

Introduction to alternative section of Year 6 transition unit

The Year 6/7 English transition units published in 2002 were designed to provide a link for children between their primary and secondary school literacy experiences. Novels were selected for the two units with a common author or theme. This alternative section provides two different novels for use in the Year 6 unit for classes which include children from both Year 5 and Year 6. It still complements exactly the transition unit for Y7.

Summary of objectives

The main objective of this unit is to ensure that pupils can use a reading journal effectively to raise and refine personal responses to text and prepare for discussion. In the reading journal, the pupils will describe and evaluate the style of writers by summarising, comparing and contrasting elements across their novels and making connections to and comparisons with another writer/other writers. In composing journal entries the pupils will use, as appropriate, complex sentences and appropriate technical language (metalinguage) when summarising, connecting and contrasting. They will also have the opportunity to investigate the language used in the novels.

Outcomes

- Reading journals – evidence of each pupil's competence in reflecting upon their reading and their competence in writing.
- A class anthology for use by the school.

Resources

Why the Whales Came and Bad Dreams

This Year 6 unit requires two novels by different authors which, between them, appeal to a wide readership and contain some similar thematic material. The two novels which are the basis of this planning exemplification are *Why the Whales Came* by Michael Morpurgo and *Bad Dreams* by Anne Fine.

The editions of the two books exemplified in the planning are listed below. All page references refer to these editions.

Michael Morpurgo, *Why the Whales Came*, 2001, Egmont Books, ISBN 0 749 74693 9
Anne Fine, *Bad Dreams*, 2001, Corgi, ISBN 0 440 86424 0

If teachers choose to use these books it is essential that they read *Why the Whales Came* to the class before starting the unit and *Bad Dreams* on a daily basis throughout the unit. In order to follow the suggested plan, it is necessary to have read up to page 105 by the end of the first week and to the end of the book by the following Wednesday. A suggested number of pages has been inserted into the plan on each day.

The planning material includes resource material for use in analysis and as demonstration writing (Sample Texts 1–7 and Resource Sheets A–C). These materials serve to illustrate the intended teaching points and can be replaced with different examples.

Two-week plan for Year 6 – Week 1

Year 6	Week 1	Shared text, sentence and word level work	Independent/guided work	Plenary	Class novel	Possible homework suggestions
Day 1	Introduction to reading journals	Introduce idea of a reading journal and discuss the range of types of entry that are possible (Resource Sheet A). Briefly show examples of journal entries, either from past pupils or using Sample Text 1. 78	Pupils start their own reading journals by writing two or three comments they would like to make to Michael Morpurgo about any aspect of <i>Why the Whales Came</i> and two questions they would like to ask him about it. 71, 78	Sample pupils' responses. Focus on and explore a wide range of reactions/responses. 71, 78	Begin reading <i>Bad Dreams</i> to the class. Suggest reading to page 25.	Pupils begin to read own chosen texts; they record initial comments and questions. 71
Day 2	Analysing journal entries which compare texts	Reread the first three paragraphs of <i>Why the Whales Came</i> ; briefly discuss their effectiveness as an opening. Read and discuss the opening of <i>The Butterfly Lion</i> (Resource Sheet B). Discuss and analyse journal entry (Sample Text 1) that compares the two openings. Note the occasional use of complex sentences to make the comparisons and the use of specific terminology (metalinguage). 71, 75, S4, W6	Pupils read the opening of <i>The Dancing Bear</i> (Resource Sheet B). In pairs or groups, they discuss and analyse a journal entry that compares this opening with the opening of <i>Why the Whales Came</i> in a chart or diagram (Sample Text 2). 75, 78	Sample responses. Evaluate the effectiveness of each type of entry; e.g. in the chart, note the use of graphic alternatives to complex sentences but still the use of metalinguage. W6	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 40.	Use preferred entry type to evaluate the effectiveness of the opening in own chosen text. 71
Day 3	Applying – writing a journal entry which compares texts	Reread description of the Birdman (pages 4–5 of <i>Why the Whales Came</i>). Read the description of Roxanne in <i>The Dancing Bear</i> (Resource Sheet B). Demo-draw/write a chart/diagram to note the key points of similarity and difference in the way in which the author describes the two characters in the two books (Sample Text 3). Focus on use of journal metalinguage. Using this chart/diagram as a skeletal plan, demo-write the first two sentences of a prose journal entry on the same subject (Sample Text 3). 76	In reading journals, pupils complete the prose comparison of how characters are described using the appropriate metalinguage and some complex sentences to make effective comparisons. 76, 712, S4, W6	Identify a point from the chart and invite examples of pupils' developed viewpoints; focus on complex sentences and metalinguage. 76, S4, W6	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 58.	Character analysis – prose or chart form – on any significant character from own reading. 71
Day 4	Language investigation	Language investigation of Morpurgo's choice of vocabulary and use of sentence structure in <i>Why the Whales Came</i> . Full details of possible investigations are included in Resource Sheet C. S2, W5	Continue the investigation in pairs or groups. S2, W5	Pupils feed back the results of their investigations and discuss the conclusions they have drawn. S2, W5	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 81.	Pupils explore the language in their chosen text. S2, W5
Day 5	Transforming a text	Remind pupils that, for most of <i>Why the Whales Came</i> , the Birdman is feared and despised by the islanders and lives a solitary existence. Discuss how he might feel when they ignore and shun him. Demo-write two poems that contrast the islanders' superstitious behaviour with the Birdman's real experiences (Sample Text 4).	Pupils write two poems, one portraying the way most children behave towards Imogen (<i>Bad Dreams</i> pages 33–35), and the other her feelings about this. 78	Pupils share their poems and respond to each other's work. 78	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 105.	Pupils redraft/revise their poems. 78

