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| Short stories independent learning project |

**Gustav Freytag**

Freytag was born in Kreuzburg (Kluczbork) in Silesia. After attending the gymnasium (school) at Oels (Oleśnica), he studied philology at the universities of Breslau (Wrocław) and Berlin, and in 1838 received his degree with a dissertation titled *De initiis poeseos scenicae apud Germanos* *Über die Anfänge der dramatischen Poesie bei den Germanen*, In English: *On the Beginnings of Dramatic Poetry among the Germans*. He became member of the student corps *Borussia zu Breslau*.

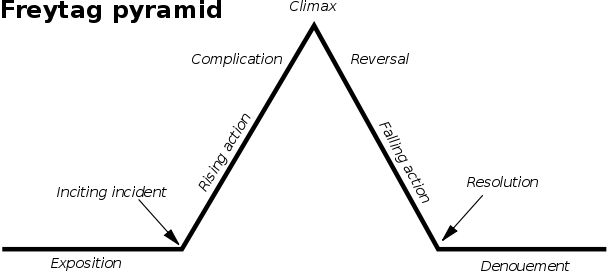
In 1839, he settled in Breslau, as *Privatdozent* in German language and literature, but devoted his principal attention to writing for the stage, achieving considerable success with the comedy drama *Die Brautfahrt, oder Kunz von der Rosen* (1844). This was followed by a volume of unimportant poems, *In Breslau* (1845), and the dramas *Die Valentine* (1846) and *Graf Waldemar* (1847). He at last attained a prominent position by his comedy, *Die Journalisten* (1853), one of the best German comedies of the 19th century.

In 1847, he migrated to Berlin, and in the following year took over, in conjunction with Julian Schmidt, the editorship of *Die Grenzboten*, a weekly journal which, founded in 1841, now became the leading organ of German and Austrian liberalism. Freytag helped to conduct it until 1861, and again from 1867 till 1870, when for a short time he edited a new periodical, *Im neuen Reich*. In 1863 he developed what is known as Freytag's pyramid.

Freytag died in Wiesbaden on 30 April 1895.

**Freytag’s Pyramid**

Freytag created a five-part model to describe the structure of a story.



**Exposition**: The exposition is the portion of a story that introduces important background information to the audience; for example, information about the setting, events occurring before the main plot, characters' back stories, etc.

**Rising Action**: In the rising action, a series of events build toward the point of greatest interest.

**Climax**: The climax is the turning point, which changes the protagonist's fate.

**Falling Action**: During the falling action, the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. The falling action may contain a moment of final suspense, in which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

**Denouement**: Comprises events from the end of the falling action to the actual ending scene of the drama or narrative. Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of catharsis, or release of tension and anxiety, for the reader/audience.

1. Where and when was Freytag born?
2. Where did he attend university and what did he study?
3. What type of writing was he most successful with in his lifetime?
4. What is Freytag’s Pyramid?
5. What happens in the exposition and denouement of a story?

**[](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/Roald_Dahl.jpg)Roald Dahl** (13 September 1916 – 23 November 1990) was a British novelist, short story writer, poet, screenwriter, and wartime fighter pilot. His books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide.

Dahl was born in Wales to Norwegian immigrant parents. He served in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He became a fighter pilot and, subsequently, an intelligence officer, rising to the rank of acting wing commander. He rose to prominence as a writer in the 1940s with works for children and for adults, and he became one of the world's best-selling authors. He has been referred to as "one of the greatest storytellers for children of the 20th century". His awards for contribution to literature include the 1983 World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement and the British Book Awards' Children's Author of the Year in 1990. In 2008, *The Times* placed Dahl 16th on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".

Dahl's short stories are known for their unexpected endings, and his children's books for their unsentimental, macabre, often darkly comic mood, featuring villainous adult enemies of the child characters. His books champion the kind-hearted and feature an underlying warm sentiment. His works for children include *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Matilda*, *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *The BFG*, *The Twits*, and *George's Marvellous Medicine*. His adult works include *Tales of the Unexpected*.

1. When and where was Roald Dahl born?
2. As well as being a writer, what else did Roald Dahl do?
3. What awards has Dahl won?
4. What are his children’s books known for?
5. How many Roald Dahl books can you name from memory?

Task: Use the following websites to help you create your own biography of Roald Dahl:

<http://www.roalddahl.com/>

<https://www.roalddahl.com/museum>

Include:

* His place of birth
* Details about his childhood
* Details about his adult life
* Details about his writing habits
* Any other facts you find out that you think are interesting.

Biography of Roald Dahl

**‘The Landlady’ by Roald Dahl –** Read the short story carefully.

**What does this title make you think of?**

**What might the story be about?**

**‘The Landlady’ by Roald Dahl**

Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow afternoon train, with a change at Reading on the way, and by the time he got to Bath, it was about nine o’clock in the evening, and the moon was coming up out of a clear starry sky over the houses opposite the station entrance. But the air was deadly cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice on his cheeks.

“Excuse me,” he said, “but is there a fairly cheap hotel not too far away from here?”

“Try The Bell and Dragon,” the porter answered, pointing down the road. “They might take you in. It’s about a quarter of a mile along on the other side.”   
  
Billy thanked him and picked up his suitcase and set out to walk the quarter-mile to The Bell and Dragon. He had never been to Bath before. He didn’t know anyone who lived there. But Mr. Greenslade at the head office in London had told him it was a splendid town. “Find your own lodgings,” he had said, “and then go along and report to the branch manager as soon as you’ve got yourself settled.”

Billy was seventeen years old. He was wearing a new navy-blue overcoat, a new brown trilby hat, and a new brown suit, and he was feeling fine. He walked briskly down the street. He was trying to do everything briskly these days. Briskness, he had decided, was *the* one common characteristic of all successful businessmen. The big shots up at the head office were absolutely fantastically brisk all the time. They were amazing.   
  
There were no shops on this wide street that he was walking along, only a line of tall houses on each side, all of them identical. They had porches and pillars and four or five steps going up to their front doors, and it was obvious that once upon a time they had been very swanky residences. But now, even in the darkness, he could see that the paint was peeling from the woodwork on their doors and windows and that the handsome white facades were cracked and blotchy from neglect.

Suddenly, in a downstairs window that was brilliantly illuminated by a street lamp not six yards away, Billy caught sight of a printed notice propped up against the glass in one of the upper panes. It said BED AND BREAKFAST. There was a vase of yellow chrysanthemums, tall and beautiful, standing just underneath the notice.

He stopped walking. He moved a bit closer. Green curtains (some sort of velvety material) were hanging down on either side of the window. The chrysanthemums looked wonderful beside them. He went right up and peered through the glass into the room, and the first thing he saw was a bright fire burning in the hearth. On the carpet in front of the fire, a pretty little dachshund was curled up asleep with its nose tucked into its belly. The room itself, so far as he could see in the half darkness, was filled with pleasant furniture. There was a baby grand piano and a big sofa and several plump armchairs, and in one corner he spotted a large parrot in a cage. Animals were usually a good sign in a place like this, Billy told himself; and all in all, it looked to him as though it would be a pretty decent house to stay in. Certainly it would be more comfortable than The Bell and Dragon.

On the other hand, a pub would be more congenial than a boarding house. There would be beer and darts in the evenings, and lots of people to talk to, and it would probably be a good bit cheaper, too. He had stayed a couple of nights in a pub once before and he had liked it. He had never stayed in any boarding houses, and, to be perfectly honest, he was a tiny bit frightened of them. The name itself conjured up images of watery cabbage, rapacious landladies, and a powerful smell of kippers in the living room.

After dithering about like this in the cold for two or three minutes, Billy decided that he would walk on and take a look at The Bell and Dragon before making up his mind. He turned to go.   
  
And now a queer thing happened to him. He was in the act of stepping back and turning away from the window when all at once his eye was caught and held in the most peculiar manner by the small notice that was there. BED AND BREAKFAST, it said. BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST. Each word was like a large black eye staring at him through the glass, holding him, compelling him, forcing him to stay where he was and not to walk away from that house, and the next thing he knew, he was actually moving across from the window to the front door of the house, climbing the steps that led up to it, and reaching for the bell.

