



LITERACY BRIDGING UNIT Part 1 (Year 6)

The Battle Below Giltspur

4 weeks, Summer term, 2000

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1. About this unit

Background

'The Battle below Giltspur' is the first of a two-part Year 6/7 literacy bridging unit, one of a series developed by Nottinghamshire Education Department as part of a national pilot scheme to help secondary schools build on the gains made by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2 and to pave the way for the introduction of the Key Stage 3 English Strategy. The units were used with Year 6 pupils in selected primary schools in the last four weeks of the summer term, 2000, and with Year 7 pupils in the secondary schools in the winter term.

The unit has an Irish focus because it draws upon a successful pilot scheme, run by 'Ireland in Schools', to test the feasibility and desirability of using Irish children's literature to deliver the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2.

The second, the Year 7, unit, ('The Celts, Ireland and Myths') was developed by Nigel Mill of The Wheldon School, to which Porchester sends some of its pupils. It was used with Year 7 pupils in the winter term, 2000, to build on the work done in this unit by Porchester Junior School and three other primary schools which also send pupils to The Wheldon.

This unit

1. This, the Year 6, unit consists of twenty lesson over four weeks' for the summer term, 2000.
2. The unit is based on one text: *The Battle below Giltspur* by Cormac MacRaois. Set in County Wicklow, Ireland, it provides opportunities to work on the themes of mystery and fantasy, with real characters embarking upon a journey and mythical characters and powers appearing within a modern setting.
3. The main aims are to:
 - a. explore features of fantasy Irish fiction;
 - b. consider how characters are developed in a story;
 - c. take an active part in reading, producing a detailed reading journal;
 - d. study the setting of a text and how it changes;
 - e. improve writing and understanding of the story structure; and
 - f. find evidence within the text to support answers and opinions.
4. Obviously, because of the nature of this pilot scheme, the planning is roughly based on a typical year 5/6 age range. Where possible differentiated activities and worksheets have been supplied. As well as literacy activities, work on Celtic art, geography or history may be included to further children's knowledge and understanding of Ireland.
5. Some of the unit's limitations stem from the circumstances of the pilot scheme as a whole:
 - a. It assumes that the children have written in a variety of purposes and have had previous experience with writing diaries, reports, letters and character profiles.
 - b. Because it is completely text- orientated, there is a great deal of shared reading in the planning, with some shared writing at the end.
 - c. To get through the text in depth in the time allocated, the planning does include some homework suggestions and finishing-off lessons.
6. Each child should produce their own booklet containing their written responses which should be sent to The Wheldon School.

Benefits

The pilot scheme will:

1. Safeguard and build on the gains made at Key Stage 2 through the National Literacy Strategy.
2. Improve continuity of teaching and learning from Year 6 to Year 7.
3. Provide early, tailored intervention to secure Level 4 for pupils still at Level 3, and those below.
4. Establish systematic and co-ordinated support for literacy across the curriculum.
5. Raise the threshold for entry at Key Stage 4 and subsequent results.
6. Improve motivation for both teachers and pupils at Key Stage 3.

2. The text

The Battle below Giltspur by Cormac Mac RAOIS, Wolfhound Press, ISBN 0 86327 356 4

Opening

THE ROOKS OF GILTSPUR WOOD were all of a flutter. They could not roost easily in their tall weather-beaten pines. They kept shuffling about on their horny claws, cawing and muttering to each other. Then they would suddenly leap into the air a frantic flapping of their ragged black wings and just as quickly turn and land again.

Scrag was angry. Scrag, the biggest, fiercest old rook was King of the Wood. For more years than any of them could count he had ruled his kingdom high on the south slope of Little Sugarloaf Mountain in County Wicklow. When Scrag was angry everyone was nervous.

Summary

When the ancient force of Bealtaine blows on May Day, and fuses life into the scarecrow near Niamh and Daire Durkan's home, Glasán isn't the only scarecrow to visit them. The Black One has also been awakened by the power of the Bealtaine winds. Niamh and Daire find themselves drawn into a dangerous attempt to destroy the evil powers of Greyfang and Deathtooth.

