



## Context of lesson

Students will need to have read the whole book in preparation for this lesson.

## Objectives

- W15:** Use a dictionary and a thesaurus with speed and skill.  
**Focus:** dictionary and thesaurus
- R12:** Comment using appropriate terminology on how writers convey setting, character and mood through word choice and sentence structure.  
**Focus:** character, setting and mood
- Wr11:** Select and present information using detail, example, diagram and illustration as appropriate.  
**Focus:** presenting information

## Starter

- Provide pairs with a dictionary and thesaurus, and the following list of words taken from the first few pages of the text:

abandoned	genuine	hailed	solitude	derelict
martial	stalking	cluttered	unbidden	lurked.
- Ask them, in pairs, to find a definition from the dictionary and at least two words of similar meaning in the thesaurus for each word on the list.
- Make a note of these and feed back to the rest of the class, finding as many alternative words as possible without losing the meaning. You could set a time limit or make it a competition to help speed up their activities.

## Introduction

Explain the focus is to be on character and consider the following questions:

- What methods does an author have for conveying character in a novel?  
**Example:** what the character says/does/thinks; what others say about the character; what the narrator tells the reader directly.
- How does the author succeed in portraying Simon as a bully in the opening chapter?
- Why does the reader not suspect Anna and Rebekkah when they are first introduced?



**Note:** The author has the power to select and control the information that they provide and the reader is required to interpret that information as best they can.

- Using **Worksheet 1**, ask students to note down what they feel each quotation reveals about the characters concerned.

## Development

- Invite students in groups of 3 or 4 to choose one of the main characters (Simon, Anna, Rebekkah, David, Miss Shaw, Mrs Stacey, Mr Kershaw, Mrs Mason, Mrs Royle).
- Give each group a large sheet of paper (A2 or 3) to present information about their chosen character. Students can use:
  - quotations from the text
  - pictures they have drawn
  - images they have cut from magazines (to be used as symbols)
  - write letters the character may have sent
  - write top ten lists
  - write school reports
  - write diary entries.

The aim is for students to provide a poster illustrating as much information as they can about their chosen character.

Students will need time to discuss ideas and divide up the work between the members of the group (especially for items such as letters and diary entries). This activity could well extend into a second lesson or a homework task and provide material for display.

## Plenary

Students share with the whole class what they are working on and what it reveals about the character.



## Character quotations

Read each of the quotations below and write down what you find out about the characters from each quotation. You may need to use the page reference to find out who is speaking and about whom.

**Note:** include as much detail as possible in your answer and remember that when someone speaks they often reveal things about *themselves* as well as who they are talking about.

'I'm not going to label you a bully just on Anna's say-so' (p12)

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'Simon Mason?! What, *him*?! Miss, miss! You must be *joking*! But he's an *idiot*, Miss!' (p22)

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'Has he got a name, Miss? Can I give him one?' (p27)

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'Where *are* they?' she demanded. 'It's weeks since those clothes were washed!' (p34)

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'Some children can be very rough,' she said. 'Boys especially.' (p35)

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'In some schools, I believe, bullying is all the rage these days ... That is not, and that will not, be the case in my school.' (p43)

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'You fool!' he said. 'You silly little fool! You're going to hurt somebody soon! Control yourself!' (p69)

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'Nothing!' he yelled. 'Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! Why don't you believe me, why do you believe that old cow!' (p77)

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'We're in enough trouble as it is, killing the gerbil. Let's leave him alone.' (p79)

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'One word to anyone, one little whine to Mum – and you're finished, right? *Right?*' (p82)

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'Don't! That's trespassing! Oh Anna, don't do that!' (p104)

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'The thing that horrifies me is that we're as bad. The kids pick up their attitudes from us, don't they?' (p130)

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## Context of lesson

Students are expected to have read the whole book.

## Objectives

**S10:** Identify the key alterations made to a text when it is changed from an informal to a formal text, e.g. *change from first to third person, nominalisation, use of passive verbs.*

**Focus:** informal to formal

**R5:** Trace the development of themes, values or ideas in texts.

**Focus:** trace developments

**Wr16:** Weigh different viewpoints and present a balanced analysis of an event or issue, e.g. *an environmental issue or historical investigation.*

**Focus:** balanced analysis

## Starter

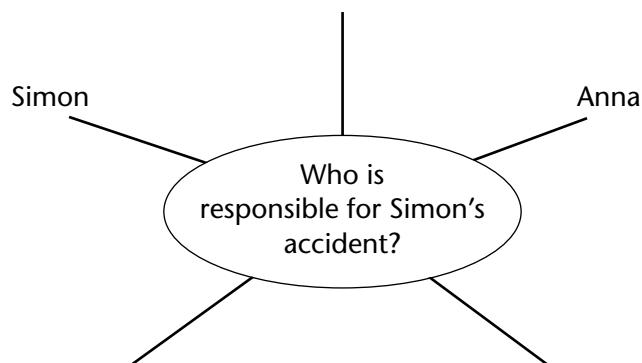
- Using **Worksheet 2**, discuss what impression the paragraph gives. **Example:** informal, scruffy, not necessarily true.
- Ask students to identify examples of informal language. **Example:** use of first person, slang vocabulary, active rather than passive verbs, double negatives, adverb/adjective confusion.
- Ask students to correct these errors and write their own version of the same paragraph, making it as formal and authoritative as they can.
- Read some of these aloud and discuss which phrases are the most successful.

