

1

Adventure

In this unit, you will study texts about adventures. You will read about characters who face challenges, go on journeys and experience exciting situations. As you work through the texts and activities, think about the way the characters react to their adventures.

> 1.1 The start of an adventure

In this session, you will:

- discuss the features of adventure stories
- look for explicit information in a text
- explore how writers structure their stories.

Getting started

Adventure stories are about characters who go on journeys. The characters often have special skills and face difficult challenges. *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson is an example of a story about a boy who goes on a sea adventure to find hidden treasure. In pairs, make a list of adventure stories and films that you know.

1.1 The start of an adventure

1 Adventure stories are a **genre**. This means that different adventure stories contain similar features. In pairs, discuss:

- the types of characters in adventure stories
- the types of **settings** in adventure stories
- what happens in adventure stories
- how these stories usually end.

Compare your findings with another pair. Apart from the main character, what other types of people do you find in adventure stories?

Key words

genre: a particular type of text (e.g. adventure, comedy, crime, science fiction)

setting: the location of where a story takes place

'Beware Low-Flying Girls'

Read the extract from 'Beware Low-Flying Girls' by Katherine Rundell. It is about Odile, a girl whose adventure begins when she discovers she has a very unusual skill.



Extract 1

It was cold, that day she first took flight, and the snow lay thick enough to hide a cat in. She wore her father's coat. It came down past her knees, and she had rolled the sleeves up, so they hung at her wrist in a great roll of wool. The coat had once been a deep, cocoa-bean brown, but now it was the colour of an elderly shoe. It smelt, very slightly, of horses and woodsmoke.

The wind was fierce that day. It was often windy in winter at the top of the mountain; birds got blown backwards up the cliff edge, reverse-somersaulting through the sky, their wings shedding feathers like confetti. Seagulls blew into the house, sometimes right into her lap as she sat curled up in the corner, wrapped in rugs, reading by the firelight. Suddenly finding that you had an irate seagull as a bookmark was not, Odile thought, ideal, but her grandfather would throw a blanket over them and stomp out into the night with the bird bundled into his arms.

'Always be polite to birds,' he would say. 'They know more than they let on.'

The house was built into the rock of the mountain, and the door was polished stone. Her grandfather had lived on the mountaintop all his life. Odile had lived with him since she was a baby. She had nobody else. In the house, the fire burned all the year round. 'Keep the fire as hot as the human heart,' said her grandfather, his jaw stern. 'Never let it go out.'

That day, she had pulled her father's coat around her, and set out. The wind caught the coat as she walked down the mountain path, billowing it out behind her like a sail. It had no buttons left, so she took a corner of the coat in each fist and held her arms stiff at her side. She began to run, her hair blowing in her eyes and mouth, down the hill.

1 Adventure

The wind caught her coat and tossed her upwards. Odile felt the sudden swoop of gravity undone.

It lasted only a second. She screamed, pulling her coat up over her face, and dropped to the ground again, landing on her hands and knees in the snow. Her breathing stopped. Though she had barely fallen two feet, she felt winded, gasping and choking for air.

'I flew,' she whispered. Or had she perhaps just tripped and fallen more extravagantly than usual? She had to be sure.

Odile rubbed some snow into her eyes to make sure she was awake. She pulled a twig from a tree, brushed the frost from it and used it to pin her hair out of her eyes. She put on her gloves.

She stretched out the corners of her coat. She began to run, downhill, her feet kicking up a spray of snow.

The coat billowed out behind her. Her breath misted the air in front of her.

And Odile flew.



Reading tip

When you see words you do not understand, use details from the surrounding sentences to help you work out meanings. For example, in the second to last paragraph of the extract, you could work out the meaning of *billowed* by thinking about the effect the wind might have on Odile's coat – blowing it out around her.

- 2 Practise working out word meanings from their **context**. The following words are taken from the third paragraph of the extract. What do you think they mean?
- | | |
|------------|------------|
| a fierce | c irate |
| b confetti | d bundled. |
- 3 When reading a text, it is important to be able to identify and understand the main points and ideas that a writer tells you.

Key word

context: the situation within which something exists or happens

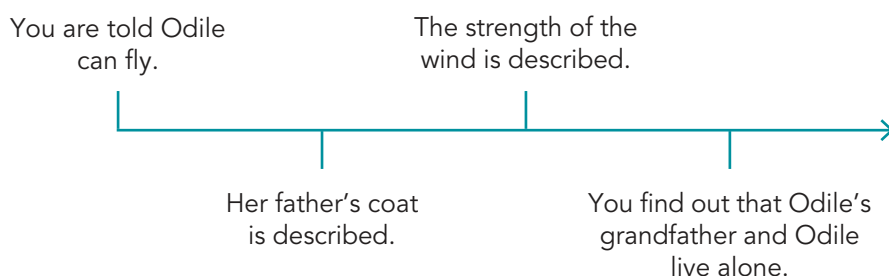
1.1 The start of an adventure

Explicit information is information that the writer states directly.