He pressed the bell. Far away in a back room he heard it ringing, and then at once —it must have been at once because he hadn’t even had time to take his finger from the bell button—the door swung open and a woman was standing there.   
Normally you ring the bell and you have at least a half-minute’s wait before the door opens. But this dame was like a jack-in-the-box. He pressed the bell—and out she popped! It made him jump.

She was about forty-five or fifty years old, and the moment she saw him, she gave him a warm, welcoming smile.

“Please come in,” she said pleasantly. She stepped aside, holding the door wide open, and Billy found himself automatically starting forward. The compulsion or, more accurately, the desire to follow after her into that house was extraordinarily strong.

“I saw the notice in the window,” he said, holding himself back.

“Yes, I know.”

“I was wondering about a room.”

“It’s all ready for you, my dear,” she said. She had a round pink face and very gentle blue eyes.

“I was on my way to The Bell and Dragon,” Billy told her. “But the notice in your window just happened to catch my eye.”

“My dear boy,” she said, “why don’t you come in out of the cold?”

“How much do you charge?”

“Five and sixpence a night, including breakfast.”

It was fantastically cheap. It was less than half of what he had been willing to pay.

“If that is too much,” she added, “then perhaps I can reduce it just a tiny bit. Do you desire an egg for breakfast? Eggs are expensive at the moment. It would be sixpence less without the egg.”

“Five and sixpence is fine,” he answered. “I should like very much to stay here.”

“I knew you would. Do come in.”

She seemed terribly nice. She looked exactly like the mother of one’s best school friend welcoming one into the house to stay for the Christmas holidays. Billy took off his hat and stepped over the threshold.

“Just hang it there,” she said, “and let me help you with your coat.”

There were no other hats or coats in the hall. There were no umbrellas, no walking sticks—nothing.

“We have it all to ourselves,” she said, smiling at him over her shoulder as she led the way upstairs. “You see, it isn’t very often I have the pleasure of taking a visitor into my little nest.”

The old girl is slightly dotty, Billy told himself. But at five and sixpence a night, who cares about that? “I should’ve thought you’d be simply swamped with applicants,” he said politely.

“Oh, I am, my dear, I am, of course I am. But the trouble is that I’m inclined to be just a teeny-weeny bit choosy and particular—if you see what I mean.”

“Ah, yes.”

“But I’m always ready. Everything is always ready day and night in this house just on the off chance that an acceptable young gentleman will come along. And it is such a pleasure, my dear, such a very great pleasure when now and again I open the door and I see someone standing there who is just exactly right.” She was halfway up the stairs, and she paused with one hand on the stair rail, turning her head and smiling down at him with pale lips. “Like you,” she added, and her blue eyes travelled slowly all the way down the length of Billy’s body, to his feet, and then up again.

On the second-floor landing she said to him, “This floor is mine.”

They climbed up another flight. “And this one is all yours,” she said. “Here’s your room. I do hope you’ll like it.” She took him into a small but charming front bedroom, switching on the light as she went in.

“The morning sun comes right in the window, Mr. Perkins. It is Mr. Perkins, isn’t it?”

“No,” he said. “It’s Weaver.”

“Mr. Weaver. How nice. I’ve put a water bottle between the sheets to air them out, Mr. Weaver. It’s such a comfort to have a hot-water bottle in a strange bed with clean sheets, don’t you agree? And you may light the gas fire at any time if you feel chilly.”

“Thank you,” Billy said. “Thank you ever so much.” He noticed that the bedspread had been taken off the bed and that the bedclothes had been neatly turned back on one side, all ready for someone to get in.

“I’m so glad you appeared,” she said, looking earnestly into his face. “I was beginning to get worried.”

“That’s all right,” Billy answered brightly. “You mustn’t worry about me.” He put his suitcase on the chair and started to open it.

“And what about supper, my dear? Did you manage to get anything to eat before you came here?”

“I’m not a bit hungry, thank you,” he said. “I think I’ll just go to bed as soon as possible because tomorrow I’ve got to get up rather early and report to the office.”

“Very well, then. I’ll leave you now so that you can unpack. But before you go to bed, would you be kind enough to pop into the sitting room on the ground floor and sign the book? Everyone has to do that because it’s the law of the land, and we don’t want to go breaking any laws at this stage in the proceedings, do we?” She gave him a little wave of the hand and went quickly out of the room and closed the door.

Now, the fact that his landlady appeared to be slightly off her rocker didn’t worry Billy in the least. After all, she not only was harmless—there was no question about that—but she was also quite obviously a kind and generous soul. He guessed that she had probably lost a son in the war, or something like that, and had never gotten over it.

So a few minutes later, after unpacking his suitcase and washing his hands, he trotted downstairs to the ground floor and entered the living room. His landlady wasn’t there, but the fire was glowing in the hearth, and the little dachshund was still sleeping soundly in front of it. The room was wonderfully warm and cozy. I’m a lucky fellow, he thought, rubbing his hands. This is a bit of all right.

He found the guest book lying open on the piano, so he took out his pen and wrote down his name and address. There were only two other entries above his on the page, and as one always does with guest books, he started to read them. One was a Christopher Mulholland from Cardiff. The other was Gregory W. Temple from Bristol.

That’s funny, he thought suddenly. Christopher Mulholland. It rings a bell.

Now where on earth had he heard that rather unusual name before?

Was it a boy at school? No. Was it one of his sister’s numerous young men, perhaps, or a friend of his father’s? No, no, it wasn’t any of those. He glanced down again at the book.

*Christopher Mulholland   
231 Cathedral Road, Cardiff*

*Gregory W. Temple   
27 Sycamore Drive, Bristol*

As a matter of fact, now he came to think of it, he wasn’t at all sure that the second name didn’t have almost as much of a familiar ring about it as the first.

“Gregory Temple?” he said aloud, searching his memory. “Christopher Mulholland? . . .”

“Such charming boys,” a voice behind him answered, and he turned and saw his landlady sailing into the room with a large silver tea tray in her hands. She was holding it well out in front of her, and rather high up, as though the tray were a pair of reins on a frisky horse.

“They sound somehow familiar,” he said.

“They do? How interesting.”

“I’m almost positive I’ve heard those names before somewhere. Isn’t that odd? Maybe it was in the newspapers. They weren’t famous in any way, were they? I mean famous cricketers7 or footballers or something like that?”

“Famous,” she said, setting the tea tray down on the low table in front of the sofa. “Oh no, I don’t think they were famous. But they were incredibly handsome, both of them, I can promise you that. They were tall and young and handsome, my dear, just exactly like you.”

Once more, Billy glanced down at the book. “Look here,” he said, noticing the dates. “This last entry is over two years old.”

“It is?”

“Yes, indeed. And Christopher Mulholland’s is nearly a year before that—more than three years ago.”

“Dear me,” she said, shaking her head and heaving a dainty little sigh. “I would never have thought it. How time does fly away from us all, doesn’t it, Mr. Wilkins?”

“It’s Weaver,” Billy said. “W-e-a-v-e-r.”

“Oh, of course it is!” she cried, sitting down on the sofa. “How silly of me. I do apologize. In one ear and out the other, that’s me, Mr. Weaver.”

“You know something?” Billy said. “Something that’s really quite extraordinary about all this?”

“No, dear, I don’t.”

“Well, you see, both of these names—Mulholland and Temple—I not only seem to remember each one of them separately, so to speak, but somehow or other, in some peculiar way, they both appear to be sort of connected together as well. As though they were both famous for the same sort of thing, if you see what I mean—like . . . well . . . like Dempsey and Tunney, for example, or Churchill and Roosevelt.”  
  
“How amusing,” she said. “But come over here now, dear, and sit down beside me on the sofa and I’ll give you a nice cup of tea and a ginger biscuit before you go to bed.”   
  
“You really shouldn’t bother,” Billy said. “I didn’t mean you to do anything like that.” He stood by the piano, watching her as she fussed about with the cups and saucers. He noticed that she had small, white, quickly moving hands and red fingernails.

“I’m almost positive it was in the newspapers I saw them,” Billy said. “I’ll think of it in a second. I’m sure I will.”

There is nothing more tantalizing than a thing like this that lingers just outside the borders of one’s memory. He hated to give up.

“Now wait a minute,” he said. “Wait just a minute. Mulholland . . . Christopher Mulholland . . . wasn’t *that* the name of the Eton schoolboy who was on a walking tour through the West Country, and then all of a sudden ...”

“Milk?” she said. “And sugar?”

