



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Writing Wise: Supporting Students with Writing





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There are a multitude of ways to engage with writing. The following pages explore a selection of possible strategies for teaching expression and coherence in the classroom. Teachers will need to consider the unique context and both age and stage of their students when planning how to best use/adapt this resource.

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Introduction:

The process of reading and writing:
Some perspectives...

"Write what should not be
forgotten."

- Isabel Allende

"If you don't have time to read, you don't
have the time (or the tools) to write.
Simple as that."

- Stephen King

"Read, read, read. Read everything -
trash, classics, good and bad, and
see how they do it. Just like a
carpenter who works as an
apprentice and studies the master.
Read! You'll absorb it.
Then write."

-William Faulkner

"Let the reader find that he
cannot afford to omit any
line of your writing
because you have omitted
every word that he can
spare."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"In displaying the psychology of
your characters, minute
particulars are essential. God save
us from vague generalizations!"

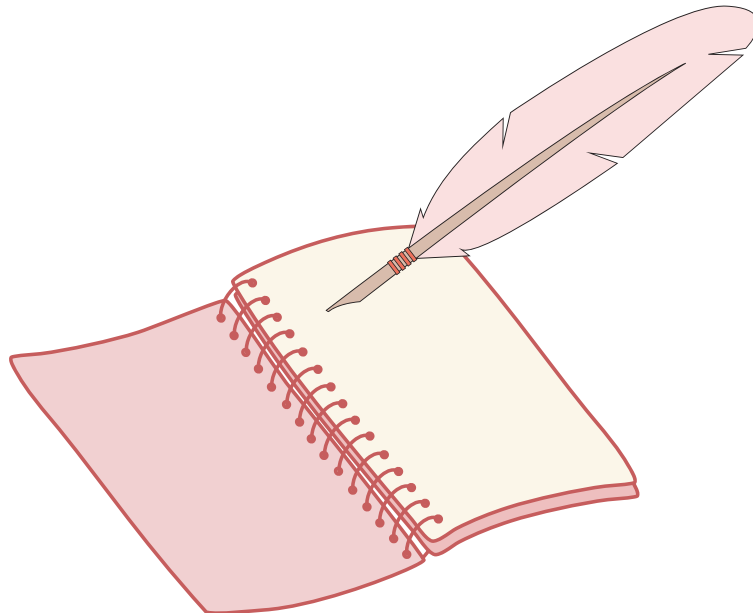
-Anton Chekhov

"Good writing is like a windowpane."

- George Orwell



Section 1: Sentence Structure: Creating More Complex Sentences





The Four Basic Sentence Types to Build Paragraphs

Declarative sentence

- This is the most common sentence type.
- A statement of an idea or an argument put forward.
- It can be a simple, complex or compound sentence.
- **Example:** Spain gets more sunlight than Ireland each year.

Exclamatory sentence

- Expresses force or a strong emotion like joy, disbelief or anger.
- Declares a strong statement.
- Ends with an exclamation mark.
- **Example:** I can't wait to go abroad this summer!

Interrogative sentence

- Asks a question.
- Always ends with a question mark.
- **Example:** Are you looking forward to your holidays?

Imperative Sentence

- Gives advice or instructions.
- Expresses requests or commands.
- **Example:** Ask your friend where they went on holiday last year.

Alternate Example - sentence prompts to build paragraphs

- Are your grandparents immigrants? (**Interrogative**)
- Many immigrants were documented at Ellis Island in the United States. (**Declarative**)
- We are so fortunate to live in a country where freedom is celebrated! (**Exclamatory**)
- Ask your parents about your family's history. (**Imperative**)

Adapted from The Writing Revolution by Judith C.

Hochman and Natalie Wexler, (2017))



Possible Sentence Starters

Sentence Starter

Example

Noun Clause

Usually begins with a relative pronoun like; that, which, who, whoever, whomever, whose, what, or whatsoever.

