

Year 5 and 6 Summer Home Learning Reading, Writing SP&L



Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom by Louis Sachar (Bloomsbury)



Bradley Chalkers sat at his desk in the back of the room—last seat, last row. No one sat at the desk next to him or at the one in front of him. He was an island.

If he could have, he would have sat in the closet. Then he could shut the door so he wouldn't have to listen to Mrs. Ebbel. He didn't think she'd mind. She'd probably like it better that way too. So would the rest of the class. All in all, he thought everyone would be much happier if he sat in the closet, but, unfortunately, his desk didn't fit.

"Class," said Mrs. Ebbel. "I would like you all to meet Jeff Fishkin. Jeff has just moved here from Washington, D.C., which, as you know, is our nation's capital."

Bradley looked up at the new kid who was standing at the front of the room next to Mrs. Ebbel.

"Why don't you tell the class a little bit about yourself, Jeff," urged Mrs. Ebbel. The new kid shrugged.

"There's no reason to be shy," said Mrs. Ebbel.

The new kid mumbled something, but Bradley couldn't hear what it was.

"Have you ever been to the White House, Jeff?" Mrs. Ebbel asked. "I'm sure the class would be very interested to hear about that."

No, I've never been there," the new kid said very quickly as he shook his head.

Mrs. Ebbel smiled at him. "Well, I guess we'd better find you a place to sit." She looked around the room. "Hmm, I don't see any place except, I suppose you can sit there, at the back."

"No, not next to Bradley!" a girl in the front row exclaimed.

"At least it's better than in front of Bradley," said the boy next to her.

Mrs. Ebbel frowned. She turned to Jeff. "I'm sorry, but there are no other empty desks."

"I don't mind where I sit," Jeff mumbled.

"Well, nobody likes sitting ... there," said Mrs. Ebbel.

"That's right," Bradley spoke up. "Nobody likes sitting next to me!" He smiled a strange smile. He stretched his mouth so wide, it was hard to tell whether it was a smile or a frown.

He stared at Jeff with bulging eyes as Jeff awkwardly sat down next to him. Jeff smiled back at him, so he looked away.

As Mrs. Ebbel began the lesson, Bradley took out a pencil and a piece of paper, and scribbled. He scribbled most of the morning, sometimes on the paper and sometimes on his desk. Sometimes he scribbled so hard his pencil point broke. Every time that happened he laughed. Then he'd tape the broken point to one of the gobs of junk in his desk, sharpen his pencil, and scribble again.

1. Explore it

Without sharing the book title, read this story opening. You might want to hear it read aloud as well as reading it for yourself. What do you think is happening in this extract? Who are the central characters? Where is it set? Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences? What questions do you have about it?

Think about the main character, Bradley. In the extract, he is described as 'an island.' What does this tell us about him? How do you think Bradley feels being in this class? Why do you think this?

How do you think the teacher and the other kids feel about him? Why do you think this? How do they treat him? Is their behaviour fair?

Re-read the extract and think about how this story opening makes you feel. What do you like or dislike about it? Does it remind you of anything you know from stories or real life? How? Think about how it is

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written. Do any parts really stick in your mind? Which words and phrases do you like best? What do you like about them? Do they look or sound interesting? Do they help you make a picture in your mind?

2. Illustrate it

Read the text again and think about the different characters in the opening of the novel. What impression are you given of Bradley Chalkers? Which words and phrases help you to imagine him?

What impression do you have of Jeff Fishkin? Which different words and phrases suggest what he is like? Does he seem friendly to you? You might like to highlight or underline the parts of the text that help you to visualise these two different characters.

Now draw a sketch of Bradley Chalkers from Jeff's perspective. What would you need to include in the drawing? What do you think Jeff's first impression of Bradley is? Why? How might you show this in your drawing? What might his body language be like? Do you think he would look confident or shy and nervous? What kind of expression might you draw on his face? Why?

Re-read the opening and write some words and phrases that have helped you make your picture of Bradley. Share what you have drawn with someone else: Why have you chosen to draw him this way? Which words and phrases helped you make a picture?

3. Talk about it

Re-read the opening of the story and consider the relationship between the different characters.

- What do you notice about the way Bradley is treated in the class, is this what you would expect from a teacher and other children?
- Why do you think Bradley would rather sit in the cupboard than in the classroom?
- Why do you think the other children and Mrs Ebbel behave in this way?
- Why do you think he smiles a 'strange smile' as Jeff sits next to him? Why do you think he looks away when Jeff smiles back?
- What do you think Bradley really feels? Why do you think he just scribbles all day? Is this what you would have expected?

4. Imagine it

Imagine that you are Jeff and that you have just joined this class.

- Do you think you'd like to be in this class? Why or why not?
- What might you ask the other children and Mrs Ebbel?
- Do you think you might behave differently from the children in this class?
- How do you imagine they will make you feel welcome?
- Would you talk to Bradley? What might you say or ask?
- What do you think would be a better way to behave towards Bradley?