“Yes, please. And then all of a sudden . . .”

“Eton schoolboy?” she said. “Oh no, my dear, that can’t possibly be right, because *my* Mr. Mulholland was certainly not an Eton schoolboy when he came to me. He was a Cambridge undergraduate. Come over here now and sit next to me and warm yourself in front of this lovely fire. Come on. Your tea’s all ready for you.” She patted the empty place beside her on the sofa, and she sat there smiling at Billy and waiting for him to come over.   
  
He crossed the room slowly and sat down on the edge of the sofa. She placed his teacup on the table in front of him.

“ *There* we are,” she said. “How nice and cozy this is, isn’t it?”

Billy started sipping his tea. She did the same. For half a minute or so, neither of them spoke. But Billy knew that she was looking at him. Her body was half turned toward him, and he could feel her eyes resting on his face, watching him over the rim of her teacup. Now and again, he caught a whiff of a peculiar smell that seemed to emanate directly from her person. It was not in the least unpleasant, and it reminded him—well, he wasn’t quite sure what it reminded him of. Pickled walnuts? New leather? Or was it the corridors of a hospital?

At length, she said, “Mr. Mulholland was a great one for his tea. Never in my life have I seen anyone drink as much tea as dear, sweet Mr. Mulholland.”

“I suppose he left fairly recently,” Billy said. He was still puzzling his head about the two names. He was positive now that he had seen them in the newspapers—in the headlines.

“Left?” she said, arching her brows. “But my dear boy, he never left. He’s still here. Mr. Temple is also here. They’re on the fourth floor, both of them together.”

Billy set his cup down slowly on the table and stared at his landlady. She smiled back at him, and then she put out one of her white hands and patted him comfortingly on the knee. “How old are you, my dear?” she asked.

“Seventeen.”

“Seventeen!” she cried. “Oh, it’s the perfect age! Mr. Mulholland was also seventeen. But I think he was a trifle shorter than you are; in fact I’m sure he was, and his teeth weren’t quite so white. You have the most beautiful teeth, Mr. Weaver, did you know that?”

“They’re not as good as they look,” Billy said. “They’ve got simply masses of fillings in them at the back.”

“Mr. Temple, of course, was a little older,” she said, ignoring his remark. “He was actually twenty-eight. And yet I never would have guessed it if he hadn’t told me, never in my whole life. There wasn’t a blemish on his body.”

“A what?” Billy said.

“His skin was *just* like a baby’s.”

There was a pause. Billy picked up his teacup and took another sip of his tea; then he set it down again gently in its saucer. He waited for her to say something else, but she seemed to have lapsed into another of her silences. He sat there staring straight ahead of him into the far corner of the room, biting his lower lip.

“That parrot,” he said at last. “You know something? It had me completely fooled when I first saw it through the window. I could have sworn it was alive.”

“Alas, no longer.”

“It’s most terribly clever the way it’s been done,” he said. “It doesn’t look in the least bit dead. Who did it?”

“I did.”

“ *You* did?”

“Of course,” she said. “And have you met my little Basil as well?” She nodded toward the dachshund curled up so comfortably in front of the fire. Billy looked at it. And suddenly, he realized that this animal had all the time been just as silent and motionless as the parrot. He put out a hand and touched it gently on the top of its back. The back was hard and cold, and when he pushed the hair to one side with his fingers, he could see the skin underneath, grayish black and dry and perfectly preserved.

“Good gracious me,” he said. “How absolutely fascinating.” He turned away from the dog and stared with deep admiration at the little woman beside him on the sofa. “It must be most awfully difficult to do a thing like that.”

“Not in the least,” she said. “I stuff *all* my little pets myself when they pass away. Will you have another cup of tea?”

“No, thank you,” Billy said. The tea tasted faintly of bitter almonds, and he didn’t much care for it.

“You did sign the book, didn’t you?”

“Oh, yes.”

“That’s good. Because later on, if I happen to forget what you were called, then I could always come down here and look it up. I still do that almost every day with Mr. Mulholland and Mr. . . . Mr. . . .”

“Temple,” Billy said, “Gregory Temple. Excuse my asking, but haven’t there been *any* other guests here except them in the last two or three years?”

Holding her teacup high in one hand, inclining her head slightly to the left, she looked up at him out of the corners of her eyes and gave him another gentle little smile.

“No, my dear,” she said. “Only you.”

Reread the opening paragraph:

Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow afternoon train, with a change at Reading on the way, and by the time he got to Bath, it was about nine o’clock in the evening, and the moon was coming up out of a clear starry sky over the houses opposite the station entrance. But the air was deadly cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice on his cheeks.

“Excuse me,” he said, “but is there a fairly cheap hotel not too far away from here?”

“Try The Bell and Dragon,” the porter answered, pointing down the road. “They might take you in. It’s about a quarter of a mile along on the other side.”

1. Underline the details that refer to the natural world.
2. How does Dahl create a sense of **foreboding** (a feeling that something bad will happen) here?

*Dahl creates a sense of foreboding in his opening paragraph to the Landlady with the simile…*

1. Why do you think Dahl begins the story at night? How does this add to the sense of foreboding?
2. What do we learn about Billy here?

“Billy was seventeen years old. He was wearing a new navy-blue overcoat, a new brown trilby hat, and a new brown suit, and he was feeling fine. He walked briskly down the street. He was trying to do everything briskly these days. Briskness, he had decided, was *the* one common characteristic of all successful businessmen. The big shots up at the head office were absolutely fantastically brisk all the time. They were amazing.”

1. Summarise the story in 5 sentences or less:
2. What is there in this paragraph to foreshadow (hint/be a warning or indication of (a future event) that Billy is in danger?

He crossed the room slowly and sat down on the edge of the sofa. She placed his teacup on the table in front of him.

“ *There* we are,” she said. “How nice and cozy this is, isn’t it?”

Billy started sipping his tea. She did the same. For half a minute or so, neither of them spoke. But Billy knew that she was looking at him. Her body was half turned toward him, and he could feel her eyes resting on his face, watching him over the rim of her teacup. Now and again, he caught a whiff of a peculiar smell that seemed to emanate directly from her person. It was not in the least unpleasant, and it reminded him—well, he wasn’t quite sure what it reminded him of. Pickled walnuts? New leather? Or was it the corridors of a hospital?

1. Put the following words in the correct classification:

**Chrysanthemum, said, suddenly, tall, brilliantly, Sofa, was, cracked, cage, could, pleasant, usually**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Nouns** | **Verbs** | **Adjectives** | **Adverbs** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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**Choose one quote and explode for language and meaning...**

*“There were no shops on this wide street that he was walking along, only a line of tall houses on each side, all of them identical.”*

*“Suddenly, in a downstairs window that was brilliantly illuminated by a street lamp not six yards away, Billy caught sight of a printed notice propped up against the glass in one of the upper panes.”*

*“He went right up and peered through the glass into the room, and the first thing he saw was a bright fire burning in the hearth.”*

**Example:**

Darkness’ has connotations of a sinister atmosphere.

Sense of neglect is created, makes the reader wonder if maybe Bath isn’t as nice as it seems.

*But now, even in the darkness, he could see that the paint was peeling from the woodwork on their doors and windows and that the handsome white facades were cracked and blotchy from neglect.*

Adjectives illustrate how old the buildings are and how there is a sense of abandonment; this creates a sense of foreboding.

