



EXTRACTS FROM THE ALEX RIDER SERIES BY ANTHONY HOROWITZ WEEK 11

Continuing from Week 10

ALEX RIDER SERIES OVERVIEW OF LESSONS

The lessons over the next two weeks include extracts that have been taken directly from the books, corresponding discussion questions and cross-curricular activities that stimulate ideas around important themes in the series.

The lessons are aimed at developing descriptive and creative writing, including exploring different genres, writing strong lead characters, devising mission files, developing settings, and creating pacey stories.

LESSON 1 & 2
TO DESCRIBE A NEW SETTING USING
SENSORY DESCRIPTION

LEAD-IN QUESTIONS:

Let's find out ...

- What are your favourite settings to read about?
- Why is it important to have a strong setting?

TASK 1

There are lots of brilliant settings in the Alex Rider series. For example, read the one below taken from Stormbreaker:

London appeared.

Suddenly the clouds rolled back and the midday sun brought the whole city, shining, into view. There was Battersea Power Station, standing proud with its four great chimneys still intact, even though much of its roof had long ago been eaten away. Behind it, Battersea Park appeared as a square of dense green bushes and trees that were making a last stand, fighting back the urban spread. In the far distance, the Millennium Wheel perched like a fabulous silver coin, balancing effortlessly on its rim. And all around it, London crouched; gas towers and apartment blocks, endless rows of shops and houses, roads, railways and bridges stretching away on both sides, separated only by the bright silver crack in the landscape that was the River Thames.

Alex saw all this with a clenched stomach, looking out through the open door of the aircraft. He'd had fifty minutes to think about what he had to do. Fifty minutes while the plane droned over Cornwall and Devon, then Somerset and the Salisbury Plains before reaching the North Downs and flying on towards Windsor and London.

FOR THE EXTRACT:

1. Underline any powerful words that stand out to you.
2. Underline as many ADJECTIVES as you can.
3. Underline as many ADVERBS as you can.
4. Underline any SIMILES and METAPHORS.

TERMINOLOGY

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun (the name of a thing or a place)

An **adverb** is simply a word that describes a verb (an action or a doing word). • He ate his breakfast quickly. The word 'quickly' is an **adverb** as it tells us how he ate (the verb) his breakfast.

A **simile** is a figure of speech that directly compares two different things. The **simile** is usually in a phrase that begins with the words "as" or "like." "This is different from a **metaphor**, which is also a comparison but one says something is something else.

TASK 2

Write each of the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) in your book. Make a list of key words/phrases or adjectives that appeal to the senses in the extract.

Consider how each word or phrase that you have written down is effective. How does it make you feel? What does it make you think of?

Can you draw London based on the description in the extract?



TASK 3

Now, imagine a setting of your own. It can be a real place, a city just like in the extract, or somewhere in your imagination.

How would you use sensory description to write about your chosen setting? Note down any key words or phrases that you would use to evoke each of the five senses.



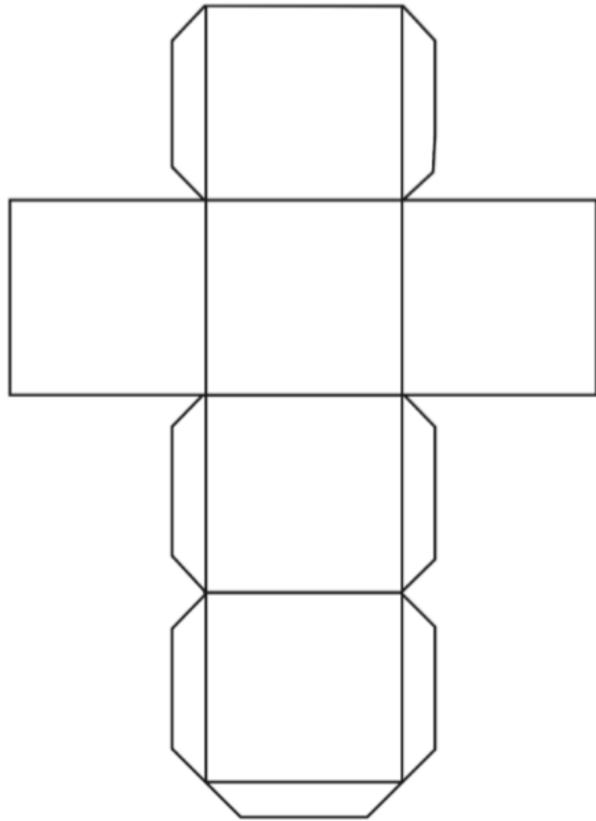
TASK 4

Use your notes to write five possible sentences that you might use to describe the setting that you are thinking of (one for each of the senses).

Write down a sentence on each side of the story die template, adding a sixth bonus sentence, and make the die!

The story die template can be found on the class home page, or you can draw it on a piece of paper (see next slide).