Appraisal

This novel is the first in the Giltspur trilogy. In spite of its setting in modern County Wicklow, it bristles with atavistic resonances. Fast, tense and full of blood-curdling happenings, it is a rivetting fantasy, a magical tale of power and revenge, blending high adventure and ancient Irish myth. It is the first in the Giltspur series and rightly deserves the description 'absolutely brilliant' which recurs in so many reviews.

Where many 'good-versus-evil' books are ruined by their pietism, Mac RAOIS triumphantly avoids this by creating characters, real and supernatural, who move beyond mere allegory into forceful credibility. Mac RAOIS's belief that realism is not necessarily the most satisfactory method of portraying the realities of people's lives and his willingness to let myth cross over to children's lives combine to produce most powerful results. As one commentator observed,

Like Niamh in The Battle below Giltspur on first meeting Glasán, the awakened scarecrow, we may be 'scarcely able to believe that the old magic was alive before her.' But when we later come to witness the amazing scenes in Brya's main street and Niamh's confrontation with Morrigan in Lightning over Giltspur our doubts should have vanished.

The rest of the trilogy

Dance of the Midnight Fire, Wolfhound Press, ISBN 0 86327 357 2

The Land of Dreaming is threatened with utter destruction. Unless the people of Danann can drink from the magic waters of the Island of Youth, they will die. This time Niamh and Daire are joined by their cousin Rónán **and are aided not only by Manannán Mac Lir but also by the magic Lir-Stone, 'an oval-shaped crystal of light ... its brightness did not dazzle their eyes but flowed into their bodies filling them with delight.'** **Can they succeed in returning with a flaskful of the water of the Well of Youth, braving the wolves, the strange and dangerous dance of the midnight fire, the enchanted forest, and the dripping shadows?**

From the very first page, when the evil power of the seaweed near Greystones is revealed, the reader is drawn breathlessly into Niamh and Daire's new battle against the forces of evil which are, again, immense and terrifying. Again, too, the book is fast, tense, full of blood-curdling happenings and almost impossible to put down.

Lightning over Giltspur, Wolfhound Press, ISBN 0 86327 308 7

It is Hallowe'en, the most menacing and magical time of year. The Morrigan and an army of Shadow Slaves, 'filling the very air with their fear and gloom', have returned to Giltspur to seek revenge. Niamh and Daire Durkan are attacked on the road, sheep are savaged by dogs, the scarecrow is stolen, Daire is accused of smoking and Niamh of lying and stealing. But Niamh, Daire and Rónán, again with the aid of Glasán and **Manannán Mac Lir**, take on Greyfang and Deathtooth in a dangerous attempt to destroy them forever by pity as much as force.

After the publication of *Dance of the Midnight Fire*, the *Irish Guide to Children's Books* wrote:

Mac RAOIS has only written two books for children but both have qualities which make them outstanding. His characters are superbly drawn and remain consistent throughout, making them and the events enveloping them seem very real.... If he can sustain the pace, originality and quality of these two books which evoke a marvellous sense of Ireland, then he will have produced an epic series of the same calibre and appeal as The Chronicles of Narnia.

3. The author

Cormac Mac Raois was born in Belfast but now lives in Bray, Co. Wicklow. A schoolteacher, he started writing for his children. His approach to writing is best summed up in this letter he wrote to two children from Park Road School, Warrington, which at the time was taking part in the 'Ireland in Schools' Literacy Pilot Scheme:

Dear Libby Naylor and Andrew Bradbury,

Many thanks for your delightful and well-written letter.

I am very pleased that the Giltspur Trilogy has been included in your reading for the Warrington Project and even more pleased that you and your class enjoyed the stories so much. I find it very interesting that you liked "Dance of the Midnight Fire" the best, as it was the most difficult book to write and I wasn't sure if I had got it quite right!

