, caramel and donuts waft through the air. The places is alive with booming music, exhilarated screams, delighted squeals and cheerful shouts.

Colossal, gyrating rides with vibrant, pulsating lights tower over the excited visitors. A roller coaster spirals and coils, which makes it look like an elongated snake twisting through the fair. Excited, thrilled, delighted children race to join the spectacular rides. A lone girl waits by the big wheel smiling and tapping her feet (inside she is petrified of the dizzying heights).

Anxious and agitated, a teenager stands huddled in a long queue. Just thirteen, it is her first time here without her parents. High above the fairground, voices cry out and shriek with wild and terrified laughter. The riders are exhilarated because they are zooming rapidly along the tracks.

Animals:

Describe a suburban street as suggested by this picture.



OR

Write a story called “secret lives”.

Bank of high level vocabulary

Colours: saffron, indigo, scarlet, azure, emerald, hazel, turquoise, jaundiced, pea green, cyan, magenta, burgundy, cherry, ruby, sapphire, crimson, bloodshot, vermilion, maroon, auburn, chestnut, cobalt, aquamarine, navy, khaki, camouflage, vanilla, , pearly white, antique white, violet, beech, cadet blue, firebrick, tomato, coral, orchid, honeydew, ivory, lemon, peach, plum, gold, lavender, beige, fuchsia.

Dramatic Verbs: snared, disturbed, smashed, blazed, swayed, tormented, straggling, lacerating, plunged, clashed, crackled, penetrated, blistering, jolted, splitting, darted, collapsed, trembled, engulfed, scurried, flickered, twitched, shattered, obliterated, throbbing, shuddered, exploded, oozed, quivered, gushed, raged, toiled, twisting, , writhed, swelled, crept, flapped, collided, pummelled, punctured, dissolved, clenched.

Emotions: apprehension, solemnity, melancholy, underlying guilt, nausea, ennui, jealous, depressed, heartbroken, crestfallen, despondent, anxiety, vexed, morose, confused, hostile, ecstatic, elated, hatred, shame, contempt, pity, envy, benevolence, boredom, restlessness, bewilderment, awe, humiliation, suspicious, impatient, panic-stricken, disbelief, exasperation, resentment, defiance, curiosity, expectation, remorse, exhilaration,

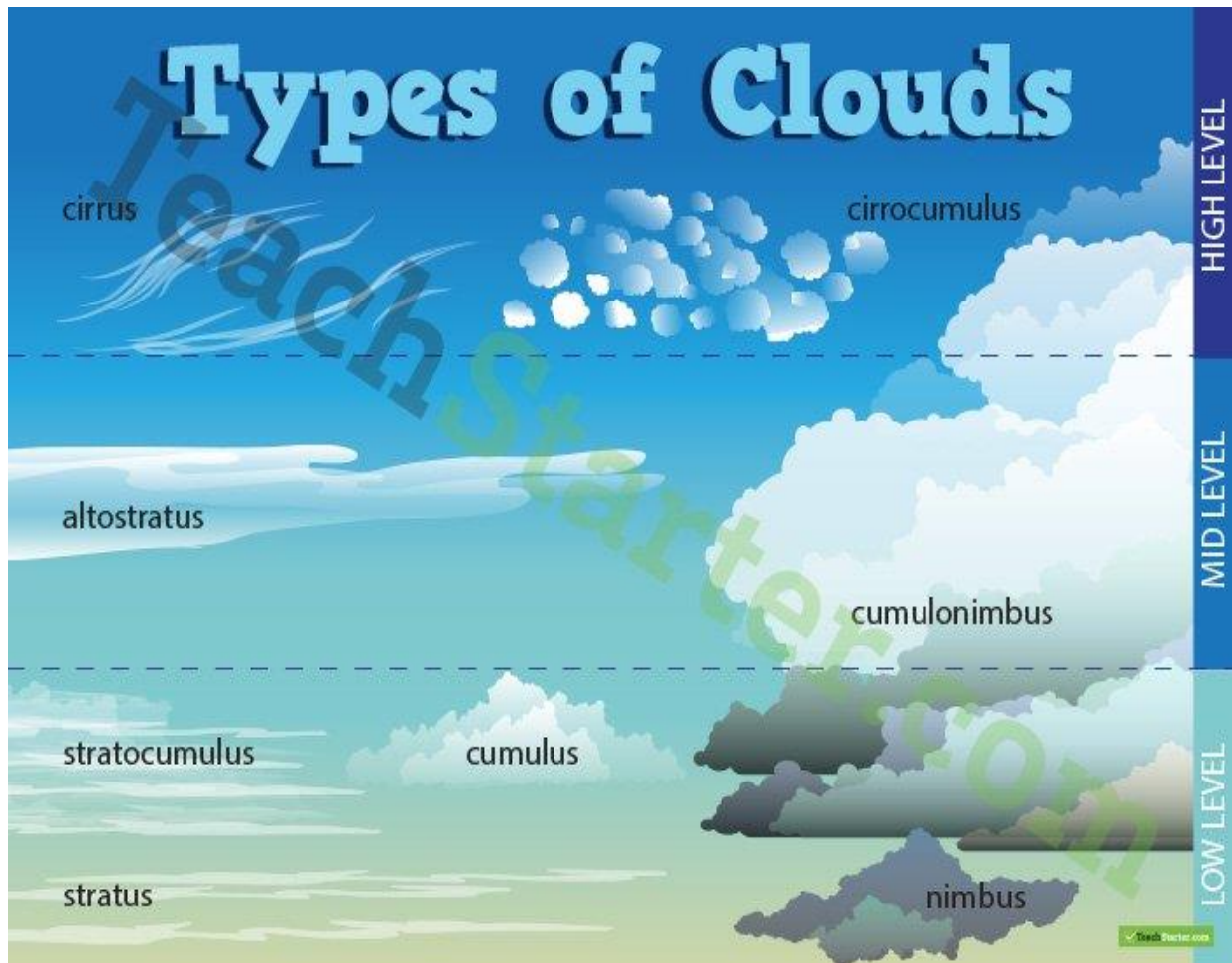
Adjectives: rigorous, merciless, relentless, arduous, rigid, vile, deformed, jagged, serrated, furtive, repulsive, monstrous, intolerable, distinct, prodigious, perilous, ghastly, vast, transparent, ruinous, obscure,