STORY DIE TEMPLATE



Ask someone to roll the die. Can they match each of your sentences to the correct sense? Share your favourite sentences and suggestions with an adult at home.

LESSON 3 & 4
TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO CREATE PACE
AND TENSION IN WRITING.

LEAD-IN QUESTIONS: Let's find out . . .

- What is pace? Why is pace important in an adventure story?
- How does increasing pace in a story make the reader feel tense or “on the edge of their seat”?
- Can you think of a book that you've read which had a moment of tension? How did it make you feel?
- What is a cliffhanger?

TASK 1

Read the following extract from Stormbreaker:

The plane had completed its pre-flight tests. It was facing down the runway. Its propellers were at full speed.

Alex slammed the gears into first, released the handbrake and gunned the Jeep forward, shooting over the drive and on to the grass, heading for the airstrip. At the same time there was a chatter of machine-gun fire. He yanked down on the steering-wheel and twisted away as his wing mirror exploded and a spray of bullets slammed into the windscreen and door. The two cars, speeding towards him, head-on, were getting closer and closer. Each of them had a guard in the back seat, leaning out of the window, firing at him. Alex swerved between them, and for a horrible second there was actually one on each side. He was sandwiched between the two cars, with guards firing at him left and right. But then he was through. The guards missed him and hit each other. He heard one of them yell out and drop his gun. One of the cars lost control and crashed into the front of the house, metalwork crumpling against brick. The other screeched to a halt, reversed, then came after him again.

The plane had begun to move down the runway. Slowly at first, but rapidly picking up speed. Alex hit the tarmac and followed.

His foot was pressed down, the accelerator against the floor. The Jeep was doing about seventy – not fast enough. For just a few seconds Alex was parallel with the cargo plane, only a couple of metres from it. But already it was pulling ahead. At any moment it would be in the air.

And straight ahead of him, the way was blocked. Two more Jeeps had arrived on the runway. More guards with machine-guns balanced themselves, half-crouching, on the seats. Alex realized the only reason they weren't firing was that they were afraid of hitting the plane. But the plane had already left the ground. Ahead of him, and just to his left, Alex saw the front wheel separate itself from the runway. He glanced in his mirror. The car that had chased him from the house was right on his tail. He had nowhere left to go.

One car behind him. Two Jeeps ahead of him. The plane now in the air, the back wheels lifting off. Everything happening at once.

AFTER READING THE EXTRACT, PLOT THE MOMENTS OF TENSION ON THE GRAPH BELOW. CONSIDER WHEN THE TENSION IS AT ITS HIGHEST AND AT ITS LOWEST. HOW DOES THE AUTHOR ACHIEVE THIS?



TASK 2

Read the extract again. Can you find examples of the following techniques to create tension or excitement for the reader?

- A variation of short and long sentences to create pace.
- Vocabulary to evoke an ominous atmosphere.
- Strong emotions from the characters.
- Cliffhangers

TASK 3

Now it's your turn to plot your own scene using the same graph, but this time use a different coloured pen or pencil. Consider the following things:

- What events will occur?
- How will your characters feel?
- How will the pace increase or decrease?
- What will the highest/lowest moment of tension be?

LESSON 5
TO UNDERSTAND HOW TO CREATE PACE
AND TENSION IN WRITING.

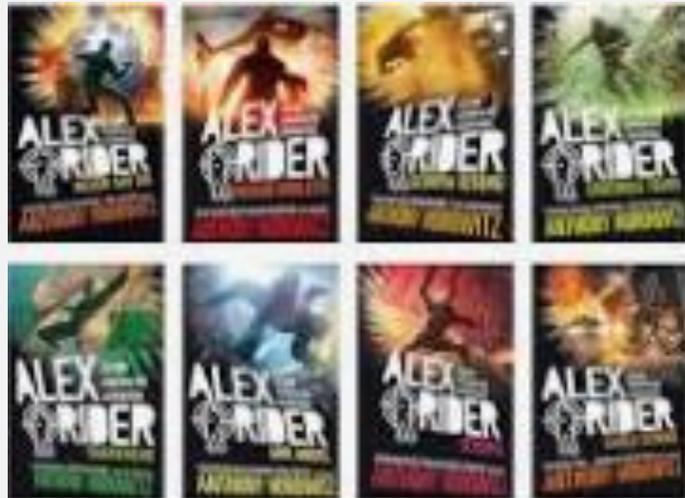
Now that you've plotted out your scene using the graph, it's time to write it down!

Remember to use the **success criteria** from Task 2:

- varied sentence lengths
- vocabulary to evoke atmosphere
- strong emotions from characters

TASK

Use everything you have completed in these lessons (over the past two weeks) to create your own Alex Rider adventure/spy short story!



REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

Answer the following:

– I have most enjoyed.....

– I have learned.....

– I would like to read more Alex Rider books because.....

– The next Alex Rider book I want to read is.....

****MISSION COMPLETE****