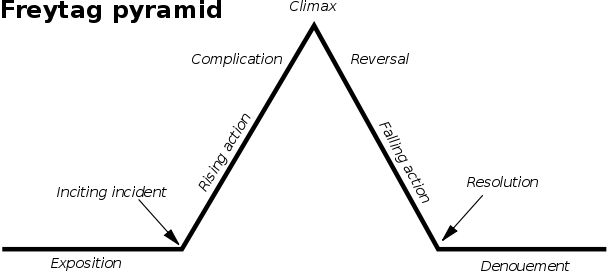
1. Choose a paragraph and annotate for language and meaning. You must consider how tension is created...
2. How does the writer use language to create tension? You could include the writer’s choice of:
3. Words and phrases
4. Language features and techniques
5. Sentence forms

Dahl creates tension by…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
|  | The portion of a story that introduces important background information to the audience; for example, information about the setting, events occurring before the main plot, characters' back stories, etc. |
|  | A series of events build toward the point of greatest interest. |
|  | The turning point, which changes the protagonist's fate. |
|  | The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist unravels, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. The falling action may contain a moment of final suspense, in which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt. |
|  | Comprises events from the end of the falling action to the actual ending scene of the drama or narrative. Conflicts are resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of catharsis, or release of tension and anxiety, for the reader/audience. |

**Complete the table:**

Track the events in ‘The Landlady’ on to Freytag’s Pyramid



**Lamb to the Slaughter –** read the short story carefully

**What does this title make you think of?**

**What might the story be about?**

**Lamb to the Slaughter**

The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight-hers and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whiskey.  Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.  
Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come him from work.  
Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come.  There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did.  The drop of a head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil.  Her skin -for this was her sixth month with child-had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger darker than before. When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock.  She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.  
“Hullo darling,” she said.  
“Hullo darling,” he answered.  
She took his coat and hung it in the closer.  Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself; and soon she was back again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both hands, rocking it so the ice cubes tinkled against the side.  
For her, this was always a blissful time of day.  She knew he didn’t want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house.  She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel-almost as a sunbather feels the sun-that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together.  She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides.  She loved intent, far look in his eyes when they rested in her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whiskey had taken some of it away.  
“Tired darling?”  
“Yes,” he said.  “I’m tired,”  And as he spoke, he did an unusual thing.  He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it, at least half of it left.. She wasn’t really watching him, but she knew what he had done because she heard the ice cubes falling back against the bottom of the empty glass when he lowered his arm.  He paused a moment, leaning forward in the chair, then he got up and went slowly over to fetch himself another.  
“I’ll get it!” she cried, jumping up.  
“Sit down,” he said.  
When he came back, she noticed that the new drink was dark amber with the quantity of whiskey in it.  
“Darling, shall I get your slippers?”  
“No.”  
She watched him as he began to sip the dark yellow drink, and she could see little oily swirls in the liquid because it was so strong.  
“I think it’s a shame,” she said, “that when a policeman gets to be as senior as you, they keep him walking about on his feet all day long.”  
He didn’t answer, so she bent her head again and went on with her sewing; bet each time he lifted the drink to his lips, she heard the ice cubes clinking against the side of the glass.  
“Darling,” she said.  “Would you like me to get you some cheese?  I haven’t made any supper because it’s Thursday.”  
“No,” he said.  
“If you’re too tired to eat out,” she went on, “it’s still not too late.  There’s plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair.”  
Her eyes waited on him for an answer, a smile, a little nod, but he made no sign.  
“Anyway,” she went on, “I’ll get you some cheese and crackers first.”  
“I don’t want it,” he said.  
She moved uneasily in her chair, the large eyes still watching his face.  “But you must eat!  I’ll fix it anyway, and then you can have it or not, as you like.”  
She stood up and placed her sewing on the table by the lamp.  
“Sit down,” he said.  “Just for a minute, sit down.”  
It wasn’t till then that she began to get frightened.  
“Go on,” he said.  “Sit down.”  
She lowered herself back slowly into the chair, watching him all the time with those large, bewildered eyes.  He had finished the second drink and was staring down into the glass, frowning.  
“Listen,” he said.  “I’ve got something to tell you.”  
“What is it, darling?  What’s the matter?”  
He had now become absolutely motionless, and he kept his head down so that the light from the lamp beside him fell across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in shadow.  She noticed there was a little muscle moving near the corner of his left eye.  
“This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I’m afraid,” he said.  “But I’ve thought about it a good deal and I’ve decided the only thing to do is tell you right away.  I hope you won’t blame me too much.”  
And he told her.  It didn’t take long, four or five minutes at most, and she say very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.  
“So there it is,” he added.  “And I know it’s kind of a bad time to be telling you, bet there simply wasn’t any other way.  Of course I’ll give you money and see you’re looked after.  But there needn’t really be any fuss.  I hope not anyway.  It wouldn’t be very good for my job.”  
Her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all.  It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn’t even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing.  Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn’t been listening, then later, when she sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had ever happened.  
“I’ll get the supper,” she managed to whisper, and this time he didn’t stop her.  
When she walked across the room she couldn’t feel her feet touching the floor.  She couldn’t feel anything at all- except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit.  Everything was automatic now-down the steps to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met.  She lifted it out, and looked at it.  It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.  
A leg of lamb.  
All right then, they would have lamb for supper.  She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-end of it with both her hands, and as she went through the living-room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.  
“For God’s sake,” he said, hearing her, but not turning round.  “Don’t make supper for me.  I’m going out.”  
At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.  
She might just as well have hit him with a steel club.  
She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying.  Then he crashed to the carpet.  
The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of he shock.  She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.  
All right, she told herself.  So I’ve killed him.  
It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden.  She began thinking very fast.  As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be.  That was fine.  It made no difference to her.  In fact, it would be a relief.  On the other hand, what about the child?  What were the laws about murderers with unborn children?  Did they kill then both-mother and child?  Or did they wait until the tenth month?  What did they do?  
Mary Maloney didn’t know.  And she certainly wasn’t prepared to take a chance.  
She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved t inside.  Then she washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom.  She sat down before the mirror, tidied her hair, touched up her lops and face.  She tried a smile.  It came out rather peculiar.  She tried again.  
“Hullo Sam,” she said brightly, aloud.  
The voice sounded peculiar too.  
“I want some potatoes please, Sam.  Yes, and I think a can of peas.”  
That was better.  Both the smile and the voice were coming out better now.  She rehearsed it several times more.  Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street.  
It wasn’t six o’clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.  
“Hullo Sam,” she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter.  
“Why, good evening, Mrs. Maloney.  How’re you?”  
“I want some potatoes please, Sam.  Yes, and I think a can of peas.”  
The man turned and reached up behind him on the shelf for the peas.  
“Patrick’s decided he’s tired and doesn’t want to eat out tonight,” she told him.  “We usually go out Thursdays, you know, and now he’s caught me without any vegetables in the house.”  
“Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney?”  
“No, I’ve got meat, thanks.  I got a nice leg of lamb from the freezer.”  
“Oh.”  
“I don’t know much like cooking it frozen, Sam, but I’m taking a chance on it this time.  You think it’ll be all right?”  
“Personally,” the grocer said, “I don’t believe it makes any difference.  You want these Idaho potatoes?”  
“Oh yes, that’ll be fine.  Two of those.”  
“Anything else?” The grocer cocked his head on one side, looking at her pleasantly.  “How about afterwards?  What you going to give him for afterwards?”  
“Well-what would you suggest, Sam?”  
The man glanced around his shop.  “How about a nice big slice of cheesecake?  I know he likes that.”  
“Perfect,” she said.  “He loves it.”  
And when it was all wrapped and she had paid, she put on her brightest smile and said, “Thank you, Sam.  Goodnight.”  
“Goodnight, Mrs. Maloney.  And thank you.”  
And now, she told herself as she hurried back, all she was doing now, she was returning home to her husband and he was waiting for his supper; and she must cook it good, and make it as tasty as possible because the poor man was tired; and if, when she entered the house, she happened to find anything unusual, or tragic, or terrible, then naturally it would be a shock and she’d become frantic with grief and horror.  Mind you, she wasn’t expecting to find anything.  She was just going home with the vegetables. Mrs. Patrick Maloney going home with the vegetables on Thursday evening to cook supper for her husband.  
That’s the way, she told herself.  Do everything right and natural.  Keep things absolutely natural and there’ll be no need for any acting at all.  
Therefore, when she entered the kitchen by the back door, she was humming a little tune to herself and smiling.  
“Patrick!” she called.  “How are you, darling?”  
She put the parcel down on the table and went through into the living room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock.  All the old love and longing for him welled up inside her, and she ran over to him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out.  It was easy.  No acting was necessary.  
A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone.  She know the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, “Quick!  Come quick!  Patrick’s dead!”  
“Who’s speaking?”  
“Mrs. Maloney.  Mrs. Patrick Maloney.”  
“You mean Patrick Maloney’s dead?”  
“I think so,” she sobbed.  “He’s lying on the floor and I think he’s dead.”  
“Be right over,” the man said.  
The car came very quickly, and when she opened the front door, two policeman walked in.  She know them both-she know nearly all the man at that precinct-and she fell right into a chair, then went over to join the other one, who was called O’Malley, kneeling by the body.  
“Is he dead?” she cried.  
“I’m afraid he is.  What happened?”  
Briefly, she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor.  While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed blood on the dead man’s head.  He showed it to O’Malley who got up at once and hurried to the phone.  
Soon, other men began to come into the house.  First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she know by name.  Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who know about fingerprints.  There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions.  But they always treated her kindly.  She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn’t wanted to go out for supper.  She told how she’d put the meat in the oven-”it’s there now, cooking”- and how she’d slopped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.  
Which grocer?” one of the detectives asked.  
She told him, and he turned and whispered something to the other detective who immediately went outside into the street.  
In fifteen minutes he was back with a page of notes, and there was more whispering, and through her sobbing she heard a few of the whispered phrases-”...acted quite normal...very cheerful...wanted to give him a good supper... peas...cheesecake...impossible that she...”  
After a while, the photographer and the doctor departed and two other men came in and took the corpse away on a stretcher.  Then the fingerprint man went away.  The two detectives remained, and so did the two policeman.  They were exceptionally nice to her, and Jack Noonan asked if she wouldn’t rather go somewhere else, to her sister’s house perhaps, or to his own wife who would take care of her and put her up for the night.  
No, she said.  She didn’t feel she could move even a yard at the moment.  Would they mind awfully of she stayed just where she was until she felt better.  She didn’t feel too good at the moment, she really didn’t.  
Then hadn’t she better lie down on the bed?  Jack Noonan asked.  
No, she said.  She’d like to stay right where she was, in this chair.  A little later, perhaps, when she felt better, she would move.  
So they left her there while they went about their business, searching the house.  Occasionally on of the detectives asked her another question.  Sometimes Jack Noonan spoke at her gently as he passed by.  Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal.  They were looking for the weapon.  The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand he may have thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises.  
“It’s the old story,” he said.  “Get the weapon, and you’ve got the man.”  
Later, one of the detectives came up and sat beside her.  Did she know, he asked, of anything in the house that could’ve been used as the weapon?  Would she mind having a look around to see if anything was missing-a very big spanner, for example, or a heavy metal vase.  
They didn’t have any heavy metal vases, she said.  
“Or a big spanner?”  
She didn’t think they had a big spanner.  But there might be some things like that in the garage.  
The search went on.  She knew that there were other policemen in the garden all around the house.  She could hear their footsteps on the gravel outside, and sometimes she saw a flash of a torch through a chink in the curtains.  It began to get late, nearly nine she noticed by the clock on the mantle.  The four men searching the rooms seemed to be growing weary, a trifle exasperated.  
“Jack,” she said, the next tome Sergeant Noonan went by.  “Would you mind giving me a drink?”  
“Sure I’ll give you a drink.  You mean this whiskey?”  
“Yes please.  But just a small one.  It might make me feel better.”  
He handed her the glass.  
“Why don’t you have one yourself,” she said.  “You must be awfully tired.  Please do.  You’ve been very good to me.”  
“Well,” he answered.  “It’s not strictly allowed, but I might take just a drop to keep me going.”  
One by one the others came in and were persuaded to take a little nip of whiskey.  They stood around rather awkwardly with the drinks in their hands, uncomfortable in her presence, trying to say consoling things to her.  Sergeant Noonan wandered into the kitchen, come out quickly and said, “Look, Mrs. Maloney.  You know that oven of yours is still on, and the meat still inside.”  
“Oh dear me!” she cried.  “So it is!”  
“I better turn it off for you, hadn’t I?”  
“Will you do that, Jack.  Thank you so much.”  
When the sergeant returned the second time, she looked at him with her large, dark tearful eyes.  “Jack Noonan,” she said.  
“Yes?”  
“Would you do me a small favour-you and these others?”  
“We can try, Mrs. Maloney.”  
“Well,” she said.  “Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick’s too, and helping to catch the man who killed him.  You must be terrible hungry by now because it’s long past your suppertime, and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent hospitality.  Why don’t you eat up that lamb that’s in the oven.  It’ll be cooked just right by now.”  
“Wouldn’t dream of it,” Sergeant Noonan said.  
“Please,” she begged.  “Please eat it.  Personally I couldn’t tough a thing, certainly not what’s been in the house when he was here.  But it’s all right for you.  It’d be a favour to me if you’d eat it up.  Then you can go on with your work again afterwards.”  
There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves.  The woman stayed where she was, listening to them speaking among themselves, their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.  
“Have some more, Charlie?”  
“No.  Better not finish it.”  
“She wants us to finish it. She said so.  Be doing her a favour.”  
“Okay then.  Give me some more.”  
“That’s the hell of a big club the gut must’ve used to hit poor Patrick,” one of them was saying.  “The doc says his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledgehammer.”  
“That’s why it ought to be easy to find.”  
“Exactly what I say.”  
“Whoever done it, they’re not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need.”  
One of them belched.  
“Personally, I think it’s right here on the premises.”  
“Probably right under our very noses.  What you think, Jack?”  
And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle.

