

1 Ordinary days

In this unit you will look at stories that are about children like you. You will learn about settings and characters, and you will learn how to make your reading sound interesting. At the end of the unit you will write your own story.

You will also learn about:
 nouns, verbs and adjectives,
 dialogue in stories.

1 Setting the scene



A



B



C



D



E



F

A **AZ** Talk about places

- 1 Look at the pictures. What are the places you can see?
- 2 Have you visited any of these places? Ask and answer the following questions:
 - What did you do there?
 - Why were you there?
 - Did you enjoy being there?
 - Did anything interesting happen to you there?



We use nouns and adjectives when we write stories.

- 1 Think of nouns and adjectives for the six pictures A–F.
- 2 In your notebook write six sentences, one for each picture. Describe each one with a noun and an adjective. Remember to use a capital letter at the beginning of each sentence and a full stop at the end.

It is a busy classroom.

I have a messy bedroom.

Language focus

Nouns are words we use to name things. For example, the words *house, bed, shop, beach, hill* and *flower* are nouns.

Adjectives are words we use to describe nouns. For example, the words *big, small, pretty, lovely, nice, dirty, horrible, high* and *low* are adjectives.



Stories have settings. The setting includes a description of the place, like your sentences in Activity B.

It can also include information about:

- the weather (e.g. *in a noisy thunderstorm*)
- the time (e.g. *When Arturo was a little boy ...*).

- 1 Choose one of the **settings** you wrote in Activity B.
- 2 Talk about a story or adventure that could happen in your chosen setting.

You have just written
six settings for a
story!



Did you know?



The author Roald Dahl used lots of different settings in his books for children. He wrote them all in a shed in his back garden!

2 An ordinary school day

Once upon an ordinary school day, an ordinary boy woke from his ordinary dreams, got out of his ordinary bed, had ... an ordinary wash, put on his ordinary clothes and ate his ordinary breakfast.

The ordinary boy brushed his ordinary teeth, kissed his ordinary mum goodbye and set off for his ordinary school.



A   Look at the opening of a story called *Once Upon an Ordinary School Day*.

- 1 Read the opening of the story.
- 2 Now re-read the opening aloud to a talk partner. Can you read it in an interesting way so that your partner wants to keep on listening?



Any volunteers?

Look again at the first sentence of *Once upon an Ordinary School Day*. Find all the words which contain the letter **o**. Read them aloud. How many different ways do you pronounce the letter **o** in the first sentence?

Tip

If you're stuck on how to read a word, try the following strategies:

- Sound it out. Remember to look through the whole word for spelling patterns you know. For example, the word *clothes* has *o_e* so the **o** is long.
- Divide it into syllables. For example, the word *ordinary* can be split into four syllables: *or-di-na-ry*.
- Match it to other words you know. For example, *once* is like *one*, and the **o** is said the same way.

Tip

Look at the letter **o** by itself and as part of different letter patterns in the words.

B   **AZ** Check your understanding.

- 1 Answer these questions in your notebook.
 - a What was the boy doing before he woke up?
 - b What did he do just before he put his clothes on?
 - c What did he do after he kissed his mum?
- 2 Talk about the story opening.
 - a What does the writer want you to know about the boy?
 - b What kind of story do you think this is going to be?
 - c What might happen in the story?

3 The power of words

The ordinary boy went into his ordinary classroom and sat at his ordinary desk. Then, something quite out of the ordinary happened ...

“Good morning, everybody!” said a quite extraordinary figure, bounding into the classroom. “My name is Mr Gee and I’m your new teacher. Now, you don’t know me and I don’t know you, so, to help me to get to know you, I’ve had an idea ...”

As Mr Gee handed out paper, he said, “For our first lesson together I want you to listen to some music and I want you to let the music make pictures in your heads. Is that clear?”

And the ordinary children whispered: “He’s barmy!” “He’s bonkers!” “He’s as nutty as a fruitcake!” “Music?” “Pictures?” “What’s he on about?”

And Mr Gee said, “Shush, just close your eyes, open your ears and listen.”

And the music began: a rumbling, rolling, thunderous music that boomed and crashed around the classroom.

Suddenly it stopped. And Mr Gee said: “Tell me what the music made you think of.”

One girl shouted, “Stampeding horses!”

Someone else said, “No, it was racing cars!”

And the ordinary boy said, “I saw elephants, Sir, and there were hundreds of them!”

“Yes,” laughed Mr Gee. “Isn’t it wonderful? Now, I want all of you to try to put what you hear on paper. Start writing!”

And as the music grew and swooped and danced and dived once more, the ordinary boy began to write.



By Colin McNaughton



What happens to the ordinary boy? Read what happens next in the story and answer these questions in your notebook.

- 1 Who was the *quite extraordinary* figure?
- 2 What was the first thing the children had to do?
- 3 What helped the children while they were writing?


- ## Any volunteers?

Language focus

Remember that adjectives are words that describe things. Adjectives can go either before a noun or after it.

The boy is ordinary.

noun adjective

 **AZ** Look at the way adjectives are used in the story. Before Mr Gee arrives the only adjective used is *ordinary*. But when he arrives there's a new adjective: *extraordinary*.