Read the text again and make notes on:

- a what you can find out about Odile's family
- b what is unusual about the setting
- c other unusual aspects of the story.

- 4 The **narrative structure** of a story is the order in which events take place. This includes how a story starts, when different pieces of information are revealed and how the story ends. Look at this timeline, which shows the first four main points in 'Beware Low-Flying Girls'.



Write down the last two main points in the extract from 'Beware Low-Flying Girls'.

- 5 Writers design the narrative structure of their stories to keep readers interested. In pairs, discuss the following questions.
- a Why does the writer start the story by telling you Odile can fly?
 - b Why does she tell the reader that Odile wears her father's coat? (Think about why the coat might be special.)
 - c Why does the writer end this part of the story with Odile flying?
- 6 Which parts of the story have you found most interesting so far? In your pairs, **predict** what you think might happen, or what you would like to find out, in the next part of the story. Do you both have the same **opinion**?
- 7 Write a summary of about 50 words explaining what you have learnt about the features of adventure stories. Use some examples from 'Beware Low-Flying Girls' in your summary.

Key words

explicit information: ideas and details that a writer states directly

narrative structure: the order in which a writer sets out the events in a story

Key words

predict: say what you think might happen in the future

opinion: a personal view or judgement about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge

1 Adventure

Summary checklist

- I can identify some features of adventure stories.
- I can locate explicit information in a text and understand its meaning.
- I can comment on the narrative structure of a text.

> 1.2 Quest!

In this session, you will:

- describe how stories develop
- explore the features of a monologue
- write and perform a monologue.

Getting started

A quest is a difficult journey in search of an item or person. Look up the origins of this word. How is the word 'quest' connected to the word 'question'?

- 1 Here are two possible ways that the story you read in Session 1.1 could develop.

Which idea do you prefer and why? Discuss your ideas in pairs. Are they similar to the predictions you made in the previous session?

A Odile flies far from home and arrives in a town she has never been to. The people treat her like a princess. She is given lots of power. One day, a threatening creature arrives and Odile is expected to defend the town. She is frightened and doesn't know what to do.

1.2 Quest!

B Odile flies into a dizzying snowstorm and doesn't know where she is. She falls asleep on a mountainside and when she wakes up, the coat has gone. She meets a friendly girl called Millie who invites Odile to stay with her family. Odile is not sure if it's a good idea.

Now read another part of 'Beware Low-Flying Girls'. At this point, Odile has found out that her father used the coat to fly. She also discovers that her grandfather is ill. To get better, he needs a special plant from the other side of the mountain. Odile decides to go on a quest to find it. Her grandfather warns her to be careful of the Kraiks – a mysterious group of talking birds.



Extract 2

Without another word, she pulled on her boots and coat and kissed her grandfather's cheek. He waved her away; his skin was colder than usual.

Odile walked as far as the paths would take her, clapping her hands together in front and behind her back to keep them warm; and then she climbed. It was more of a scramble, really, around the edge of the mountain, but there were places where the ground cut away and dropped to a blur below. She did not fly: the wind might drop at any moment, and she didn't like the idea of so much gravity at once.

The first hint that something was wrong was the smell. Odile sniffed. There were seven layers of scent, none of them good: a between-the-toe smell, a week-old-fish smell, an unbrushed-tooth smell; a **jackdaw's** breath, a cat's sick pool, a burnt **furball** and a sailor's earwax.

'Kraiks,' she whispered.

She looked up, up the edge of the mountainside. She could see nothing – only mist, and branches stretching like arms across the rocks. But a voice came down, thin and quiet.

'Where are you going, little girl?'

Odile said nothing. She set her jaw, and kept climbing, heading sideways.



jackdaw: a bird (a small crow)
furball: a ball of fur that can develop in an animal's stomach

1 Adventure

2 In pairs, discuss how the story could develop.

Remember the following:

- The Kraiks seem dangerous.
- Odile can fly.
- She needs the plant for her grandfather.
- The central character in an adventure story usually faces a problem.
- Adventure stories usually end happily.



3 A **monologue** is a spoken text told by one person. The speaker usually explains their feelings and attitudes, as well as telling a story in which they gradually reveal bits of information.

Listen to the monologue and answer the questions. You will need to listen for explicit information, but also consider the speaker's **tone**, which can reveal how he is feeling.

- a How many messages had Alex missed?
 - b Why does Alex think the music shop owners are happy to let John play the guitars?
 - c How would you describe the relationship between Alex and his mother?
 - d How does the story end?
 - e 'Alex seems like a really kind person.' To what extent do you agree with this view?
- 4 Just like written stories, monologues are carefully structured to keep the listener interested. When writing a monologue, it is important to think about *when* to tell the listener key information.
- In pairs, discuss the following questions.
- a What were you told at the start of the monologue and how did this keep you interested?
 - b What was the most exciting or dramatic part of the monologue? At what point in the story did it happen?
 - c How did the monologue end? How did the ending make you feel – were you happy for Alex?