**List four things you learn about the room from this opening paragraph.**

“The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight – hers and one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whisky. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.”

1.

2.

3.

4.

**What do you learn about Mary Maloney here?**

“Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come him from work.  
Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come.  There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did.  The drop of a head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil.  Her skin -for this was her sixth month with child-had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger darker than before. When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock.  She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.”

Put the following words in the correct classification:

**big, lamb, brought, frozen, hit, window, swung, ridiculous, cellar, brought.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Nouns** | **Verbs** | **Adjectives** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Chose one quotation and explode it for meaning:

*She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-end of it with both her hands, and as she went through the living-room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.*

*Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.*

*She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying.*

*The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock.  She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.*

**Example**

*couldn’t feel anything’ emphasises her numbness, she is both physically and emotionally numb as a result of the news he has given her.*

She couldn’t feel anything at all- except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit.

Verb ‘desire’ emphasises how much she wants to vomit; she has been completely sickened by her husband’s confession.

‘slight’ the adjective makes the nausea seem mild yet in reality she is totally sickened by the news.

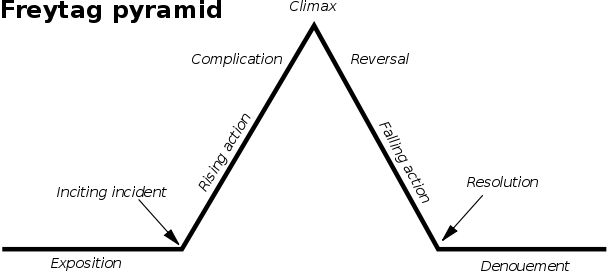
How does the writer use language to create tension? You could include the writer’s choice of:

* Words and phrases
* Language features and techniques
* Sentence forms

**Complete the table**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
| Exposition |  |
| Rising Action |  |
| Climax |  |
| Falling Action |  |
| Denouement |  |

Track the events in *‘Lamb to the Slaughter’* on to Freytag’s Pyramid



 Rhys was born in Roseau, the capital of Dominica, one of the British Leeward Islands. Her father, William Rees Williams, was a Welsh doctor and her mother, Minna Williams, née Lockhart, was a third-generation Dominican Creole of Scots ancestry. ("Creole" was broadly used in those times to refer to any person born on the island, whether they were of European or African descent, or both.) She had a brother. Her mother's family had an estate, a former plantation, on the island.

Rhys was educated in Dominica until the age of 16, when she was sent to England to live with an aunt, as her relations with her mother were difficult. She attended the Perse School for Girls in Cambridge, where she was mocked as an outsider and for her accent. She attended two terms at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London by 1909. Her instructors despaired of her ever learning to speak "proper English" and advised her father to take her away. Unable to train as an actress and refusing to return to the Caribbean as her parents wished, Williams worked with varied success as a chorus girl, adopting the names Vivienne, Emma or Ella Gray. She toured Britain's small towns and returned to rooming or boarding houses in rundown neighbourhoods of London.

After her father died in 1910, she became the mistress of wealthy stockbroker Lancelot Grey Hugh ("Lancey") Smith, whose father Hugh Colin Smith had been Governor of the Bank of England. Though he was a bachelor, Smith did not offer to marry Rhys, and their affair soon ended. However, he continued to be an occasional source of financial help. Distraught by events, including a near-fatal abortion (not Smith's child), Rhys began writing and produced an early version of her novel *Voyage in the Dark*. During the First World War, Rhys served as a volunteer worker in a soldiers' canteen. In 1918 she worked in a pension office.