Like yourselves I also read Alan Garner's - "Weirdstone of Brisingamen" and "Moon of Gomrath" and enjoyed both very much. They are my kind of stories.

Niamh, Daire and Rónán are indeed my children. In a way the books were written as a gift to them and I read the stories to them before they were published. The illustrations are based on photos of them that I sent to Jeanette Dunne when she was preparing the art work for the publishers. I think they were rather pleased (though sometimes embarrassed) that they featured in books read by so many people.

Oddly enough I have very few photos of myself but I enclose one taken by Niamh in my garden. I'm also including a few shots of scenes linked to the Giltspur adventures to give you an idea of the style of landscape in the area - though the photos are not half as impressive as the real scenery.

I live in Bray and as you may see from the maps in the books, it is quite near the Glen of the Downs, the setting of the stories. Indeed Bray features in "Lightning Over Giltspur." Walking in the woods and hills around the Sugarloaf Mountains and along the cliff walks above the sea at Bray Head is one of my favourite pastimes. It was because I know and love the area so much and because it is such a beautiful exciting place that I decided to place my stories there. I have spoken to many children in Wicklow and they all were delighted to have a story set in places that they knew well.

Giltspur Cottage was an old hunting lodge belonging to the Earl of Meath, a local landlord. It was later used by scouting groups when camping on the Sugarloaf. Bray has grown a lot since I wrote the first book and we now have a housing estate bearing the name of Giltspur!

You asked me to tell you about myself! I was born in Belfast (quite a long time ago) and lived there until I was thirteen. Then I moved to Dublin, eventually trained as a teacher, got married and moved to Bray where I have lived for twenty-five years. Nowadays I teach in a school in Wicklow Town, so every day I drive between the Sugarloaf Mountains and south through the Glen of the Downs where I often see the rooks streaming out across the Glen, reminding me of Scraggs. Apart from writing, my hobbies are playing piano, occasionally strumming a guitar (rather badly) and singing (when no one is listening), painting and drawing, walking, swimming and gardening.

Apart from the Giltspur books I have written one other children's novel called "It's Pinbindimdominilli!" - which has to be the hardest title to pronounce! Most children call it "The Pin Book." It is quite different from the Giltspur Trilogy in that it is mostly humorous. I really enjoyed writing it and as I think you might enjoy it too I am enclosing a copy for you. My other writings are short stories published by Poolbeg, Dublin, along with the work of other writers in collections entitled "Shiver" and "Chiller" - mostly ghostly stories. I have also written poetry in Irish for adults.

You tell me you have written a class book. That is an excellent idea and I would certainly love you to send me a copy so that I may read your writing.

Good luck with everything you do with the Warrington Project. I look forward to hearing from you again and if you ever come to visit Ireland I will be happy to meet you all in person.

Yours sincerely,

4. Lesson plans

Week 1 KEY TEXT OBJECTIVES

- Examine a text from a different culture/tradition
- Understand narrative aspects of a text
- Contribute to a shared discussion about a text
- Develop an active attitude towards reading
- Evaluate a text by referring to details and examples within it