- ### Tip

- think of other words that look and sound a bit the same, for example *thunderous* sounds like *thunder*

- bonkers rumbling stampeding

4 More about settings

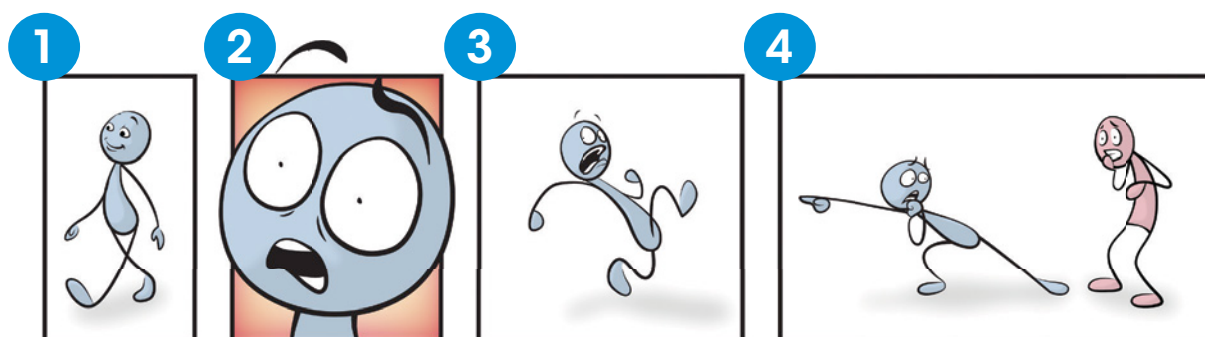


A  Look at the two pictures of a car park near a shopping mall.

- 1 Decide what is the same and what is different in the two pictures.
- 2 Look at these adjectives. Which picture does each one describe?

sad cheerful sunny dark rainy warm stormy
bright dull empty colourful busy dangerous
smiley lively thundery gloomy light happy

- 3 Write three sentences to describe the setting in each of the pictures – it can be the place, the weather or the time. Remember that adjectives can go before or after a noun.



B **Create a setting and use it in a story.**

- 1 Look at the cartoon strip. What do you think has happened?
What do you think the setting is? Does the cartoon strip tell a story?
- 2 Think of a title for the cartoon strip story.
- 3 Write a description of the setting using interesting words.

5 Characters

A **AZ** We usually want to know four things about the characters in a story:

- what they look like
- what they think or say
- what they do
- how they feel.

- 1 Look back at the cartoon strip in the last session. Tell the story to a talk partner. Remember to include information about the setting. Give each of the characters a name. Include some information about them too.
- 2 Write a description of the main character using interesting words to make him or her come to life.

B **Create another character.**

- 1 Look at the three illustrations. Who would you most like to be friends with? Why?



- 2 Think of an adjective to describe each of the three characters. Write your three adjectives in your notebook.
- 3 Read the character portrait of Liang. Do you think these statements are true or false?

Liang hangs out in the mall with his friends. He and his friends usually wear earplugs so they have to SMS each other if they want to talk. Sometimes Liang texts back; sometimes he doesn't.

Liang is interested in computers. He enjoys flicking through websites, finding out about the latest improvements and new releases. He and his friends mostly communicate through SMS and online. When they visit the mall, they generally saunter over to a computer shop to examine the computers on display.

- a Liang and his friends have fun together.
 - b Liang talks a lot.
 - c Liang knows a lot about computers.
 - d Liang is excited about visiting the computer shop.
 - e Liang likes playing football.
- 4 In your notebook write a character portrait of either Juan or Asibi. Include information about:
 - what Juan/Asibi likes doing
 - the kind of person he/she is.

6 Verbs

Language focus

Verbs tell you what someone or something does, is or has.
Verbs also tell you when the action in the sentence happens:

When?	What?	Tense
Yesterday morning	she walked to school.	past
Every morning	she walks to school.	present
Tomorrow morning	she will walk to school.	future

A sentence must:

- have a verb – if there isn't a verb, it isn't a sentence
- begin with a capital letter
- end with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark
- make sense.

Verbs are sometimes called 'doing' words, but they are also 'being' or 'having' words.

Did you know?

The verb *be* is the most common verb in the English language. Different parts of the verb are tricky to recognise. They include the little words *am*, *is*, *are*, *was* and *were*.

A **AZ** Decide which of the following are sentences. Write the sentences in your notebook and underline the verb in each one.

- 1 The cute kittens.
- 2 She whispered to her friend.
- 3 I love chocolate.
- 4 I heard hundreds of elephants.
- 5 Some dangerous sharks.
- 6 They walk to school together.

No verb? Not a sentence!

B Write these sentences in your notebook, completing each one with the correct form of the verb *be*.

- 1 When he ... six, Liang could play the piano very well.
- 2 His fingers ... very good at finding the notes.
- 3 Now that Liang ... eight, he can mend computers.
- 4 Liang's teacher says that he ... very clever.
- 5 "I ... very interested in computers," said Liang.

C These sentences all contain a form of the verb *have*. Write the sentences in your notebook. Then find the different forms of *have* and underline them.

- 1 Sharks have sharp teeth.
- 2 I had a toy like that when I was little.
- 3 She is having a violin lesson at the moment.
- 4 She has no front teeth at the moment.

Tip

Different forms of a verb often look a bit like each other. Try looking for words that begin with the same letters as **have**.



7 Amazing Grace

- 1 Grace was a girl who loved stories. She didn't mind if they were read to her or told to her or made up out of her own head. She didn't care if they were from books or on TV or in films or on the video or out of Nana's long memory. Grace just loved stories. And after she had heard them, or sometimes while they were still going on, Grace would act them out. And she always gave herself the most exciting part.