Week 2

Year 6	Week 2	Shared text, sentence and word level work	Independent/guided work	Plenary	Class novel	Possible homework suggestions
Day 6	Emphasising in role-play and writing	Reread Mel's summary of the dilemma she believes she faces on pages 104–105 of <i>Bad Dreams</i> . In pairs, pupils discuss her three options. Ask pupils to justify which option they favour. Go into role as Mel's mum and Imogen's mum (hot-seating) in turn, to argue the case for two of the three possible courses of action, responding to counter arguments from the rest of the class. Demo-write a transformation piece for a journal entry, e.g. a letter to an agony aunt (Sample Text 5). T8	In reading journals, pupils write one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • response from agony aunt; • a persuasive piece, presenting the case for a particular course of action; • script for playlet in which Mel tries to persuade Imogen's mum to get rid of the necklace. T8 	Collect examples of dilemmas faced by characters from other texts read in class and pupils' wider reading. Do any themes recur? T8	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 120.	Design and write own transformation piece, showing empathy with any chosen character from own reading. Give brief orientation. T8
Day 7	Summarising and evaluating	Reread the incident where Imogen's story is read to the class (<i>Bad Dreams</i> pages 42–47). Discuss Imogen's behaviour over this and other incidents in school. Demo-write a summary of her behaviour, as if written by her teacher for a 'setting-in' report. Indicate your use of complex sentences and metalanguage (Sample Text 6). T9, S4, W6	Pupils reread the incident where Mr Hooper objects to Mel's writing (<i>Bad Dreams</i> pages 71–75). Pupils write a summary of this incident from Mr Hooper's point of view, and add any comments they feel he might make about Mel's behaviour in general. T9, S4, W6	Active listening – volunteers read out summaries; class listens to check accurate representation of incident. T8	Continue to read <i>Bad Dreams</i> . Suggest reading to page 138.	Select an incident from own chosen text where a character's behaviour is unusual. Write a summary from the point of view of another character.
Day 8	Creating a story map	Identify fear of those who are different or unusual, and how this can lead to intolerance, as one of the themes of both novels. Demonstrate creating a 'story map' of <i>Why the Whales Came</i> , showing the events which signal the changes in Gracie's feelings about the Birdman (Sample Text 7). T1	Pupils create a 'story map' for <i>Bad Dreams</i> , noting occasions when both Mel and Imogen behave differently from other children, and how they are treated by other characters. T1	Ask pupils to identify incidents and discuss any disagreements. T8	Finish reading <i>Bad Dreams</i> .	Pupils create 'story map' for own chosen text. T8
Day 9	Relating themes in the two novels to pupils' lives	Lead a discussion with the pupils of how the theme of intolerance of difference often appears in everyday life. Make connections with work done in PSHE or circle time, using paired talk to explore how and when this occurs in school life and the wider world. T6	Pupils reflect on an issue of intolerance that concerns them and respond with a journal entry in the form of their choice (i.e. diagram, letter, poem, empathetic response, diary entry, etc.). T8	Ask pupils to tell you the form of their entry and record the range. Discuss which forms are more or less popular. T8		Pupils revisit questions and comments in their first journal entry, and add to/refine these in the light of recent work.
Day 10	Evaluating use of a reading journal	Lead a class review of the results of using reading journals to explore a range of responses to a featured text. Organise pupils into groups to select and refine particular responses for inclusion in a class 'anthology' reading journal. T8	Create a communal journal. In groups, pupils review journal entries and choose items for anthology. Select pieces for revision and editing. Compile questions and comments for both authors to conclude anthology. T1, T5, T6, T8	Pupils add a final, reflective comment on what keeping a journal has meant for them and what they look forward to learning in English in Year 7.		