In 1924 Rhys came under the influence of English writer Ford Madox Ford. After meeting Ford in Paris, Rhys wrote short stories under his patronage. Ford recognised that her experience as an exile gave Rhys a unique viewpoint and praised her "singular instinct for form". "Coming from the West Indies, he declared, 'with a terrifying insight and... passion for stating the case of the underdog, she has let her pen loose on the Left Banks of the Old World'." This he wrote in his preface to her debut short story collection,*The Left Bank and Other Stories* (1927). It was Ford who suggested she change her name from Ella Williams to Jean Rhys. At the time her husband was in jail for what Rhys described as currency irregularities.

Rhys moved in with Ford and his long-time partner, Stella Bowen. An affair with Ford ensued, which she portrayed in fictionalised form in her novel *Quartet* (1928) Her protagonist is a stranded foreigner, Marya Zelli, who finds herself at the mercy of strangers when her husband is jailed in Paris. In *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1931), the protagonist, Julia Martin, is a more unravelled version of Marya Zelli, romantically dumped and inhabiting the sidewalks, cafes and cheap hotel rooms of Paris.

With *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), Rhys continued to portray a mistreated, rootless woman. Here the narrator, Anna, is a young chorus girl who grew up in the West Indies and feels alienated in England. *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) is often considered a continuation of Rhys's first two novels. Here she uses modified stream of consciousness to voice the experiences of an ageing woman, Sasha Jansen, who drinks, takes sleeping pills and obsesses over her looks, and is adrift again in Paris. *Good Morning, Midnight*, acknowledged as well written but deemed depressing, came as World War II broke out and readers sought optimism. This seemingly ended Rhys's literary career.

In the 1940s Rhys largely withdrew from public life. From 1955 to 1960 she lived in Bude, Cornwall, where she was unhappy, calling it "Bude the Obscure", before moving to Cheriton Fitzpaine in Devon.

1. Where was Jean Rhys born?
2. What was her relationship with her mother like and what did it lead to?
3. What did she do during WWI?
4. What are her writings known for?

What do you think a story with this illustration would be about?

What do you think might happen in a story with this illustration?

***I Used to Live Here Once* – read the short story carefully:**

1. What does this title make you think of?
2. What might the story be about?

This is the opening paragraph of the story. Do you think it matches the illustration?

She was standing by the river looking at the stepping stones and remembering each one. There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle — the safe stone where you could stand and look around. The next one wasn’t so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery. But after that it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side.

1. Does it fit with the title?
2. What do you think the story is about now?
3. What do you think might happen in the story?

***I Used to Live Here Once***

She was standing by the river looking at the stepping stones and remembering each one. There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle — the safe stone where you could stand and look around. The next one wasn’t so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery. But after that it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side.

The road was much wider than it used to be but the work had been done carelessly. The felled trees had not been cleared away and the bushes looked trampled. Yet it was the same road and she walked along feeling extraordinarily happy.

It was a fine day, a blue day. The only thing was that the sky had a glassy look that she didn’t remember. That was the only word she could think of. Glassy. She turned the corner, saw that what had been the old pave had been taken up, and there too the road was much wider, but it had the same unfinished look.

She came to the worn stone steps that led up to the house and her heart began to beat. The screw pine was gone, so was the mock summer house called the ajoupa, but the clove tree was still there and at the top of the steps the rough lawn stretched away, just as she remembered it. She stopped and looked towards the house that had been added to and painted white. It was strange to see a car standing in front of it.

There were two children under the big mango tree, a boy and a little girl, and she waved to them and called “Hello” but they didn’t answer her or turn their heads. Very fair children, as Europeans in the West Indies so often are: as if the white blood is asserting itself against all odds.

The grass was yellow in the hot sunlight as she walked towards them. When she was quite close she called again, shyly: “Hello.” Then, “I used to live here once,” she said.

Still they didn’t answer. When she said for the third time “Hello” she was quite near them. Her arms went out instinctively with the longing to touch them.

It was the boy who turned. His grey eyes looked straight into hers. His expression didn’t change. He said: “Hasn’t it gone cold all of a sudden. D’you notice? Let’s go in.”

“Yes, let’s,” said the girl.

Her arms fell to her sides as she watched them running across the grass to the house.

That was the first time she knew.

She was standing by the river looking at the stepping stones and remembering each one. There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle — the safe stone where you could stand and look around. The next one wasn’t so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery. But after that it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side.

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List all the things we learn about the **setting**:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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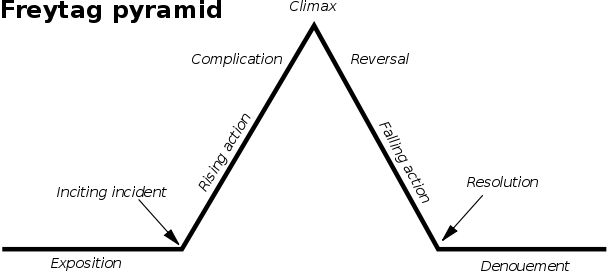
Still they didn’t answer. When she said for the third time “Hello” she was quite near them. Her arms went out instinctively with the longing to touch them.

It was the boy who turned. His grey eyes looked straight into hers. His expression didn’t change. He said: “Hasn’t it gone cold all of a sudden. D’you notice? Let’s go in.”

How does Rhys create a sense of **foreboding** (a feeling that something bad will happen) here?

Summarise the story in up to 5 sentences:

Track the events in ‘I used to Live here once’ on to Freytag’s Pyramid





Use the image to plan and create a story of your own.

**INFER -** deduce or conclude (information) from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements. When we read between the lines.

**DEDUCE -** arrive at (a fact or a conclusion) by reasoning; draw as a logical conclusion. Use facts from a text to support an idea.

1. Write a couple of sentences which would allow a reader to **INFER** that a character felt happy:
2. Write a couple of sentences which would allow a reader to **DEDUCE** that two characters were identical twins:



What can you **infer** about this man? How do you know this?

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_Louis_Stevenson_by_Henry_Walter_Barnett_bw.jpg)**Robert Louis Stevenson** (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894) was a Scottish novelist and travel writer, most noted for *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *A Child's Garden of Verses*.

Born and educated in Edinburgh, Stevenson suffered from serious bronchial trouble for much of his life but continued to write prolifically and travel widely in defiance of his poor health. As a young man, he mixed in London literary circles, receiving encouragement from Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse, Leslie Stephen and W. E. Henley, the last of whom may have provided the model for Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*. In 1890, he settled in Samoa, where he died in 1894.

A celebrity in his lifetime, Stevenson’s critical reputation has fluctuated since his death, though today his works are held in general acclaim. He is currently ranked as the 26th most translated author in the world.

1. When and where was Stevenson born?
2. Name 2 of his famous novels.
3. What did Stevenson suffer with most of his life?
4. Where did he live from 1890?
5. What is his current ranking in terms of most translated author in the world?

**‘The Bodysnatcher’**

**What does this title make you think of?**

**What might the story be about?**

**‘The Body Snatcher’ by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Somewhat as two vultures may swoop upon a dying lamb, Fettes and Macfarlane were to be let loose upon a grave in that green and quiet resting place. The wife of a farmer, a woman who had lived for sixty years, and been known for nothing but good butter and godly conversation, was to be rooted from her grave at midnight and carried, dead and naked, to that far away city that she had always honoured with her Sunday best; the place beside her family was to be empty till the crack of doom; her innocent and almost vulnerable members to be exposed to that last curiosity of the anatomist. Late one afternoon the pair set forth, well wrapped in cloaks and furnished with a formidable bottle. It rained without remission – a cold, dense, lashing rain. Now and again there blew a puff of wind, but these sheets of falling water kept it down.

…It was by this time growing somewhat late. The gig, according to order, was brought round to the door with both lamps brightly shining, and the young men had to pay their bill and take the road. They announced that they were bound for Peebles, and drove in that direction till they were clear of the last houses of the town; then, extinguishing the lamps, returned upon their course, and followed a by-road towards Glencorse. There was no sound but that of their own passage, and the incessant, strident pouring of the rain. It was pitch dark; here and there a white gate or a white stone in the wall guided them for a short space across the night; but for the most part it was at a foot pace, and almost groping, that they picked their way through that resonant blackness to their solemn and isolated destination. In the sunken woods that traverse the neighbourhood of the burying ground the last glimmer failed them, and it became necessary to kindle a match and reillumine one of the lanterns of the gig. Thus, under the dripping trees, and environed by huge and moving shadows, they reached the scene of their unhallowed labours.