DAY	SHARED READING/WRITING	WORD/SENTENCE LEVEL WORK	LITERACY/ACTIVITY	PLENARY
MON	Introduce bk- blurb +front cover. Discuss type of book. Read p 6-10 (2 nd paragraph). How opens, what learn about characters. What makes the text make you want to read on. What learn about Scraggs and Carrock.	Use of dashes to link words. How speech is punctuated. Other words for 'said', e.g. croaked. Other suitable ones.	Children examine the pages read out in the first part of the lesson. Answer the questions in detailed answers using evidence from the text. Differentiated questions/abilities.	Discuss the questions and recap on the characters of the birds.
TUES	Read pp10-15. Plot main points of the chapter on board. Decide which main action and exclude unimportant parts.	Use of connective words and phrases. Find and record examples. Personification - p13 'he had grown into the field'. Repetition of the word 'it' on p13. Effect on reader.	Children write a synopsis of chapter 1 in rough. The sheets are differentiated, but encourage the children to think about the setting, characters, opening, main action, and the language used.	Record phrases on board - those that entice you to read on.
WED	Re-read p13 and last paragraph on p15. How are the scarecrows brought to life? Find evidence in the book. How wind seems real/helpful.	How the author uses colour to add to the descriptions and imagery. How text hints at good and bad characters through its descriptions. Display.	Children check their rough chapter synopsis and improve - changing words for better ones. Encourage neat handwriting and evidence from the text.	On whiteboard - display all 'good' and 'bad' words and descriptions. E.g. 'soft darkness ...glistened yellow jacket' compared to 'angrily... black... dark deepening darkness'.
THURS	Shared writing - how the scarecrow is described - action, dialogue/description. Find evidence - page references. Build evidence on board under each section.	Personification on p13 - the wind sang...it found ...grasses dancing... hedges talking . How the text makes it seem alive. Think of others.	Children use the notes from the first part of the lesson to write a character profile of the scarecrow. Using evidence from the chapter. Include figurative language. Use structure of action, dialogue and description.	Selection of profiles to read out and listen to. Audience listen for similes, alliteration etc. Record these on whiteboard.
FRI	Start to read chapter 2 - pp16-18. Discuss 'strange incident'. What do we learn about the dark figure? On OHT underline all facts about the incident.	Recap on layout and content of newspaper articles. Look at a selection - headline, opening statement, the interview, past tense.	Children imagine they are a reporter for <i>Wicklow People</i> - reporting the car accident. Plan their article using the facts from p17. Rough first - copy out at a later date.	Show a selection of newspaper articles - children read out their headline - display on board. Read out a selection of opening paragraphs and decide what information needs to be in it. Homework - prefixes and suffixes in chapter 2, e.g. wonderful/wonderfully.

Week 2 KEY TEXT OBJECTIVES

- Find evidence in the text
- Write character descriptions using the text as a starting point
- Evaluate a text by referring to details and examples within it
- Empathise with a character

DAY	SHARED READING/WRITING	WORD/SENTENCE LEVEL WORK	LITERACY/ACTIVITY	PLENARY
MON	Read p19-23. Discuss children's response to the scarecrow. How hints at magical powers - flute playing, talking to dog.	Use of ! in speech on p20. Similes on p20. Said words - smiled, asked, repeated, replied, laughed.	Children imagine they are either Naimh or Daire. Write a diary for the day they met the scarecrow. Thoughts, feelings, effect of the meeting. Recount of the flute playing.	Discuss text so far - prediction with a partner as to what the task is and what will happen. Record in reading journal.
TUES	Read p24 - bottom p26. How are the characters changing towards Glasán? How the author uses the parents to bring the action forward - the two children hear about the incident at Roundwood.	Use of their and there in text - highlight examples. Teacher writes other examples on the board - children decide which one. Intro. to they're.	Each child has a true/false sheet related to chapter 2. They decide on which are which and then use the true ones to write a summary of chapter 2. Differentiated sheets.	Recap on true/false and read out some summaries. Recap on their/there/they're.
WED	Read pp27-30. How magical powers of Glasán are growing - butterfly, swallows. Highlight how Glasán is presented - action, dialogue and description.	Find words <i>fluttered, twittered, splintered, feathered</i> . Look at spelling patterns and think of others.	Children use all three chapters to find evidence of the character of Glasán. Include magical powers and his personality. SEN children use page prompts to find information. Remind of use of connectives.	Teacher writes <i>action, dialogue and description</i> on board and children describe their evidence and page references. Teacher writes notes under each heading to build up a table.
THURS	Read pp31-2. Discuss change in Glasán after hearing about the black scarecrow, also how he is becoming stronger. On OHT, highlight evidence of devastation of the scarecrow.	Highlight ellipsis to show pause, also words such as murmured, quietly speaking. Words chosen to describe the incidents - invaded, savagely, ragged, disturbing. Thesaurus work.	Children to use p32 to write a second report for the <i>Wicklow People</i> . Choose one incident and write as if they are the reporter from last week. Children use their other article to remind them of features and layout.	Collect together the headlines from their articles. Discuss how they hint at the content of the article. Display suitable words chosen for the character of the scarecrow.
FRI	Read p33 - top of p35. Recap on Scraggs. Change - how text hints at Scraggs becoming dark character.	Suitable similes on p35. Highlight negative words and how the creatures are suitable - crows, dogs etc.	Children find all the evidence from the book about 'The dark one' and write a character description - appearance, actions. Include figurative language. Use thesaurus.	Listen to some descriptions and focus on the negative words. Display. Weekend homework - write summary of chapter 3.