Where she had developed her accent, nobody knew.

Adverb

Describes a verb in more detail and tends to end with -ly

- **Quickly**
- **Suddenly**
- **Slowly**

Prepositional Phrase

Positions the noun or subject, i.e. through, in, between, beneath, on, over etc.

- In the dark of the night
- After the storm

Absolute Phrase

Generally starts with a possessive pronoun: my, his, your, her, our, its, and their.

The party organised, she relaxed in the armchair.

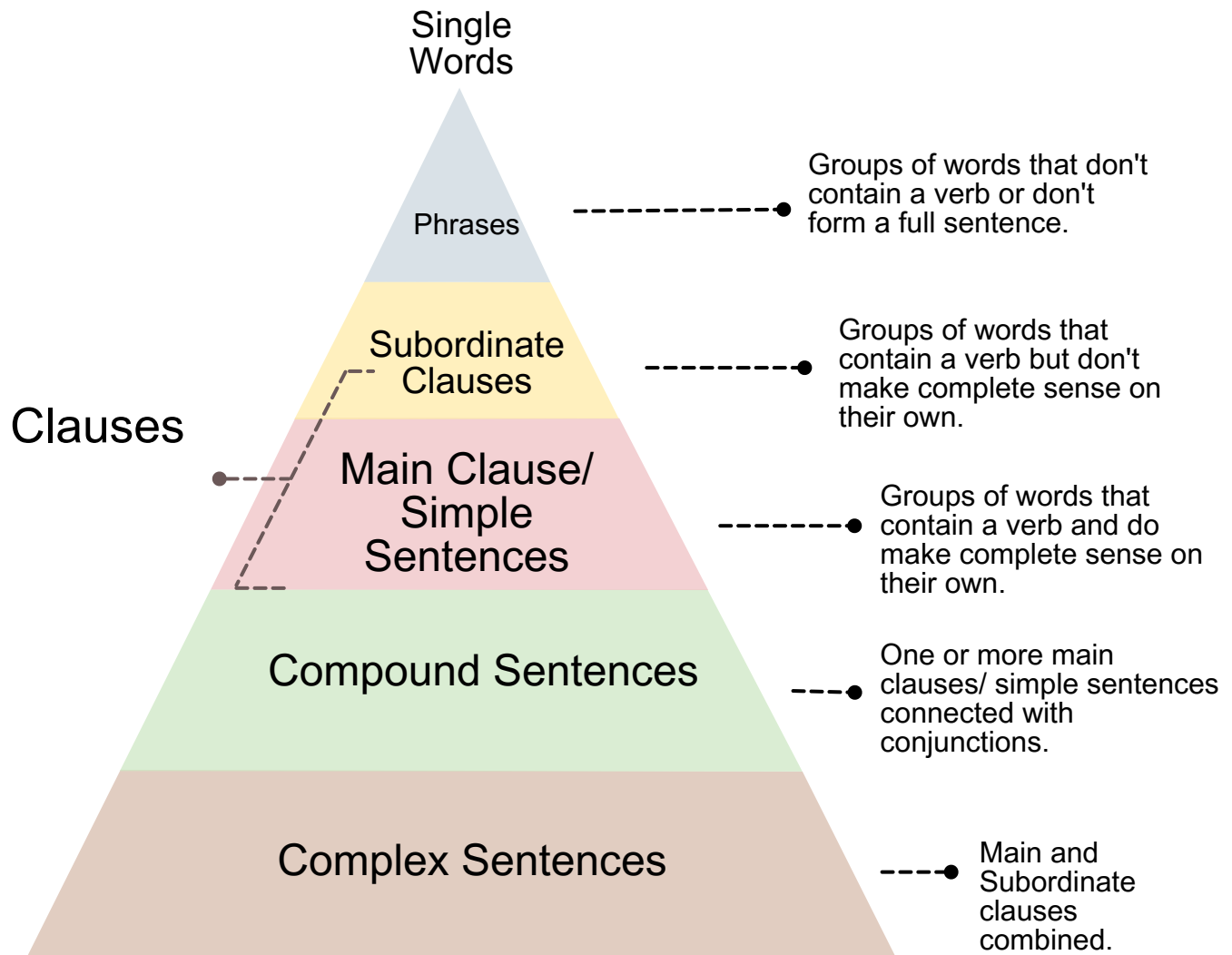
An Appositive Phrase

Describes the noun, it adds information without disrupting the flow

A gifted musician, Tom played the violin and guitar.