They were both experienced in such affairs, and powerful with the spade; and they had scarce been twenty minutes at their task before they were rewarded by a dull rattle on the coffin lid. At the same moment Macfarlane, having hurt his hand upon a stone, flung it carelessly above his head. The grave, in which they now stood almost to the shoulders, was close to the edge of the plateau of the graveyard; and the gig lamp had been propped, the better to illuminate their labours, against a tree, and on the immediate verge of the steep bank descending to the stream. Chance had taken a sure aim with the stone. Then came a clang of broken glass; night fell upon them; sounds alternately dull and ringing announced the bounding of the lantern down the bank, and its occasional collision with the trees. A stone or two, which it had dislodged in its descent rattled behind it into the profundities of the glen; and then silence, like night, resumed its sway; and they might bend their hearing to its utmost pitch, but naught was to be heard except the rain, now marching to the wind, now steadily falling over miles of open country.

They were so nearly at an end of their abhorred task that they judged it wisest to complete it in the dark. The coffin was exhumed and broken open; the body inserted in the dripping sack and carried between them to the gig; one mounted to keep it in its place, and the other, taking the horse by the mouth, groped along by the wall and bush until they reached the wider road by the Fisher’s Tryst. Here was a faint disused radiancy, which they hailed like daylight; by that they pushed the horse to a good pace and began to rattle along merrily in the direction of the town. They had both been wetted to the skin during their operations, and now, as the gig jumped among the deep ruts, the thing that stood propped between them fell now upon one and now upon the other. At every repetition of the horrid contact each instinctively repelled it with greater haste; and the process, natural as it was, began to tell upon the nerves of the companions.

Macfarlane made some ill-favoured jest about the farmer’s wife, but it came hollowly from his lips, and was allowed to drop in silence. Still their unnatural burthen jumped from side to side; and now the head would be laid, as if in confidence, upon their shoulders, and now the drenching sackcloth would flap icily about their faces. A creeping chill began to possess the soul of Fettes. He peered at the bundle, and it seemed somehow larger than at first. All over the countryside, and from every degree of distance, the farm dogs accompanied their passage with tragic ululations; and it grew and grew upon his mind that some unnatural miracle had been achieved, that some nameless change had befallen the dead body, and that it was in fear of their unholy burthen that the dogs were howling.

“For God’s sake,” said he, making a great effort to arrive at speech,

“for God’s sake, let’s have a light!”

Seemingly Macfarlane was affected in the same direction; for though he made no reply, he stopped the horse, passed the reins to his companion, got down, and proceeded to kindle the remaining lamp. They had by that time got no farther than the crossroad down to Auchendinny. The rain still poured as though the deluge were returning, and it was no easy matter to make a light in such a world of wet and darkness. When at last the flickering blue flame had been transferred to the wick and began to expand and clarify, and shed a wide circle of misty brightness round the gig, it became possible for the two young men to see each other and the thing they had along with them. The rain had moulded the rough sacking to the outlines of the body underneath; the head was distinct from the trunk, the shoulders plainly modelled; something at once spectral and human riveted their eyes upon the ghastly comrade of their drive.

For some time Macfarlane stood motionless, holding up the lamp. A nameless dread was swathed, like a wet sheet, above the body, and tightened the white skin upon the face of Fettes; a fear that was meaningless, a horror of what could not be, kept mounting to his brain. Another beat of the watch, and he had spoken. But his comrade forestalled him.

“That is not a woman,” said Macfarlane, in a hushed voice.

“It was a woman when we put her in,” whispered Fettes.

“Hold that lamp,” said the other. “I must see her face.”

And as Fettes took the lamp his companion untied the fastenings of the sack and drew down the cover from the head. The light fell very clear upon the dark, well-moulded features and smooth-shaven cheeks of a too familiar countenance, often beheld in dreams of both of these young men. A wild yell rang up into the night; each leaped from his own side into the roadway; the lamp fell, broke, and was extinguished; and the horse, terrified by this unusual commotion, bounded and went off towards Edinburgh at a gallop, bearing along with it, sole occupant of the gig, the body of the dead and long-dissected Gray.

Word Bank

Disused radiancy – unfamiliar glow of light

Environed – surrounded by

Exhumed – uncovered from the earth

Formidable –powerful

Gig – small horse-drawn carriage

Incessant – endless

Naught – nothing

Plateau – flat land

Profundities of the glen – depths of the valley

Resonant – echoing

Spectral – ghost-like

Tragic – deeply sad

Traverse – cross

Ululations – cries

Unhallowed – unholy, evil

Venerable – respectable

1. Underline all the different gothic features Stevenson uses in his opening paragraph

Somewhat as two vultures may swoop upon a dying lamb, Fettes and Macfarlane were to be let loose upon a grave in that green and quiet resting place. The wife of a farmer, a woman who had lived for sixty years, and been known for nothing but good butter and godly conversation, was to be rooted from her grave at midnight and carried, dead and naked, to that far away city that she had always honoured with her Sunday best; the place beside her family was to be empty till the crack of doom; her innocent and almost vulnerable members to be exposed to that last curiosity of the anatomist. Late one afternoon the pair set forth, well wrapped in cloaks and furnished with a formidable bottle. It rained without remission – a cold, dense, lashing rain. Now and again there blew a puff of wind, but these sheets of falling water kept it down.

1. How does Stevenson create a gothic atmosphere in the first paragraph?

The **Burke and Hare murders** were a series of 16 killings committed over a period of about ten months in 1828 in Edinburgh, Scotland. They were undertaken by William Burke and William Hare, who sold the corpses to Robert Knox for dissection at his anatomy lectures.

Edinburgh was a leading European centre of anatomical study in the early 19th century, in a time when the demand for cadavers (dead bodies) led to a shortfall in legal supply. Scottish law required that corpses used for medical research should only come from those who had died in prison, suicide victims, or from foundlings and orphans. The shortage of corpses led to an increase in body snatching by what were known as "resurrection men". Measures to ensure graves were left undisturbed—such as the use of mortsafes—exacerbated the shortage. When a lodger in Hare's house died, Hare turned to his friend Burke for advice and they decided to sell the body to Knox. They received what was, for them, the generous sum of £7 10s. A little over two months later, when Hare was concerned that a lodger suffering from fever would deter others from staying in the house, he and Burke murdered her and sold the body to Knox. The men continued their murder spree, probably with the knowledge of their wives. Burke and Hare's actions were uncovered after other lodgers discovered their last victim, Margaret Docherty, and contacted the police.

A forensic examination of Docherty's body indicated she had probably been suffocated, but this could not be proven. Although the police suspected Burke and Hare of other murders, there was no evidence on which they could take action. An offer was put to Hare granting immunity from prosecution if he turned king's evidence.( admitting guilt and testifying as a witness for the state against his/her associate(s) or accomplice(s),) He provided the details of Docherty's murder and confessed to all 16 deaths; formal charges were made against Burke and his wife for three murders. At the subsequent trial Burke was found guilty of one murder and sentenced to death. The case against his wife was found not proven—a Scottish legal verdict to acquit an individual but not declare them innocent. Burke was hanged shortly afterwards; his corpse was dissected, and his skeleton displayed at the Anatomical Museum of Edinburgh Medical School where, as at 2020, it remains.

The murders raised public awareness of the need for bodies for medical research and contributed to the passing of the Anatomy Act 1832. The events have made appearances in literature, and been portrayed on screen, either in heavily fictionalised accounts or as the inspiration for fictional works.

1. Who were Burke and Hare?
2. How many people did they kill and over what period of time?
3. What did they do with the bodies of the people they killed?
4. Why was Hare not punished as severely as Burke?
5. What happened to Burke?
6. How did Burke and Hare influence Stevenson’s story ‘The Bodysnatcher’?