Using a reading journal

Reading journals, sometimes known as reading logs, can take a variety of forms and can involve different people: pupils only; pupils and teacher in dialogue; pupils, teacher and parents in a two- or three-way written dialogue. In this unit, suggestions are made as to possible ways of using a journal with Year 6 and Year 7 pupils, but these can be adapted and altered to suit a wide range of purposes, depending on the teacher's priorities. Before deciding how to make use of the materials in this unit, you may want to consider the following:

- Reading journals can provide a space for critical reflection and evaluation.
- Entries can take an infinite variety of forms: jottings, notes, ideas, diagrams, grids, charts, sketches, lists, mind maps, questions, predictions, diary entries, letters, playscripts, poems, stories, as well as more formal writing such as reviews or pieces related to close analysis of character, plot, setting, author's choice of language, and so on.
- Journals can provide pupils with an opportunity to speculate, explore, play with ideas and be tentative and uncertain in their responses. This may be particularly important for pupils who, for any number of reasons, currently find it difficult to express their opinions orally.
- Journals can allow pupils, whatever their reading ability, not only to respond to texts, but to investigate how the author provoked that response.
- 'Transformation pieces' are those where an idea or theme from the text has been transformed into another medium such as a poem, a letter or even a picture.

The following list was contributed by a Year 6 teacher.

What can I write in my reading journal?

- Write a description of the main character – their looks, the way they dress, the way they talk and their personality.
- Choose a descriptive passage and make a list of examples of vivid imagery, e.g. similes, metaphors, alliteration, personification, noun phrases, etc.
- List the words and phrases used to create an atmosphere, e.g. a scary or spooky one.
- Write about what a character might be thinking or feeling at any stage of the story – you could write it in the first person.
- Predict when you are about half way through a book, what might happen.
- Write down some words you had difficulty reading and had not met before. Find their meanings in a dictionary and write them down.
- Write about your favourite part of a book and why you liked it.
- Write down three facts you have learned from a non-fiction book.
- Pick a descriptive word from the text, write it down and, using a thesaurus, write down five synonyms and antonyms for that word.
- Write about how a non-fiction book is set out.
- Write some advice to a character in trouble.
- Write a diary entry that a character might write after an incident in the story.
- Challenge yourself! Write a 50-word summary of a whole plot!
- Write whether you would recommend the book or not, and why.

Comparison of the openings of *Why the Whales Came* and *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo has written both of these texts in the first person. I think this gives them more of a private feeling – as if the narrator is actually talking just to me when I read the text, so I feel really involved. Both narrators are also the main characters of the stories they tell, which means they will be directly involved in the action. I think this device usually makes books more convincing. Furthermore, both introductions use a flashback technique, with the narrator thinking back and explaining something significant in the past. This time-travel idea is always interesting, making it a bit like reliving someone’s personal history. It is also reassuring because, no matter how scary or dangerous events may get, I know that the narrator has survived to tell the tale!

Both openings refer to creatures, and the influence they seem to have over events. The image of the butterfly lion, glimpsed one summer afternoon, has stayed with the narrator all his life, while it was the arrival of a pair of swans that precipitated the adventures in *Why the Whales Came*. But each of these novels also begins with a reference to a mystery: what were the butterfly lion and the promise, and who was the Birdman and why was he forbidden?

The opening sentence from *Why the Whales Came* is threatening as well as mysterious, hooking in the reader straightaway with its air of menace. Michael Morpurgo also uses an emotional hook in the opening of *The Butterfly Lion*, but the content is less dramatic, so he boosts it with colourful, descriptive language to build attractive images. The short opening sentence just states a simple fact about butterflies, but it relies heavily on the universal appeal of these beautiful creatures to draw in his readers. The author reflects on the poignant fact of life that butterflies ‘flower and flutter’ gloriously, but die all too soon. After that, I really wanted to find out more about the fantastical butterfly lion, ‘blue and shimmering’ in the sun, that the narrator assures us was not a dream. I couldn’t tell immediately what the story would be about, but my imagination was captured by the butterflies!