Week 3 KEY TEXT OBJECTIVES

- Revise figurative language features
- How characters are presented in the story
- Record predictions and reflections in a reading journal
- Use the text to pick out the main action and for evidence to support their view T

DAY	SHARED READING/WRITING	WORD/SENTENCE LEVEL WORK	LITERACY/ACTIVITY	PLENARY
MON	Read p35 - top p38. Why attacked scarecrow? Characters of the children - relationship with father.	Words to describe the attack- shattered, collapsed, shredded, savagely. Simile - p37.	Children complete figurative language search - use the first four chapters to find examples of similes, alliteration, metaphor and personification. Use of colour in descriptions of good and bad characters. Page references.	Thesaurus game - Teacher shouts out suitable adjectives for the birds - children find synonyms.
TUES	Read p38-42. Highlight evidence about the Black One. Use recount genre sheet to plot the main action in chapter 4.	Find where apostrophe's are used for omission or ownership. More examples on whiteboard. Brainstorm connective words and phrases.	Children use first part of the lesson to write a detailed summary of chapter 4. Include action, descriptions. Use connective words and phrases and indented paragraphs.	Apostrophe's game - Teacher writes sentences on the board and children put in the apostrophe, saying whether omission or ownership.
WED	Read pp43- 50. How Glasán's powers are becoming stronger? Why the wolves have entered the story? Who sent them? How Glasán heals Rusk?	Dashes to link words - p43. Use of word "it" for effect. Find examples of powerful verbs.	Children answer differentiated SATS type questions on the chapter in detail. Look for evidence to support ideas and opinions. Page references.	Go through some of the questions. Brainstorm other powerful verbs that are appropriate for the wolf.
THURS	Recap on the entry of the wolves. Highlight together some key words. Recap on use of a thesaurus to find synonyms.	Find examples of similes, use of colour to extend the description. How info. Is either about the noise of the wolves, or their appearance and actions.	Use text sheet on the wolf. Children annotate the text, underlining the adjectives figurative language. Put descriptions into sections - those about action or appearance or noise.	Teacher writes action, appearance and noise on the board. Children offer their ideas and page references. Other synonyms.
FRI	Look at notes made previous day about the wolves. Shared writing - write opening paragraph about either wolf - include 3 areas.	Recap on figurative language and thesaurus work. Remind study must include noise, action and description. Ways to start sentences.	Children use the ideas from the previous two days to write their own detailed character study of either Greycfang or Deathtooth.	Share some predictions of what will happen next - write them down in their reading journal and their reasons for them. Homework - read chapter 6.

Week 4 KEY TEXT OBJECTIVES

- Poetry writing
- Use the text to find evidence and support ideas/opinions
- Revise types of speech
- Make predictions based on knowledge of the text
- Express an opinion about the text in the form of a review
- Study back cover blurbs and write one - decide on what information needs to be included.