Words to create an interesting character: mute, hesitant, aloof, prodigious, insolent, dispassionate, timid, bashful, surreptitious, indifferent, detached, unapproachable, intriguing, negligent, irresponsible, isolated, irritable, impudent, compelling, edgy, cantankerous, evasive, deceitful, fiery, impulsive, fervent, introverted, eccentric, callous, amoral, immoral, fickle, sentimental, compassionate, eager, inquisitive, indecisive, naïve, infatuated, affectionate, threatening, vicious, unpredictable, cynical, pessimistic, impertinent,

Adjectives for describing food: bittersweet, acidic, peppery, spicy, tangy, sweet, flavoursome, fruity, bitter, sour, salty, sapid, citrus, appetising, sharp, sugary, insipid, bland, stale, watery, succulent, unpalatable, savoury, lukewarm, tingle, aftertaste,

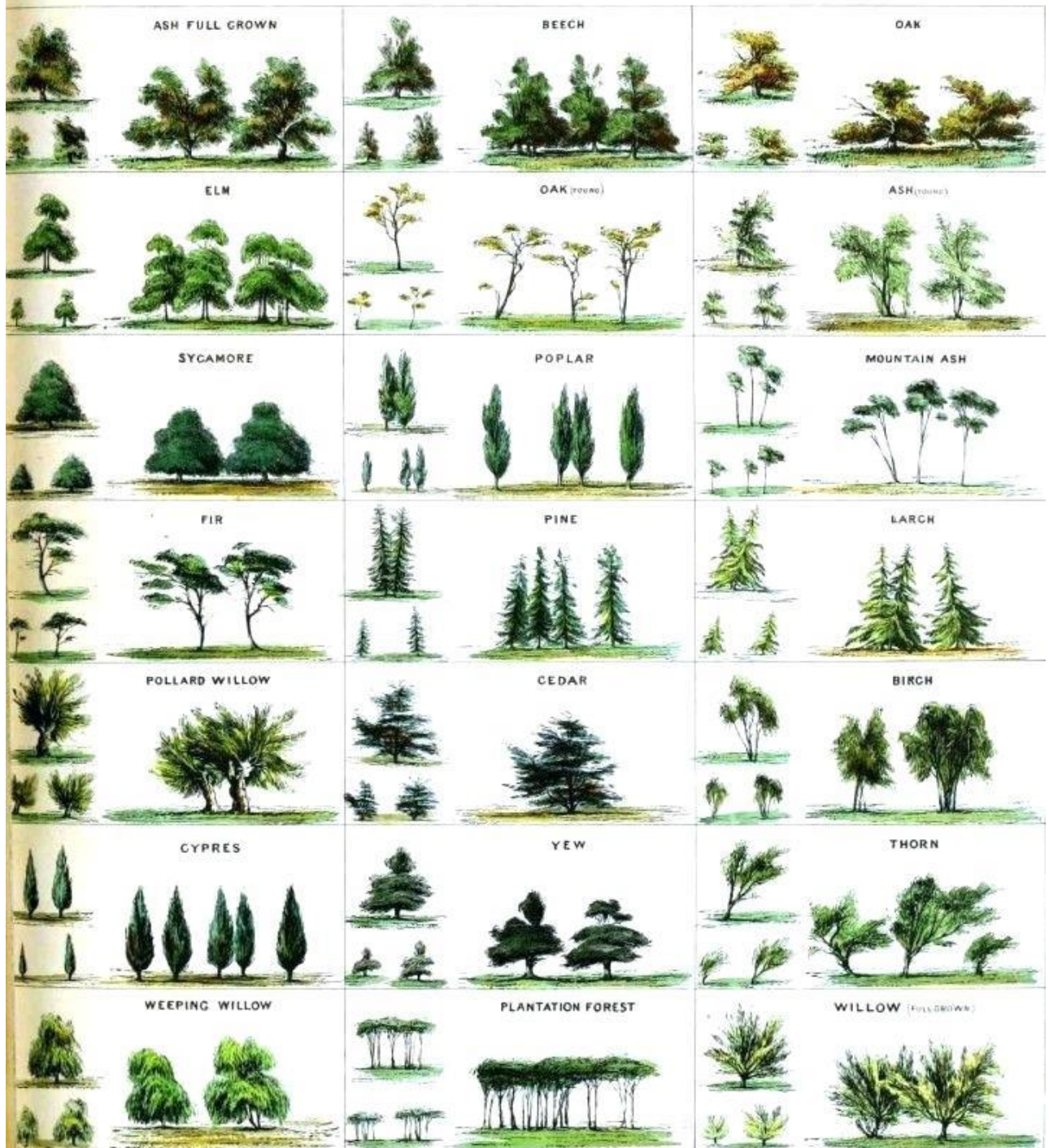
Sound Nouns: click, whisper, hush, silence, tiptoe, creak, tap, thud, knock, din, tone, resonance, vibration, ring, toll, chime, echo, scream, thump, yell, bawl, screech, wail, yelp, roar, shriek, bang, shout, uproar, babble, clunk, tick, inaudible, rattle, plod, hum, whirr, rev, crunch, beep, rumble, squeak, clatter, snore, bleep, yawn, snorted,