Comparison of the openings of *Why the Whales Came* and *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Morpurgo

Convention — mentioning the author by name
 Making a technical point, then backing it up with a personal reaction

(Michael Morpurgo) has written both of these texts in the (first person). (I think this gives them more of a private feeling) — as if the (narrator) is actually talking just to me when I read the text, so I feel really involved. Both narrators are also the (main characters) of the stories they tell, which means they will be directly involved in the action. I think this (device) usually makes books more convincing. (Furthermore, both introductions use a flashback technique) with the narrator thinking back and explaining something significant in the past. This time-travel idea is always interesting, making it a bit like reliving someone's personal history. It is also reassuring because, no matter how scary or dangerous events may get, I know that the narrator has survived to tell the tale.

Technical vocabulary

Complex sentence used to set out a cause/effect relationship; use of 'which' as connective

Appreciation/explanation of authorial technique

Evaluation of impact — source of interest; reassurance

Use of discussion connective to structure points of comparison

Personal response interwoven with analysis

Close reference to content

Both openings refer to (creatures), and the influence they seem to have over events. The image of the butterfly lion, glimpsed one summer afternoon, has stayed with the narrator all his life, while it was the arrival of a pair of swans that precipitated the adventures in *Why the Whales Came*. (But) each of these novels also begins with a reference to a mystery: what were the butterfly lion and the promise, and who was the Birdman and why was he forbidden?

Deliberate use of 'But' to start a sentence — used to signal clearly a point to come

Use of non-finite verb in second clause — implies that the hooking effect is ongoing and/or will always work

The opening sentence from *Why the Whales Came* is threatening as well as mysterious, (hooking) in the reader straightaway with its air of menace.

Michael Morpurgo also uses an emotional hook in the opening of *The Butterfly Lion*, but the content is less dramatic, so he (boosts) it with colourful, descriptive language to build attractive images. The short opening sentence just states a simple fact about butterflies, but it relies heavily on the (universal) appeal of these beautiful creatures to draw in his readers. The author reflects on the poignant fact of life that butterflies (flower and flutter) gloriously, but die all too soon. After that, I really wanted to find out more about the fantastical butterfly lion, (blue and shimmering) in the sun, that the narrator assures us was not a dream. I couldn't tell immediately what the story would be about, but my imagination was captured by the butterflies!

Appreciation of authorial technique

Use of short quotations from the text; using author's own words to recreate the magic

Finishing with a convincing personal evaluation using an idea that links effectively with the text

Extracts from *The Butterfly Lion* and *The Dancing Bear*

***The Butterfly Lion* – opening paragraphs**

Chilblains and Semolina Pudding

Butterflies live only short lives. They flower and flutter for just a few glorious weeks, and then they die. To see them, you have to be in the right place at the right time. And that's how it was when I saw the butterfly lion – I happened to be in just the right place, at just the right time. I didn't dream him. I didn't dream any of it. I saw him, blue and shimmering in the sun, one afternoon in June when I was young. A long time ago. But I don't forget. I mustn't forget. I promised them I wouldn't.

I was ten, and away at boarding school in deepest Wiltshire. I was far from home and I didn't want to be. It was a diet of Latin and stew and rugby and detentions and cross-country runs and chilblains and marks and squeaky beds and semolina pudding. And then there was Basher Beaumont who terrorised and tormented me, so that I lived every waking moment of my life in dread of him. I had often thought of running away, but only once ever plucked up the courage to do it.

***The Dancing Bear* – opening paragraphs**

I was born in this mountain village longer ago than I like to remember. I was to have been a shepherd like my grandfather and his grandfather before him, but when I was three, an accident left me with a limp. Shepherding wasn't ever going to be possible, so I became a teacher instead.

For nearly forty years now, I have been the schoolmaster here. I live alone in a house by the school, content with my own company and my music. To play my hunting horn high in the mountains, and to hear its echoes soaring with the eagles, is as close as I have been to complete happiness.