DAY	SHARED READING/WRITING	WORD/SENTENCE LEVEL WORK	LITERACY/ACTIVITY	PLENARY
MON	Recap on chapter 6 . from homework. Re-read 57-60. Discuss change in the children. Bravery and courage. Find evidence.	Words that suggest Daire was awoken. Punctuation of speech at top of p59. Use of ? and !. Mixture of short/long sentences.	Children brainstorm adjectives in pairs of the wolves - use the text and then use a thesaurus to think of others. Use these words to write a poem about the wolves including similes. E.g, eyes burning red like... Moon glowing like ...	Read out a selection of poems - practise expression.
TUES	Read p61- 69. Why children think they're lucky to go to Aunt Florrie's? Why were people acting strange when they went to post the letter?	Look at how speech is presented in the chapter. Introduce the terms <i>statement, question, response, warning</i> . Find an e.g. of all.	Children use the rest of the lesson to find other examples of types of speech. Give page references and copy out the examples neatly, with correct punctuation.	Discuss types of speech and said words that are appropriate for each.
WED	Read p70 - middle p77. Prediction of what might happen next? How the action is fast moving - sentences and speech carry it forward.	Recap on vowels - find words where vowels are unstressed - suddenly, squirrels etc.	Children write a brief summary of chapter 8 so far and then record their predictions in their reading journal.	Share some predictions and read rest of chapter. Discuss how the weaknesses of the children come out.
THURS	Recap on why the three characters have gone to the cave. P83 on OHP- annotate key features and figurative language. Discuss effects of descriptions.	Similes on p83-87. Said words to show panic and fear - p88. cried...commanded... shouted.	Children use chapter 9 to write a character description of the Black One. Focus on appearance, personality and action. Encourage figurative language. Thesaurus.	Read on to chapter 10.
FRI	Use the remaining time to complete reading the text -this may take up to three extra lessons!	Look at main features of a fantasy text - suspense, special powers, warnings, real + supernatural powers.	Write a review of the text Rewrite back cover blurb	Present reviews and blurbs.

5. Worksheets

1. Questions on chapter 1 - two ability sheets
2. Chapter review sheet blank suitable for all chapters - two ability sheets
3. Blank newspaper sheet - Wicklow people
4. True/false statements for chapter 2 - two ability sheets
5. SEN page prompts for character of Glasán
6. Language search sheet for use with whole book
7. Questions on chapter 2 - two ability sheets
8. Text sheet on the entry of the wolves
9. Sheet to organise information from text - the entry of the wolves
10. Types of speech - study sheet

There is also a separate section for other ideas for independent work, including the address of the author and the opening of the next book by Cormac MacRaois.

Read pages 6-10 and answer the questions below. Include page numbers where you can.

1. Who are the main characters ?
2. Find some describing words for Scrag (p. 6)
3. What do you think the birds are waiting for?
4. What sound does Scrag make on page 10?
5. Find an example of a question and write it down and who said it.
6. Do you like the character of Scrag? Explain your reasons.

Questions on pages 6-10

Read the questions and answer them in detail, finding evidence from the text where possible.

1. Describe how the text opens (action, dialogue or description)
2. What do we learn about the character of Scraggs from the text?
3. What are the birds waiting for?
4. Why does Carrock call Scraggs 'the king'?
5. Explain what makes Scraggs angry on page 7.
6. Explain what Scraggs meant when he said 'the fools below will give us away'?
7. Predict who Bill Durkan might be. Why are the birds watching him?
8. Find evidence in pages 6-10 that shows Scraggs is angry.
9. What new threat does Scraggs feel on page 10?
10. Describe your views on the opening pages of the text. Include
 - Which parts you like/dislike
 - your predictions of what will happen next
 - Any parts you would change and why
 - Which character you prefer- Scraggs or Carrock
11. Find some adjectival phrases that you like and explain why. Include page references.

e.g. 'shuffling about on their horny claws, cawing and muttering to each other' (p. 6)

Chapter title

Characters

(minor/major characters, action, appearance, dialogue)

Setting

(where, when, what time, setting changes)

How the chapter opens

(action, dialogue or description)

Main action

(what actually happens!)

Language features

(e.g. descriptions, figurative language)

Title of chapter

Names of characters?

Where the story takes place

What happens in the chapter?