5. Create it

Thinking about the experiences of Bradley and Jeff, can you create a list of ways in which a class can make someone feel welcome, either a new student or someone who is finding school challenging? What would make people feel welcome? What behaviour would help someone to feel more confident and happier in a new space?

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Running on Empty by S.E. Durrant (Nosy Crow)



1. Explore it

Read the extract from the book below, thinking about what is happening and the characters you meet:

The Best Trainers in the World

I'm running so fast my feet don't touch the ground. I don't notice at first. I think I must be wearing the best trainers in the world and then I realise I'm sort of flying. And someone shouts. "Look at that boy!" and the crowd roars and I can't even see where I'm running because I'm going so fast everything's a blur. All I know is at this moment I'm the happiest, fastest, most brilliant eleven-year-old boy in the world. And somewhere Grandad's watching.

And then I'm back in the real world because I wasn't really running so fast I was flying. I was sitting on my bed gazing into space. And now Mum's put the kettle on and the switch is broken so if you don't turn it off at the plug the steam comes all the way up the stairs. That's how small our house is. And I can't stand it. I'm not kidding. I can't stand the kettle bubbling away on its own like it's going to explode.

I run down to the kitchen and flick the switch. The back door's open. Mum's standing in the garden with Dad looking at the sunflowers. She sees me and smiles.

"AJ," she says. "Thank you."

She looks at Dad.

"That's kind, isn't it, Eddie?"

Dad nods.

"Yup," he says.

"Very kind," says Mum.

We've got the tallest sunflowers ever this year. They're drooping now and a squirrel keeps stealing the seeds but they still look amazing.

It's sort of disappointing to wake up from a daydream. Because I'm not on a track with a crowd of people cheering me on, I'm in a little house with creaky stairs and a leaking roof and I'm pouring water into Mum's chipped teapot. I couldn't even spin round in my room if I wanted to. I'd knock myself out. Maybe that's why I've got such a big imagination.

What do you think is happening in this extract? Who are the central characters? Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences?

Re-read the extract to yourself and think about the character of AJ. What do you learn about him as a character? What do you learn about his family? What makes you think these things?

Now think about the setting. What do you find out about AJ's home? How does he feel about it? How do you know? How is the world of his daydreams different from his real life? What words describe how he feels in his dreams? What words might you choose to describe him as he is?

Re-read the extract and think about how this part of the story makes you feel. How do you feel about AJ and his situation? What is it about the way the extract is written that makes you feel this way? Think about how it is written. Do any parts really stick in your mind? Which words and phrases do you like best? What do you like about them? Do they look or sound interesting? What do you picture in your mind as you read?

2. Illustrate it

Re-read the passage, ask someone to read it to you, or maybe record it for yourself so you can play it over again. After you have read the extract a few times, think about what you can see in your imagination. What

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stands out most for you? Then take a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. If you don't have one to hand, you can use the back of an old envelope, letter or cereal packet.

Draw what you see in your mind's eye; anything that captures the place, action or mood in this extract. Which part captured your interest the most? AJ sitting on his bed, daydreaming? The actual daydream itself? Mum and Dad looking at the sunflowers in the back garden or the broken kettle, '*bubbling away on its own like it's going to explode*.' If you have coloured pencils, crayons or felt tips, you can think about how to use these to help capture the mood of the moment you have chosen.

Remember, everyone has their own ideas and imagines things their own way. This is a good thing! Add any words and phrases that have helped you make your picture, which might come from the passage or from your own imagination.

3. Talk about it

- Think about the final sentence of the first paragraph of the extract, *And somewhere Grandad's watching*. What do you think this means? Why do you think this thought snaps him *back in the real world*?
- Why do you think the author places such a focus on the broken kettle, and uses the figurative phrase, '*bubbling away on its own like it's going to explode*.' What else could this be compared to? Why do you think the author has done this in this way?
- How does the mood of the extract change as we move from the inside of the house to the outside? Why do you think this is?
- Think about the impact of the adjectives used in the last paragraph, *a little house, creaky stairs, a leaky roof, Mum's chipped teapot*. How do these give a greater insight into AJ's family's situation?
- Think again about the final sentence of the extract, *Maybe that's why I've got such a big imagination*. Why do you think AJ says this? Why might he lose himself in his daydreams? Why do you think he might dream of running?

4. Imagine it

Think about the different emotions that AJ goes through in the extract. What in his life do you think makes him feel free? Frustrated? Happy? Sad? What factors in his life might be contributing to his emotional reactions? How does he deal with his differing emotions? What are the positive aspects of his life that support him in staying resilient, despite the harder aspects? What should he focus on to stop him feeling too negative about his situation? How could you help yourself or others who might have feelings of stress, anger, sadness or worry to feel more at ease? Write your ideas down, either as a list or as a letter to AJ.