## Introduction

- Ask students what they feel the positive values of the text might be. **Example:** honesty, kindness, responsibility.
- Explain that these are *themes* of the novel and that themes often come in pairs. For example, an author may wish to illustrate both kindness *and* cruelty.
- As a class, choose one of these themes and trace how it develops in the story, recalling each relevant episode, and recording them on the whiteboard, perhaps as a flow chart.



## Development



- Consider the question 'Who is responsible for Simon's accident?'. There are many characters who could take some of the blame, including Simon himself. Give students the opportunity to discuss their ideas, taking account of all the major characters (Simon, Anna, Rebekkah, David, Miss Shaw, Mrs Stacey, Mr Kershaw, Mrs Mason, Mrs Royle).
- Ask students to write an answer to the above question (perhaps using a spidergram for investigation), with a short paragraph about each character and a conclusion. Each paragraph should include the student's opinion about how responsible that character is, and reasons or evidence to back up their point of view. Some students may wish to use quotations. The conclusion should be an opportunity to state who is most responsible for what happened.

**Note:** remind students of the need for formal language in an assignment like this, referring them back to the starter activity.

## Plenary

One at a time, invite students to stand and accuse the character they feel to be most responsible, giving their reasons all in one sentence.



## Formal language

One of the teachers at St Michael's School has written a report about Simon Mason and has not used very appropriate language. Read the report, then write your own version using appropriate language for a school report.

SIMON MASON BR HISTORY

Simon is useless at sorting himself out. He doesn't try hard enough in class and he's always losing his stuff and he hasn't done no homework since September. I think the other kids in the class don't like him much. He can't write very quick in lessons and I don't think he knows much about history. Simon needs a good kick up the bum if he wants to get anywhere in life.

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**W8:** Recognise how lines of thought are developed and signposted through the use of connectives, e.g. *nonetheless*, *consequently*, *furthermore*.

**Focus:** connectives for developing thought

**SL5:** Compare different points of view that have been expressed, identifying and evaluating differences and similarities.

**Focus:** compare points of view

**Wr13:** Present a case persuasively enough to gain the attention and influence the responses of a specified group of readers.

**Focus:** influence audience

## Starter

Explain that students are going to briefly review the purpose of connectives in sentences.

- Hand out **Worksheet 3** to students asking them to complete each sentence, demonstrating their understanding of the meaning of the connective at the end of each sentence.
- As a class, go through some of their answers, discussing whether their choice is appropriate or not and the reasons why.

## Introduction

- Reread chapter 16 and consider the range of views about events at the school represented by the characters.
- Ask individual students to take the role of each of the main characters from the final chapter and summarise, for the class, their answers to the following questions:

What should the students involved have done differently?

**Example:** talked to their parents.

What should the teachers have done?

**Example:** intervened earlier to stop problems.

What should happen now to the students involved?

**Example:** sent to a psychiatrist.



How should things change at school?

**Example:** develop a bullying policy in the school.

Students should make notes as they listen.

## Development

Explain to students that they are going to write letters to the Head-teacher, Mrs Stacey, putting forward their own point of view, as parents of students at St Michael's, about the events that have taken place.

- Students use the questions in the introduction above as prompts for each paragraph to help structure the letter.
- Students should also use the opportunity to include some of the connectives from the starter activity to formalise their style.

**Note:** remind students about the features of persuasive writing. **Example:** use of repetition, exaggeration, appealing to the reader directly, generalisation, emotive vocabulary. You could write the first paragraph together as a shared writing activity.

Mr Smith  
40 Smith Gardens  
Lower Smithbury  
SM5 6LH

Dear Mrs Stacey,

I am writing to inform you of my grave concern about the events which have taken place at St Michael's last week.

As the parent of a child at the school, I am appalled to hear that this young boy should have been left to deal with his tormentors alone, without the support of teachers, furthermore that he should suffer such serious, physical injury.

I would like to know what you are doing about this appalling issue.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Smith

## Plenary

Set up a competition and ask 5 to 6 students to read aloud some of the final paragraphs they have written and vote on which are the most persuasive.





## Connectives

Complete these sentences, taking care that they make sense.

Mrs Royle believed what Anna told her, whereas...

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Simon wanted to stay off school, although...

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Mr Kershaw didn't agree with Miss Shaw, nevertheless...

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...consequently she asked Simon to be pets monitor.

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Simon escaped from class as soon as the bell rang, since...

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Mrs Stacey was convinced the girls were innocent of bullying, furthermore...

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