Describing words

WICKLOW PEOPLE

June 2000, price 30p

Chapter 2

Read chapter 2 and decide which of the statements below are true or false next to these sentences.

1. Naimh and Daire's father is called Bill Durkan.
2. Rusk is a stray dog.
3. Rusk is scared of the scarecrow.
4. The strange incident was when a dark person caused a car crash.
5. The dark person looked like he had fancy dress on.
6. Rusk hates the scarecrow.
7. Glasán is the name of the scarecrow.
8. Glasán was brought to life by a magic wand.
9. Glasán eats some bread that Naimh gave him.
10. Glasán can move safely around during the day.

Chapter 2

Read chapter 2 and decide which of the statements below are true or false next

1. Rusk ran up to scarecrow and barked.
2. Bill Durkan went to the field to check on the seeds.
3. Rusk was excited when he got to the field.
4. The local newspaper is called 'Wicklow Times'.
5. The dark figure jumped out of a hedge and caused an accident.
6. After the accident, the dark figure helped the driver.
7. The title 'stranger in the field' means the dark figure.
8. Bill Durkan thought the crash was just an accident.
9. Rusk was acting strange because of the birds making noises.
10. Glasán was brought to life a by a magic wand.
11. Glasán can move safely during the day.
12. Glasán has magical powers.
13. Bealtaine is the name of a person who gave Glasán his life.
14. Another scarecrow is made because Glasán wants a friend.
15. Niamh does not get on with her brother Daire.
16. Daire means 'oak wood'.
17. Mrs Durkan is eager to cook food for Glasán.
18. The field provides most of the setting for chapter 2.
19. The children promise not to tell anyone about meeting Glasán.
20. Chapter 2 opens with dialogue.

Glasán

APPEARANCE

(P14 - TOP, P20 -TOP)

WHAT HE DOES

(P14 - END, P19 - BOTTOM, P20 - BOTTOM)

WHAT HE SAYS

(P14 - MIDDLE, P15 - MIDDLE, P17 - TOP, P22 - ALL)

Language search!

Similes

Alliteration

Metaphors

Personification

Use of colour in descriptions

Chapter 4

Answer the questions in detail, finding evidence from the text where possible.

1. Describe the significance and importance of Scrag's dream.
2. On page 33 there are a lot of questions. What job do they do?
What effect do they have on the reader?
3. Explain what the other birds do when Scrag tells them they all have to leave?
4. What might the phrase 'at last he was giving in to the call of the great crow' mean?
5. Find evidence in the text to suggest that Scrag is not in control of what is happening.
6. Describe the black master.
7. Why do you think the rooks attacked the scarecrow?
8. Find and write down an example of a simile. Include a page reference.
9. Who does Glasán tell to protect the children?
10. Why was Daire in trouble at school?
11. Why do they have to leave the woods?
12. What advantage do Glasán and the children have over the black scarecrow at this point in the text?
13. Find and write down 5 connective words or phrases. Include page references.

Greyfang and Deathtooth!

Read the sections of text below, where the wolves enter the story. Highlight the language features such as figurative language, interesting punctuation, connectives.

Entry of Greyfang

They were no sooner under cover when they heard another howl, much louder than the first. Suddenly the wolf rushed out of the trees. Daire and Niamh almost cried out in fear. The wolf was enormous. They had seen pictures of wolves in books and even films of wolves on television, but this wolf made the rest look like pets. It was easily as tall as Niamh. While its shaggy coat was palest grey, it had two long black ears that twitched and turned, listening to every sound. Even at that distance they could see its red eyes burning and its long cruel white teeth against the red of its enormous mouth. It paused in the middle of the path, turning its head from side to side sniffing the air. It bent its long black muzzle to the ground, looking for their scent, examining their tracks in the gravel. Then it threw back its head and howled again.