Useful pages for nature writing:



FOREST TREES IN ELEVATION.

Nº 1.



From nature expressly for this Work by A. D. Rye

Arranged & Drawn to Scale for Maps & Plans by B P Wilne. London 1842

The smallest Tree Throughout the Diagram is recommended for Plans at a scale of Three Chains to one Inch

BRITISH GARDEN BIRDS



WREN



BLUE TIT



BLACKBIRD



ROBIN



CHAFFINCH



BULLFINCH



SONG THRUSH



GOLDFINCH



NUTHATCH



GREENFINCH



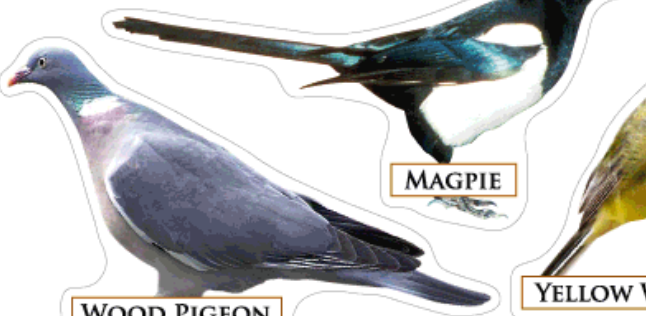
SPARROW



GREAT TIT



STARLING



MAGPIE



YELLOW WAGTAIL



COLLARED DOVE



WOOD PIGEON

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BIRDS NOT TO SCALE.

orange	tangerine	marigold	cider
rust	ginger	tiger	fire
bronze	cantaloupe	apricot	clay
honey	carrot	squash	spice
marmalade	amber	sandstone	yam

purple	mauve	violet	boysenberry
lavender	plum	magenta	lilac
grape	periwinkle	sangria	eggplant
jam	iris	heather	amethyst
rasin	orchid	mulberry	wine

blue	slate	sky	navy
indigo	cobalt	teal	ocean
peacock	azure	cerulean	lapis
spruce	stone	aegean	berry
denim	admiral	sapphire	arctic

red	cherry	rose	jam
merlot	garnet	crimson	ruby
scarlet	wine	brick	apple
mahogany	blood	sangria	berry
currant	blush	candy	lipstick

black	ebony	crow	charcoal
midnight	ink	raven	oil
grease	onyx	pitch	soot
sable	jet black	coal	metal
obsidian	jade	spider	leather

yellow	canary	gold	daffodil
flaxen	butter	lemon	mustard
corn	medallion	dandelion	fire
bumblebee	banana	butterscotch	dijon
honey	blonde	pineapple	Tuscan sun

green	chartreuse	juniper	sage
lime	fern	olive	emerald
pear	moss	shamrock	seafoam
pine	parakeet	mint	seaweed
pickle	pistachio	basil	crocodile

brown	coffee	mocha	peanut
carob	hickory	wood	pecan
walnut	caramel	gingerbread	syrup
chocolate	tortilla	umber	tawny
brunette	cinnamon	penny	cedar

white	pearl	alabaster	snow
ivory	cream	egg shell	cotton
chiffon	salt	lace	coconut
linen	bone	daisy	powder
frost	porcelain	parchment	rice