

Writing Task : To write (draft) an action story

Before you start to write your spy action story, I would like you to read this extract from "Hurricane Gold", one of the Young Bond books by Charlie Higson.

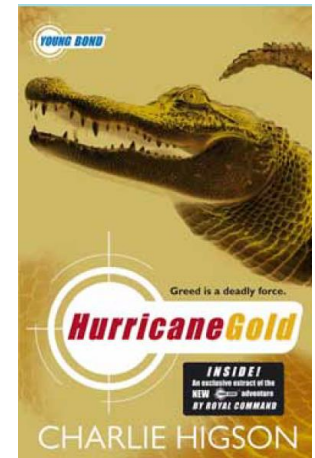
Can you picture everything that is happening to James and everything that he is doing? Well, that is what I am looking for in your writing today. Look at the level of detail that Higson has included and think about the affect this has on how the reader feels.

James stayed put, breathing heavily. The intruders seemed to have come prepared, but with luck they wouldn't know that he was here at all.

James waited in the Wendy house for a full five minutes. Once he was sure that the man wasn't coming back he crept out of his hiding place and tiptoed over to the playroom door.

He hardly needed to be quiet. The storm was making a fearsome racket as it buffeted the house. There was a cacophony of different sounds; crashing, hissing, roaring, squealing, rumbling.

As he moved out into the corridor James felt the full force of the wind slam into the house like a physical object. He could actually feel the floor moving beneath his feet, and the walls seemed to sway and shudder. He glanced out of the window, but all he could see was a swirling maelstrom of cloud and rain. There was a startling flash and another blast of thunder, then a gust of wind so powerful it blew the windows in. The rain followed, hosing down the corridor in horizontal bars. The walls were instantly soaked and a picture flew off the wall.



Look at the draft below of how the story continues and compare it to the same part of the story as it appears in the book.

The wind was blowing outside the house and the walls were rattling really loudly. James was scared.

He crept across the floor to the stairs and then quickly went down to see what was happening beneath him.

Can you see the difference? Every single detail is described: every movement, object, position and place.

The noise from outside was like nothing that James had ever heard before, like boulders crashing down a mountainside. The wind was whipping around in the corridor and the house was vibrating as if at any moment it might crack up and be blown away.

James dropped to his knees and crawled along the sodden carpet as bits of debris were hurled past his head.

He reached the stairs and slid down them on his backside in the darkness. He made it safely to the lower landing and peered out between the banisters into the hallway below.

Your task is to write your own chapter about a "live drop" from a spy story including all of the detail, description, atmosphere, tension and action that you would want to read if you were reading a book. You also need to keep to a fairly realistic action story - invisibility cloaks or shrinking machines do not exist in this world.

As you draft your story, you need to include the following details:

- **adjectives and adverbs** to add detail to your work (think about the expanded noun phrases, which you wrote last week)
- **interesting vocabulary** to engage your reader (plus some 5/6 vocab)
- **using specific nouns** (e.g. fountain pen rather than pen, small wiry spectacles rather than glasses)
- **wide range of punctuation** (including brackets, dashes, colons and semi-colons if you can)
- **both short and longer complex sentences** to vary your writing style and to create tension (e.g. The street light flickered. Darkness engulfed the narrow alleyway between the towering buildings.)
- **relative clauses** to add more detail (who, which, where etc)
- **minimal amount of speech/dialogue** - please make sure that everything that is said adds something to the story or moves the action on to the next point. (No waffling, long-winded conversations)

You should be aiming to hand write two to three pages in order to be including the amount of detail needed, some of you I know will need to really push yourself to do this. You can do it!

Finally, please remember that there are four reasons to start a new paragraph as you draft your story:

- when you change the subject or focus
- when you change to a new place or setting
- when you change to a new time
- when a different character begins to speak
- write in paragraphs

Additional challenge:

To use **figurative language** (similes, metaphors and personification) to bring your descriptions to life. Reread the extract above (like boulders crashing down a mountainside) or the text, which we used for Guided Reading a week ago (the mist burned like fire, as sharp as a knife's thrust).

When you are happy with your work, please take a picture of it (you may need to do a section at a time to make sure that it is clear) and then send it in on seesaw. I will get back to you with some ideas on how to improve your story when you edit and redraft on Wednesday. I hope you enjoy the process and that you "WOW" me with your work as you have done in the past.