The howl was answered by a faint echoing howl in the distance. The wolf snarled, showing all its fangs, and then it came on. They could hear the sound of its heavy paws on the path and see the cruel sharp eyes searching the tangled wasteland for any movement that would give them away. Closer and closer it came. Niamh's heart was thumping so hard that it hurt her and she felt sure the wolf would hear the pounding. Glasán put his hand on Rusk's head to quieten him.

The wolf was moving swiftly. It came to the place where they had left the path and passed it. For a moment the children thought it would go on by and they would be safe, but the great beast suddenly stopped as if someone had pulled it up sharply on a leash. They could hear the rattle of pebbles and gravel as its heavy legs slipped on the path when it stopped. They heard a deep rumbling growl in its body as it turned and looked back. It sniffed at the air and the ground, again. Then it left the path and began nosing its way through the brambles and weeds. Its deep growl was growing angrier as it drew nearer to them. They could hear its heavy breathing through its cruel white teeth, and saliva dripped in long sticky strings from its mouth.

Suddenly it stopped quite still and looked directly at where they were hiding. Its red eyes glowed like coals in a fire and its whole body shook with rage. It opened its huge mouth and snarled savagely. It seemed to grow even larger as it gathered itself up for the attack. The snarl became a roar. The wolf was about to spring.

Entry of Deathtooth

The great wolf struggled to shake Rusk from its neck but the brave little dog hung on. The wolf swung its head round, trying to get its teeth at Rusk, but it couldn't reach him. Each time it tried its whole body spun around while its heavy paws churned up the path. Blood began to trickle down the wolf's black fur. It roared in rage and reared up on its hind legs. Then it unbalanced and fell over. The fall threw Rusk off the wolf's back. Instantly the beast sprang on the dog, catching him by the head. It lifted Rusk in its mouth and with a violent swing of its head hurled him across the path. Rusk lay stunned, with blood pouring from a nasty gash in his ear. The wolf opened its mouth to finish off the dog, but now that Rusk was separated from Deathtooth Glasán was able to act. He muttered a word of command and jerked his arms forward as if he was throwing an armful of invisible objects at the wolf. There was a sudden rush of air along the ground. Suddenly every stone on the path between Glasán and Deathtooth rose and flew through the air. The stones struck the wolf with such force that they bounced off its body and splintered as they fell.

Deathtooth gave a great yelp of pain and leaped back with a look of amazement. Rusk lay where he had fallen. Before the wolf had a chance to recover, Glasán whispered, 'Arís agus arís eile!' Again the stones flew up, pelting the huge black animal, and again and again. The wolf found itself in the centre of a whirlwind of stinging bruising stones: It yelped and twisted and spun round and round. In the end it turned and fled down the path, and off through the trees as fast as a racehorse in full flight.

Greyfang and Deathtooth!

Use the text sheet to organise the information into 3 sections:

action

appearance

noise

ACTION

APPEARANCE

NOISE

Types of Speech

QUESTION

STATEMENT

RESPONSE

WARNING

INSTRUCTION

6. Other ideas for extra independent activities

1. Complete a study of magical powers- people, places and objects. Children make notes and find examples in the text. Compare those magical powers/objects of good and bad characters.
2. Children write a letter to the author, either individually, in pairs or in groups. Ask questions about the text and explain their views. Letter writing style and structure- explore formal language style.
3. Look at the opening chapter of MacRaois's next book - write the opening chapter of the book in the style of the author.
4. Study MacRaois's style - suspense, pace, passing of time, character development, warnings in the text.
5. Children use the text to complete a settings investigation- can also use the maps at the front of the book. Skim through the text and write down the settings in order and when they change. Effect of changing the setting often. How the settings are described.
6. Diary of one of the children at the end of the book- feelings and thoughts now that the adventure is over.

7. *Dance of the Midnight Fire*

This is the second novel in trilogy - see page 2 above.

Children could use the opening lines to continue to write the rest of the opening chapter in the style of the author, using their knowledge of the characters from the first book.

Something strange was going to happen. The seaweed at Greystones gave Naimh and Daire their first warning.