Possible Components of Sentences



Adapted from *Grammatix* by Sarah North (2020).

Examples:

Phrases:

a cup of tea, a red flower, a blue car

Subordinate Clauses:

as he closed his eyes, **as** the wind howled, **while** the door creaked

Main Clauses/ Simple sentences:

The boy ran. She cried. It was Sunday.

Compound Sentences:

The boy ran **because** he was afraid he might miss the bus.

Complex Sentences:

As soon as she woke up, she checked her phone.



Some Basic Conjunctions

but

indicates the other side of the argument or a change in direction.

Example: Shylock was a money-lender but...

because

explains why something is true by offering extra information or details.

Example: Shylock was a money-lender because...

so

cause and effect or what happens as a result of something else.

Example: Shylock was a money-lender so...

and

links two clauses.

Example: Shylock was a money-lender and....

Further Subordinating Conjunctions

before

although

after

since

when

unless

if

while

even
though

whenever



Extract from 'Noughts and Crosses' - a focus on the elements of sentence structure.

‘Honestly, Mrs Hadley,’ said Meggie McGregor, wiping her eyes. **Exclamatory Sentence**

‘That sense of humour of yours will be the death of me yet!’

Jasmine Hadley allowed herself a rare giggle. ‘The things I tell you, Meggie. It’s lucky we’re such good friends!’

Meggie’s smile wavered only slightly. She looked out across the vast lawn at Callum and Sephy. Her son and her employer’s daughter. They were good friends playing together. Real good friends. No barriers. No boundaries. Not yet anyway. It was a typical early summer’s day, light and bright and, in the Hadley household anyway, not a cloud in their sky. **Basic Conjunction**

‘Excuse me, Mrs Hadley.’ Sarah Pike, Mrs Hadley’s secretary, approached from the house. She had shoulder-length straw-coloured hair and timid green eyes which appeared permanently startled. ‘I’m sorry to disturb you but your husband has just arrived. He’s in the study.’

‘Kamal is here?’ Mrs Hadley was astounded. ‘Thank you, Sarah.’ She turned to Meggie. ‘His fourth visit home in as many months! We’re honoured!’

Meggie smiled sympathetically, making sure to keep her mouth well and truly shut. No way was she going to get in the middle of another inevitable squabble between Kamal Hadley and his wife. Mrs Hadley stood up and made her way into the house.

‘So, Sarah, how is Mr Hadley?’ Meggie lowered her voice to ask. **Interrogative sentences**

‘Is he in a good mood, d’you think?’ Sarah shook her head. ‘He looks about ready to blow a fuse.’

‘Why?’

‘No idea.’

Meggie digested this news in silence.

‘I’d better get back to work,’ Sarah sighed.

‘Would you like something to drink?’ Meggie pointed to the jug of ginger beer on the patio table.