Key words

monologue: a story or speech given by one character

tone: the way that someone speaks or how a piece of writing sounds, which helps suggest mood and feelings

Listening tip

When you hear information spoken aloud, listen carefully for any explicit information. The way a person speaks and how they use their voice can also give you clues as to how they feel about the story they are telling. Listen carefully not just to what is being said, but also the tone (i.e. *how* it is being said).

1.2 Quest!

- 5 Plan a monologue called 'The Day I Met the Kraiks'. It will be told from Odile's point of view.
- a On your own, decide and make brief notes on:
- what happened when you met the Kraiks
 - what happened on the next stage of your quest.
- b Think about the narrative structure of your monologue. List the events in the order you will tell them in your monologue. Look back at the structure outlined in Session 1.1, Activity 4 for ideas.
- 6 Now write your monologue. Remember that you are writing from Odile's point of view, so you will need to capture her **voice**. This means thinking carefully about her personality and attitude, and choosing words and phrases that convey this. For example, you have found out that Odile is young, but she is also brave. She likes adventures. She has been warned about the Kraiks, so she may be cautious and a little scared.

Key word

voice: the way a particular character speaks or thinks in fiction, or the writer's tone and point of view in non-fiction

Peer assessment

In groups, take turns reading your monologue aloud.

- Which bits of each monologue were the most interesting to listen to?
- Why? Give reasons for your assessment.

- What have you learnt from writing this monologue?
- What might you do differently next time?

Speaking tip

Before you read your monologue, plan how you will speak. Which words will you emphasise? Where will you pause? How can you use your voice to make your monologue sound exciting?

Summary checklist

- I can predict how stories might develop.
- I can identify the features of a monologue.
- I can write and perform an interesting monologue.

1 Adventure

> 1.3 Train trouble

In this session, you will:

- explore ways of using speech to engage an audience
- look for implicit meaning in a text
- use different sentence types to add interest to descriptive writing.

Getting started

Have you ever had a difficult start to a journey? Have you ever missed a bus or been on a crowded train? Have you ever been stuck in traffic or had an annoying start to a holiday? What happened? How did it make you feel? Tell your **anecdote** to a partner.

- 1 Tell the whole class your anecdote.
 - Explain clearly what happened.
 - Focus on feeling and emotion to engage your listeners.
 - Use tone of voice, **gesture** and facial expression to add meaning.
 - Give your anecdote a strong ending.

Speaking tip

When you relate an anecdote, make sure you give enough details about the event to help your listeners picture the scene. Effective speakers often use non-verbal communication, so think about how you could use gesture and facial expression to add meaning to your anecdote.

Around India in 80 Trains

Read the following piece of **non-fiction** writing, which is from an **autobiography** by Monisha Rajesh. In the extract, the writer describes a difficult start to a journey, as she arrives at a station in India. She is accompanied by a friend called Passepartout. They are helped by Subbu, who is guiding them through the busy station and on to the train. As you read, think about how the writer makes the journey seem stressful.

Key words

anecdote: a short entertaining story that is usually spoken

gesture: movements of the hands or arms to add emphasis to bring a story to life

non-fiction: writing that is about real events and facts

autobiography: a text in which the writer gives an account of their own life and experiences

1.3 Train trouble



Chennai Egmore station could be heard before it was seen. A **cacophony** erupted as we made our way under the arches, running after Subbu who had been instructed to come with us to the platform. Indian stations are not designed for running. An **assault course** lay between us and Subbu, who was winding deeper and deeper into the sea of boxes. We ducked and wove around the **slalom** of wooden carts wheeled by men with no sense of urgency, strings of hand-holding children, **hobbling** dogs, stacked **hessian** sacks, nose-pickers, watersellers, booksellers and red-shirted porters. Subbu now stood by our train, under a digital sign reading B2, his face powder dry, as we bent double, sweat running down our bodies.

Engines hissed and thudded as they began to move, high-pitched announcements singing out in breakneck-speed Tamil, while the smell of dried fish crept up my nostrils. Passepartout leapt about, clicking away, and I smiled weakly for the camera before boarding the Anantapuri Express to Nagercoil.

Subbu had already found our seats and placed our bags on each by the time we squeezed through. Thanking him, we dug out bottles of water, notebooks, pens, toilet paper, flannels and flip-flops, much to the amusement of our companions who had already chained up bags, hidden shoes, plugged in phones and sat down cross-legged, watching us. At 7:20 pm the train jerked. Subbu bowed and **slunk** off as the train glided out of the station. Through the tinted window he was soon no more than a saluting **silhouette**.

We were on the move.

cacophony:

a mix of loud, often unpleasant sounds

assault course:

an area filled with obstacles such as walls and ditches that people have to find a way over or around

slalom: a skiing race down a long, winding course

hobbling: walking unsteadily

hessian: a strong, thick woven fabric

slunk: moved away smoothly and quietly

silhouette: the shadow or outline of an object against a brighter background