Yet I suppose you could say that I became a sort of shepherd after all: I shepherd children instead of sheep, that's all. I teach them, and I'm a kind of uncle to them even after they've left school. They think I'm a bit eccentric – I play my horn and I talk to myself more than I should. Like all children, they can be a bit cruel from time to time. They call me 'Three Legs' or 'Long John Silver' when they think I'm not listening, but you have to put up with that.

***The Dancing Bear* – page 10**

Roxanne was about seven years old at the time. An orphan child, she lived with her grandfather, who was a dour and unloving man. She was a solitary girl, but never lonely, I think. At school, she appeared to be a dreamer, a thinker. After school, with her grandfather busy in his fields, she would often wander off by herself, watching rabbits, maybe, or following butterflies. She was forever going missing. Then her grandfather would come shouting around the village for her. When he found her, he would shake her or even hit her. I protested more than once, but was told to mind my own business. A friendless, bitter old man, Roxanne's grandfather was interested in nothing unless there was some money in it. Roxanne was a nuisance to him. She knew it – and everyone knew it. But he was the only mother and father she had.

Comparison of the openings of *Why the Whales Came* and *The Dancing Bear* by Michael Morpurgo

	Opening of <i>Why the Whales Came</i>	Opening of <i>The Dancing Bear</i>
Character	Female – Gracie	Male – not yet named
Voice	First person – ‘I’	First person – ‘I’
Verb tense	Past tense	Past tense to start Switches to present in second paragraph
Content	Flashback – looking back over more than 70 years Mystery – a warning about an unknown character Setting appears idyllic – carefree children sailing toy boats	Flashback – looking back over more than 40 years of teaching General information; no specific focus Calm, reflective and content
Main hook	Who was the Birdman? Why was Gracie warned to stay away from him? Was he dangerous? How did the children end up going near him, and what happened?	Mild interest in character; still building ...
Other characters	Father – sounds stern Daniel – close friend	
Any other points	Old woman, remembering events from childhood Detailed memories – a ‘perfect day’s sailing’ Undercurrent of menace – father’s warning and swans’ menacing attitude	Older man; schoolteacher No hint of change Elegant style; literary ... suits a schoolteacher Powerful image – music ‘soaring with eagles’

Comparison of the openings of *Why the Whales Came* and *The Dancing Bear* by Michael Morpurgo with annotations

	Opening of <i>Why the Whales Came</i>	Opening of <i>The Dancing Bear</i>
Character	Female – Gracie	Male – not yet named
Voice	First person – 'I'	First person – 'I'
Verb tense	Past tense	Past tense to start Switches to present in second paragraph
Content	Flashback – looking back over more than 70 years Mystery – a warning about an unknown character Setting appears idyllic – carefree children sailing toy boats	Flashback – looking back over more than 40 years of teaching General information; no specific focus Calm, reflective and content
Main hook	Who was the Birdman? Why was Gracie warned to stay away from him? Was he dangerous? How did the children end up going near him, and what happened?	Mild interest in character; still building ...
Other characters	Father – sounds stern Daniel – close friend	
Any other points	Old woman, remembering events from childhood Detailed memories – a 'perfect day's sailing' Undercurrent of menace – father's warning and swans' menacing attitude	Older man; schoolteacher No hint of change Elegant style; literary ... suits a schoolteacher Powerful image – music 'soaring with eagles'

Table or chart contains same key points of information as would prose equivalents

No need for function words used for organisation or for grammatical correctness

Points of comparison can be accessed/ scanned quickly and easily

Metalinguage used – both in headings/labels and in notes

Note-form recording – quick and efficient

Prose passage would have to be read more carefully

Less 'personal' than prose – no opportunity to make the writing 'your own'

Comparing and contrasting the introduction of the characters of the Birdman and Roxanne

Demo-write grid

	Birdman	Roxanne
How character first seen by reader	Through first person narrator's eyes. Her first impression – looks like an owl.	Through first person narrator's eyes. Gives a few facts about her life. Summarises his knowledge of her up to the point where the story starts. <i>Correct technical/metalanguage</i>
Physical appearance	Always wearing a black cape and sou'wester. Stooped, limping, barefoot. Accompanied by bird and dog.	About 7 years old. No details of physical appearance. <i>Information given in note form</i>
Character's feelings	Avoids human contact, keeps his distance.	No evidence of Roxanne's feeling about her grandfather for the way he treats her.
What character says	Talks only to self.	Does not speak. <i>Evidence from text</i>
Presentation of character	Through author's eyes. See how the Birdman looks, sounds and behaves, as if we can see him in the distance.	Described as 'solitary, but not lonely'. Our knowledge of her is hazy and vague, as if we see her from a distance. Possibly wilful, unhappy, sullen. <i>Hypothesising from given information</i>