‘No, thanks. I don’t want to get into trouble . . .’ With obvious trepidation, Sarah went back into the house. **Beginning a sentence with a prepositional clause**



Section 2:

Supports for Writing Multiple Paragraphs





Writing a Single Paragraph

Basic Outline

- Topic Sentence
- Body of the paragraph: 3 - 4 key details. Consider the 5Ws (who, what, where, when and why) and H (how).
- Concluding Sentence

Possible Template:

Title _____

Topic Sentence _____

Point 1 _____

Point 2 _____

Point 3 _____

Point 4 _____

Concluding Sentence _____



Using the Traffic Light Paragraphing System students can follow:



Green for the topic sentence



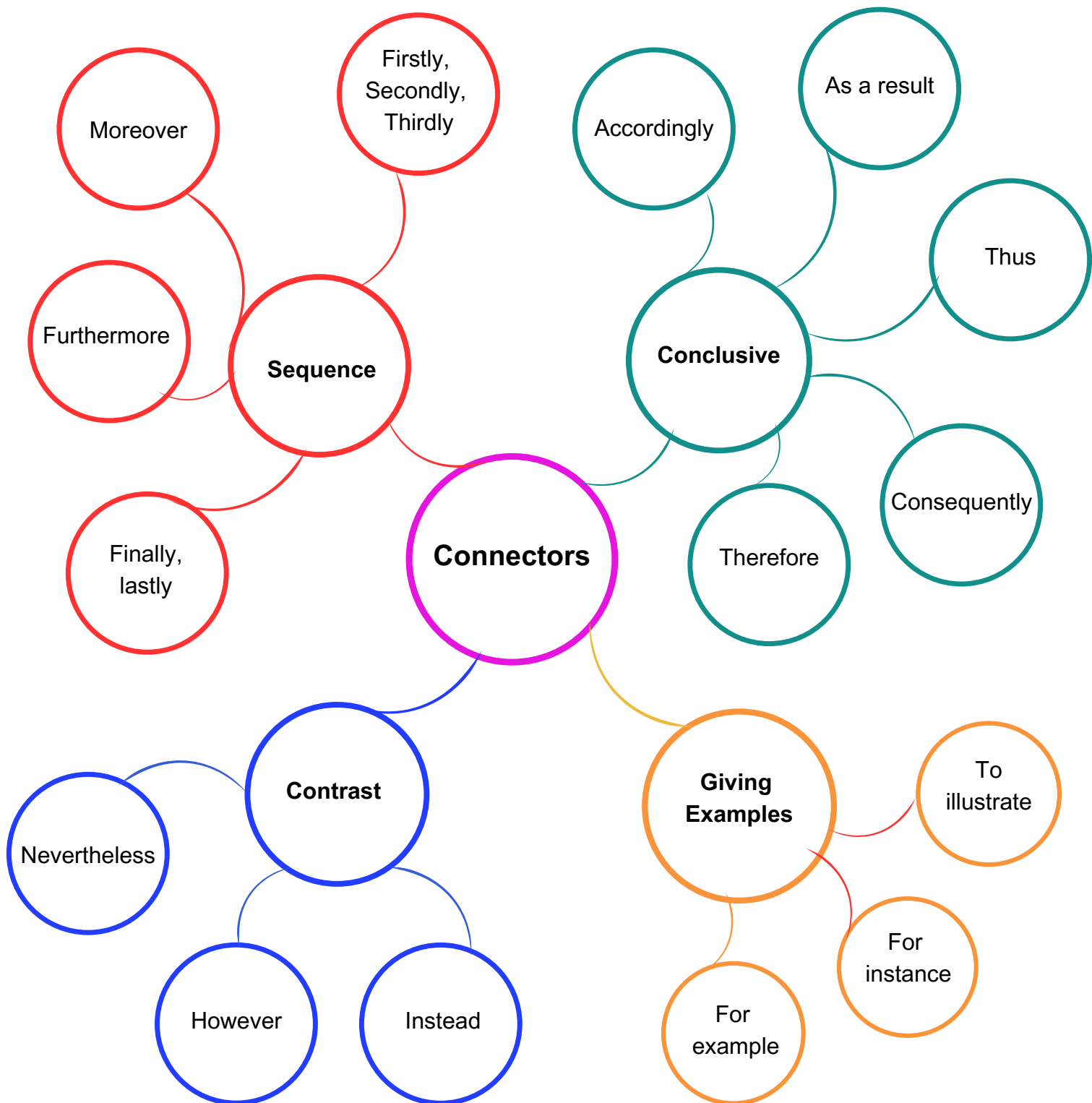
Amber for the body of the paragraph



Red for the concluding sentence



Using Connectors to Link Ideas





Linking Multiple Paragraphs

MAIN IDEA	DETAILS
Introduction Topic sentence Main ideas	What is your piece of writing about? What are the supporting details for the introduction? Consider your opening sentence and how you might grab the reader's attention.
Paragraph 2	Idea 1. Supporting details and examples.
Paragraph 3	Idea 2. Connecting phrase to paragraph 2. Supporting details and examples.
Paragraph 4	Idea 3. Connecting phrase to paragraph 3. Supporting details and examples.
Conclusion / Concluding Statement	Closing remark(s) and drawing your points together.

Adapted from *The Writing Revolution* (2017) by Judith C. Hochman and
Natalie Wexler, 2017 pp. 159-160



Review extract of 'Spider-Man into the Spider-Verse' - a focus on multiple paragraph outlines

Topic sentence

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse is a raucous, smart, self-referential adventure. The comics-inspired visuals are stunning, and the emotional coming-of-age story is relevant and inspiring, even as it acknowledges the many Spider-Man movies that have come before it.....

Along with the story insights and laughs, however, Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse is undeniably a visual powerhouse, with a style unlike any previous comics adaptation. The film pulls both from traditional 3D computer animation and comic book aesthetics, mashing them up into a dazzling, kinetic style. In one moment, the film lays out multiple panels on the screen. In another, it uses written captions to mirror Miles' internal monologue. In yet another, it deploys familiar written sound effects to match the action. It allows the directing team — Rothman, Bob Persichetti, and Peter Ramsey — to litter every frame with as many flourishes and blink-and-miss-it gags as possible. (My personal favorite is when the word “Bagel!” is used as a sound effect. Trust me on this one.)