5. Create it

In the extract, AJ loses himself in his ultimate fantasy daydream; being an incredible runner with crowds of people cheering him on. What is your ultimate daydream? Does it involve being incredible at something like? Does it involve visiting a special place? Or living a different life from the one you have now in the future?

Think about the detail and description that S.E. Durrant uses in the first paragraph to enable us to feel as if we are watching AJ run. Can you write about your own ultimate daydream in this way? What language will you use so that your reader can capture the sights, sounds, feelings and experience of being in that moment with you? What words will you use to describe how this situation makes you feel?

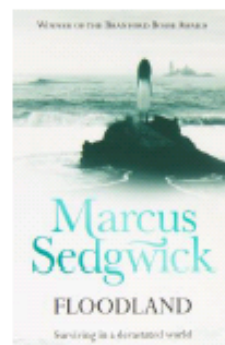
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Floodland by Marcus Sedgwick (Orion)

1. Explore it

Look at this image from the opening of the novel:

- What do you notice about this image? What can you see in the picture? Where might it be?
- What do you like about the image? What don't you like? Does it remind you of anything you have seen before, in real life or in other books, or on TV and in film? Do you have any questions about the image?
- What do you think about the word 'before' that accompanies this image? What do you think this refers to? What does this make you think about? How does this connect to the ideas you have about the story?
- Why do you think the novel opens with this image? What does this suggest to you about the story that will unfold? What impression is made on you by this image? From whose viewpoint may this image be taken?
- Now look at the front cover and title of the book. What does this make you think about? What is a flood? What do you think the title, Floodland means? How does this relate to the image you have looked at? Does it confirm or challenge any of the initial ideas you had?



before

2. Illustrate it

Read the opening to this novel:

'Zoe ran. Harder than she had ever run in her life. Her feet pounded through the deserted streets of derelict buildings. Somewhere, not far behind, she could hear the gang coming after her. It felt as if her heart would burst, but she didn't slow down. She'd been planning to leave the island for a long time, but had been putting it off. It was a big decision to set out to sea in a tiny rowing boat. Now she had no choice.'

Before, no one had bothered her. Zoe was a loner. Most of the people left on Norwich hung around together in groups. But she preferred to be on her own. It was safer that way, because you never knew whom you could trust. Somehow, someone had found out about the boat she'd been hiding. A boat was an escape route, a way to get away from Norwich, which got smaller every year, as the sea kept on rising. It didn't matter that there could only be room for two people at most in her boat. Others had joined in the chase, and now a mob of about fifteen people was hot on her heels. There was only one way out; to get to her boat before they got to her.'

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Re-read the passage, or ask someone to read it to you, or maybe record it for yourself so you can play it over again. What do you feel or think when you read or hear this?

After you have read the extract a few times, think about what you can see in your imagination – people, places, objects or events, whatever stood out most to you. Then take a pen or pencil and a bit of scrap paper. You can use the back of an old envelope, letter or cereal packet; whatever is to hand if you don't have paper. Draw what you see in your imagination; anything that captures the place and the mood of this story opening. Remember, everyone has their own ideas and imagines things their own way. This is a good thing!

Add to your illustration any words and phrases that have helped you make your picture, which might come from the passage or from your own imagination.

3. Talk about it

- Think about the text again. How has the author created a sense of drama and intrigue in this opening? What do you notice about the way in which the paragraphs are structured? What is the impact of the mix of long and short sentences? How do these make you feel?
- How did you imagine the events as you read the passage? What helped you to imagine this? Does it remind you of anything you have read before? Or anything you may have watched? What do you predict will happen in the story?
- Think about the adjectives used by the author to describe the place, 'deserted' and 'derelict'. What do these mean? Use a dictionary to look these up or an online dictionary, such as: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>. What do these words make you think about this place?
- Now think about the text and the illustration together. Was this what you expected to accompany this picture?

4. Imagine it

Think about this line in the text: *A boat was an escape route, a way to get away from Norwich, which got smaller every year, as the sea kept on rising.*

Have a look at the map of Norwich below. Does it make sense, given what you can see, that Zoe would need a boat to escape Norwich? Why do you think she refers to Norwich as an Island? What does this suggest to you about what has happened in the book?

Looking at this map, what do you notice about the geography of this location? Can you imagine what could have happened to the sea levels to create such devastation that Norwich has become surrounded by water?



5. Create it

Marcus Sedgwick was inspired to write this novel in response to climate change.

Can you plan some small ways in which you can help prevent climate change? For example, record what items you use on a daily basis that use single use plastic such as a plastic cup. Can you think about possible alternatives that you could use instead? Are there other ways in which you can reduce, reuse or recycle the items you use on a daily basis to limit your impact on the planet? Once you have discovered these you may want to share these ideas with other people you know.

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