Description separated into various features

Demo-write prose (first paragraph)

The first person narrator of *Why the Whales Came* has heard tales about the Birdman's strangeness but has only seen and heard him in the distance. The comparisons and associations with animals (*more like an owl ... a fitting creature of the dark ...*) create a vivid picture of a strange, unreal being, more wild animal than human. This is reinforced by learning that he talks to himself in an 'unearthly' monotone and is accompanied everywhere by animals and birds. *Connective signalling difference* (In contrast), although Roxanne is also introduced to us by a first person narrator who has obviously seen her many times, he gives us no details at all of her appearance so that we have to create our own picture using our imaginations.

Language investigations

Objectives

Sentence level – to conduct detailed language investigations through ... reading;
 Word level – to invent words using known roots, prefixes and suffixes, e.g.
vacca + phobe = someone who has a fear of cows.

Sampling Morpurgo's choice of vocabulary and use of sentence structure in *Why the Whales Came*: suggested passages for discussion.

p.78 – few lines from bottom

'The boat lolled beneath us, lapped by a listless sea.'

Identify the use of alliteration and personification in this descriptive sentence.
 Discuss the author's reasons for personifying the sea at this point in the story.

Suggestion for supported composition (oral or written): choose an object and a setting and demonstrate creating a sentence with a similar structure, e.g. *The dust whirled around us, whipped by a wild west wind*. Ask the children to do the same with another object and setting, e.g. leaves in a woodland, path in the fog, rain in the street, etc.

p.90 – two thirds of the way down

'They were elongated human faces that breathed out smoke from staring eyes and gruesome grinning mouths.'

Identify the use of alliteration and personification in this descriptive sentence.
 Discuss how it contributes to the sense of menace and foreboding.

p.85 – lines 5–11

'Only fear kept us awake, fear of the unknown out there in the dark around us, and fear that one of us might fall asleep and leave the other to face the night alone.'

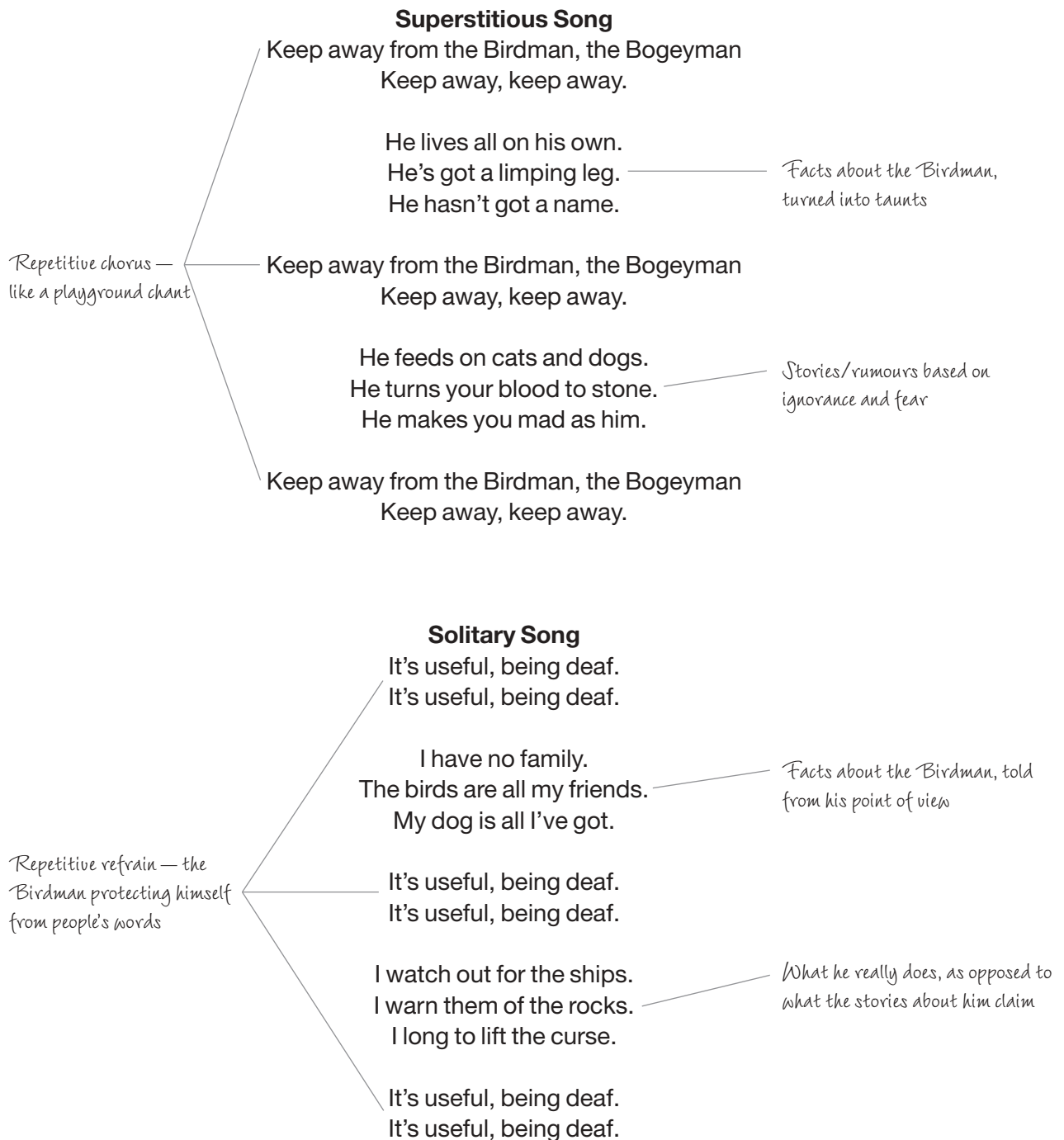
Discuss the structure of this sentence, and the cumulative effect of *fear ...*, *fear of ...*, *fear that ...*