Sometimes the film does reach visual overload. In the final act, particularly, so much is happening on-screen that the movie's style seems to undercut the narrative, turning everything into a blur of shape, color, and movement. But for the most part, the highly experimental style works extraordinarily well. It's a testament to Sony that the studio was willing to let the filmmakers go so far with the visual treatment, and it becomes one more element that distinguishes Spider-Verse as something completely distinct from other Spider-Man movies or even other animated films.

That last aspect — the fact that it feels honestly, truly unique — is one of the most invigorating aspects of Into the Spider-Verse. Superhero movies clutter the cinematic landscape these days, and with rare exceptions like Thor: Ragnarok and Black Panther they often look, sound, and act alike. They've become more consumer-friendly products than storytelling endeavors, with specific moments and stylistic approaches that are carefully honed to create films with the greatest possible chance of success. That doesn't mean they're all good (as many of Sony's Spider-Man releases prove), but it does mean that they're safe and often extraordinarily similar.

Concluding sentence

Adapted from *The Verve*

<https://www.theverge.com/2018/11/28/18115201/spider-man-into-the-verse-movie-review-miles-morales>

Indicates connecting phrases



Section 3: Identifying Word Choice and a Focus on Coherence

Using 'Knights of the
Borrowed Dark' by Dave
Rudden





Extract from *Knights of the Borrowed Dark* Chapter 8 - 'The Taste of Glass' - a focus on verbs and adverbs

The woman in white was eating light bulbs.

Simon couldn't take his eyes off her. It was horrible. She had found a cupboard on the third-floor corridor six metres from the closet in which Simon was hiding - and had begun rifling through its insides.

Linens had been experimentally sniffed then idly tossed aside, forming lonely snowdrifts on the floor. A first-aid kit had been emptied out, its content separated with a toe and methodically stamped apart. Now she was opening boxes of light bulbs, shaking the spheres out into her palm and peering into them before closing her teeth around their fragile domes. Crunch.