Encourage the children to discuss their own experiences of being frightened of noises in the dark. Read the next sentence (*'Every rustle behind us ... taut with terror'*) and experiment with constructing a sentence using the same structure, based on hearing noises whilst in bed, e.g. *Every rustle of the leaves outside the window, the sudden yowling of a cat on the prowl, even the quiet hum of the water in the pipes ...*

Refer to the map of the Scilly Isles at the beginning of the book

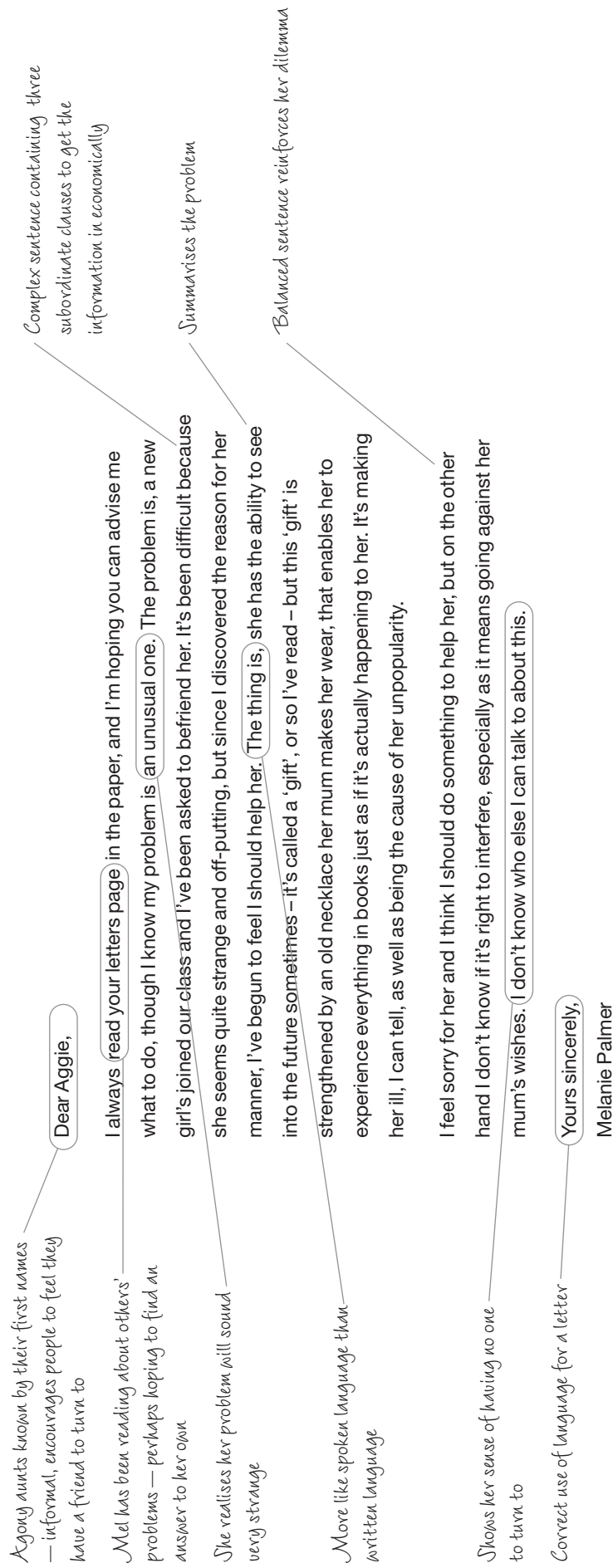
No names of the various bays, headlands or features appear on the map of Samson. Children could list what they have learned about the island from the story: e.g. that it is overrun with black rabbits; that thousands of terns live on it; that whales can be seen in the distance from time to time; that there is a well that has renewed itself; that there are sand dunes and a steep hill, etc. Using dictionaries and prior knowledge of word roots, prefixes and suffixes, invent possible names for places on Samson.