Examples of verbs
and adverbs from
the extract:

rifling...

experimentally sniffed...

idly tossed...

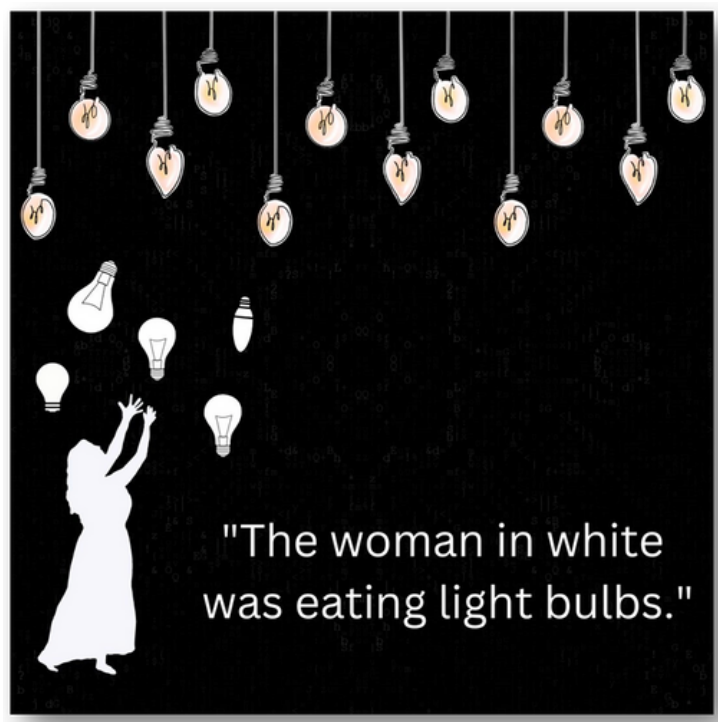
methodically stamped...



Experimenting with word choice – a possible strategy

Individually or in pairs:

- Create your own atmospheric opening to a story in 10 words or less.
- Create a physical or digital image to accompany your opening sentence.



Possible prompts:

- Sentence structure
- Use of colour
- Word choice
- 8 words in the sentence
- Unusual nouns and verbs.



Using the novel to support coherence

Read the following sentences from the novel. Correct one error in each sentence. They have been **adapted for this purpose**.

- As nice as it was to take a few hours off class - He wouldn't of been able to concentrate anyway. (Chapter 1)

- Massive windows invited the weak October sunlight in to die, there frames rattling occasionally with the wind. (Chapter 1)

- Simon could'nt take his eyes off her (Chapter 8)

- A first – aid kit had been emptied out, its content seperated (Chapter 8)

- Alot of people never get the answers they're looking for (Chapter 10)



Some Commonly Misspelt Words

separate	calender	unnecessary
questionnaire	surprise	embarrass
accommodation	receive	weird
definitely	business	independent
tattoo	beginning	absence
acknowledge	conscience	believe
immediate	commit	villain
occurred	character	rhythm
experience	special	onomatopoeia

Some Commonly Misspelt Homophones

its/ it's	your/ you're	their/there/ they are
new/knew	die/dye	tail/tale
principal/ principle	hear/here	right/ write
know/ no	for/ four	cell/ sell



Further Supports

Bibilography

- Hochman, J.C. and Wexler, N., 2017. *The Writing Revolution: A guide to advancing thinking through writing in all subjects and grades*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Quigley, A., 2018. *Closing the Vocabulary Gap*. Routledge.
- North, S., 2020, *Grammatix: Grammar in Context*, John Catt Educational Ltd.

Some useful websites to support writing:

- www.wordhippo.com
- www.vocabulary.com
- www.visuwords.com
- www.thenounproject.com (for dual coding)
- www.flaticon.com (for dual coding)
- www.ncse.ie
- www.rewordify.com
- www.grammar-monster.com
- www.grammarly.com