Annotated demo-write of poem



The two simple songs represent the contrast between the islanders' perception of the Birdman and the truth about him. The format of the first poem is meant to sound like a children's rhyme that might be chanted as a 'charm' to ward off evil. Children, who should be innocent, can also be cruel. A similar format is used for the second poem to mirror the first and to reflect the fact that the supposedly dangerous adult is, in fact, an innocent.

Annotated demo-write of letter to an agony aunt



Annotated demo-write of summary of Imogen's behaviour from the point of view of her teacher, Mr Hooper

Use of subordinate clause to open sentence

Imogen Tate joined my class part way through the summer term. **To help her settle in,** I appointed one of the girls, Melanie Palmer, to look after her and show her the ropes.

Colon used before information that expands or illustrates the main clause

Imogen's school work gives some cause for concern: she is a long way behind the rest of the class in most subjects and I wonder if she has had any prolonged absences. She lacks concentration, and often appears to be in a world of her own.

Connectives signalling contrasting information

However, recently she did complete an excellent piece of creative writing, **though** her extreme nervousness meant she was unable to read it aloud. She was even too embarrassed to listen to me reading it to the class.

Connective used to open a balanced argument

Although Imogen seems to find it difficult to mix with other children, she has shown in swimming lessons that she can do so. I hope that in time she will relax and settle down.

P. Hooper, class teacher

Story map of *Why the Whales Came*

Tracking/mapping the events in the novel which signal the narrator's gradual change from superstitious fear of the Birdman to understanding and respect

All the children have been told the same stories about the Birdman.

- p.1 The opening of the book sets the tone: the Birdman is to be feared and shunned.
- p.4 'Some said the Birdman was mad. Some said he was the devil himself ... and that he would put spells and curses on you if you came too close.'
- p.16 Gracie's father tells her about the curse of Samson. 'And I shivered as I thought of how close we had been to his cottage that day, and how he must have been watching us on Rushy Bay.'

Gracie's attitude begins to change once she has some contact with the Birdman.

- p.21 He leaves the children a present and they meet his dog.
- p.22 '... I was no longer frightened.'
- p.28 They begin to get to know him through written messages.

When they eventually meet the Birdman, Gracie is still apprehensive.

- p.41 '... and blotting out the light from the doorway was the black, hooded silhouette of the Birdman ...'
- p.66 'I myself was never comfortable talking to the Birdman in those early days for he would stare uncannily at me whilst I was speaking ...'

The Birdman understands the difficulties Gracie and her mother will face once her father has left, perhaps because his own father disappeared when he was young.

- p.72 "I'll be your father till he gets back home again;"

He proves he can be depended on.

- p.75 'The Birdman was as good as his word. He was indeed a father to me, looking after Mother and me like some anonymous guardian angel.'
(Compare p.4 'he was the devil himself'.)

The time comes for Gracie to stand up for the Birdman.

- pp.117–118 The children set out to warn him of the attack.
- p.132 "Had to go, Mother," I said, standing up. "I had to."

Gracie's mother challenges the old superstitions.

- p.133 "Yes, every one of us is frightened of him and we tell our children to keep out of his way; but what has he ever really done to harm any one of us?"
There was silence.'