**‘The Book of Sand’ by Jorge Luis Borges (1972)**

*This is a translation by Norman Thomas di Giovanni; the text was originally written in Spanish.*

The line consists of an infinite number of points; the plane, of an infinite number of lines; the volume, of an infinite number of planes; the hypervolume, of an infinite number of volumes… No—this, *more geometrico*, is decidedly not the best way to begin my tale. To say that the story is true is by now a convention of every fantastic tale; mine, nevertheless, *is* true.

I live alone, in a fifth-floor apartment on Calle Belgrano. One evening a few months ago, I heard a knock at my door. I opened it, and a stranger stepped in. He was a tall man, with blurred, vague features, or perhaps my near sightedness made me see him that way. Everything about him spoke of honest poverty: he was dressed in gray and carried a gray valise. I immediately sensed that he was a foreigner. At first, I thought he was old; then I noticed that I had been misled by his sparse hair, which was blonde, almost white, like the Scandinavians’. In the course of our conversation, which I doubt lasted more than an hour, I learned that he hailed from the Orkneys.

I pointed the man to a chair. He took some time to begin talking. He gave off an air of melancholy, as I do myself now.

“I sell Bibles,” he said at last.

“In this house,” I replied, not without a somewhat stiff, pedantic note, “there are several English Bibles, including the first one, Wyclif’s. I also have Cipriano de Valera’s, Luther’s (which is, in literary terms, the worst of the lot), and a Latin copy of the Vulgate. As you see, it isn’t exactly Bibles I might be needing.”

After a brief silence he replied.

“It’s not only Bibles I sell. I can show you a sacred book that might interest a man such as yourself. I came by it in northern India, Bikaner.”

He opened his suitcase and brought out the book. He laid it on the table. It was a clothbound octavo volume that had clearly passed through many hands. I examined it; the unusual heft of it surprised me. On the spine was printed Holy Writ, and then Bombay.

“Nineteenth century I’d say,” I observed.

“I don’t know,” was the reply.

“Never did know.”

I opened the book. The characters were unfamiliar to me. The pages, which seemed worn and badly set, were printed in double columns, like a Bible. The text was cramped, and composed into versicles. At the upper corner of each page were Arabic numerals. I was struck by an odd fact: the even-numbered page would carry the number 40,514, let us say, while the odd-numbered page that followed it would be 999. I turned the page; the next page bore an eight-digit number. It also bore a small illustration, like those one sees in dictionaries: an anchor drawn in pen and ink, as though by the unskilled hand of a child.

It was at that point that the stranger spoke again. “Look at it well. You will never see it again.” There was a threat in the words, but not in the voice. I took note of the page, and then closed the book. Immediately, I opened it again. In vain I searched for the figure of the anchor, page after page. To hide my discomfiture, I tried another tack. “This is a version of Scripture in some Hindu language, isn’t that right?”

“No,” he replied. Then he lowered his voice, as though entrusting me with a secret. “I came across this book in a village on the plain, and I traded a few rupees and a Bible for it. The man who owned it didn’t know how to read. I suspect he saw the Book of Books as an talisman. He was of the lowest caste; people could not so much as step on his shadow without being defiled. He told me his book was called the Book of Sand because neither sand nor this book has a beginning or an end.”

The stranger suggested I try to find the first page.

I took the cover in my left hand and opened the book, my thumb and forefinger almost touching. It was impossible: several pages always lay between the cover and my hand. It was as though they grew from the very book.

“Now try to find the end.”

I failed there as well.

“This can’t be,” I stammered, my voice hardly recognizable as my own.

“It can’t be, yet it is,” the Bible peddler said, his voice little more than a whisper.

“The number of pages in this book is literally infinite.

No page is the first page; no page is the last.

I don’t know why they’re numbered in this arbitrary way, but perhaps it’s to give one to understand that the terms of an infinite series can be numbered any way whatever.” Then, as though thinking out loud, he went on.

“If space is infinite, we were anywhere, at any point in space. If time is infinite, we are at any point in time.”

His musings irritated me.

“You,” I said, “are a religious man, are you not?”

“Yes, I’m Presbyterian. My conscience is clear. I am certain I didn’t cheat that native when I gave him the Lord’s Word in exchange for his diabolic book.”

I assured him he had nothing to reproach himself for, and asked whether he was just passing through the country. He replied that he planned to return to his own country within a few days. It was then that I learned he was a Scot, and that his home was in the Orkneys. I told him I had great personal fondness for Scotland because of my love for Stevenson and Hume.

“And Robbie Burns,” he corrected.

As we talked I continued to explore the infinite book.

“Had you intended to offer this curious specimen to the British Museum, then?” I asked with feigned indifference.

“No,” he replied,

“I am offering it to you,” and he mentioned a great sum of money. I told him, with perfect honesty, that such an amount of money was not within my ability to pay. But my mind was working; in a few moments I had devised my plan.

“I propose a trade,” I said. “You purchased the volume with a few rupees and the Holy Scripture; I will offer you the full sum of my pension, which I have just received, and Wyclif ’s black-letter Bible. It was left to me by my parents.”

“A black-letter Wyclif !” he murmured.

I went to my bedroom and brought back the money and the book. With a bibliophile’s zeal he turned the pages and studied the binding.

“Done,” he said.

I was astonished that he did not haggle.

Only later was I to realize that he had entered my house already determined to sell the book. He did not count the money, but merely put the bills into his pocket.

We chatted about India, the Orkneys, and the Norwegian jarls that had once ruled those islands. Night was falling when the man left. I have never seen him since, nor do I know his name. I thought of putting the Book of Sand in the space left by the Wyclif, but I chose at last to hide it behind some imperfect volumes of the Thousand and One Nights. I went to bed but could not sleep. At three or four in the morning I turned on the light. I took out the impossible book and turned its pages. On one, I saw an engraving of a mask. There was a number in the corner of the page —I don’t remember now what it was— raised to the ninth power. I showed no one my treasure. To the joy of possession was added the fear that it would be stolen from me, and to that, the suspicion that it might not be truly infinite. Those two points of anxiety aggravated my already habitual misanthropy. I had but few friends left, and those, I stopped seeing. A prisoner of the Book, I hardly left my house. I examined the worn binding and the covers with a magnifying glass, and rejected the possibility of some artifice. I found that the small illustrations were spaced at two-thousand-page intervals. I began noting them down in an alphabetized notebook, which was very soon filled. They never repeated themselves. At night, during the rare intervals spared me by insomnia, I dreamed of the book.

Summer was drawing to a close, and I realized that the book was monstrous. It was cold consolation to think that I, who looked upon it with my eyes and fondled it with my ten flesh-and-bone fingers, was no less monstrous than the book. I felt it was a nightmare thing, an obscene thing, and that it defiled and corrupted reality.

I considered fire, but I feared that the burning of an infinite book might be similarly infinite, and suffocate the planet in smoke I remembered reading once that the best place to hide a leaf is in the forest.

Before my retirement I had worked in the National Library, which contained nine hundred thousand books; I knew that to the right of the lobby a curving staircase descended into the shadows of the basement, where the maps and periodicals are kept. I took advantage of the librarians’ distraction to hide the Book of Sand on one of the library’s damp shelves; I tried not to notice how high up, or how far from the door.

I now feel a little better, but I refuse even to walk down the street the library’s on.

Summarise the story in 5 sentences or less:

Reread the paragraph below. What do we learn about the man who knocks at the door?

I live alone, in a fifth-floor apartment on Calle Belgrano. One evening a few months ago, I heard a knock at my door. I opened it, and a stranger stepped in. He was a tall man, with blurred, vague features, or perhaps my near sightedness made me see him that way. Everything about him spoke of honest poverty: he was dressed in gray and carried a gray valise. I immediately sensed that he was a foreigner. At first, I thought he was old; then I noticed that I had been misled by his sparse hair, which was blonde, almost white, like the Scandinavians’. In the course of our conversation, which I doubt lasted more than an hour, I learned that he hailed from the Orkneys.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Underline all the negative words in the paragraph:

Summer was drawing to a close, and I realized that the book was monstrous. It was cold consolation to think that I, who looked upon it with my eyes and fondled it with my ten flesh-and-bone fingers, was no less monstrous than the book. I felt it was a nightmare thing, an obscene thing, and that it defiled and corrupted reality.

How does the writer create a **gothic atmosphere** and a **sense of foreboding** in this paragraph?

What is the twist at the end of the story and what impact does it have on the reader?

Complete the terms and definitions for Freytag’s Pyramid:

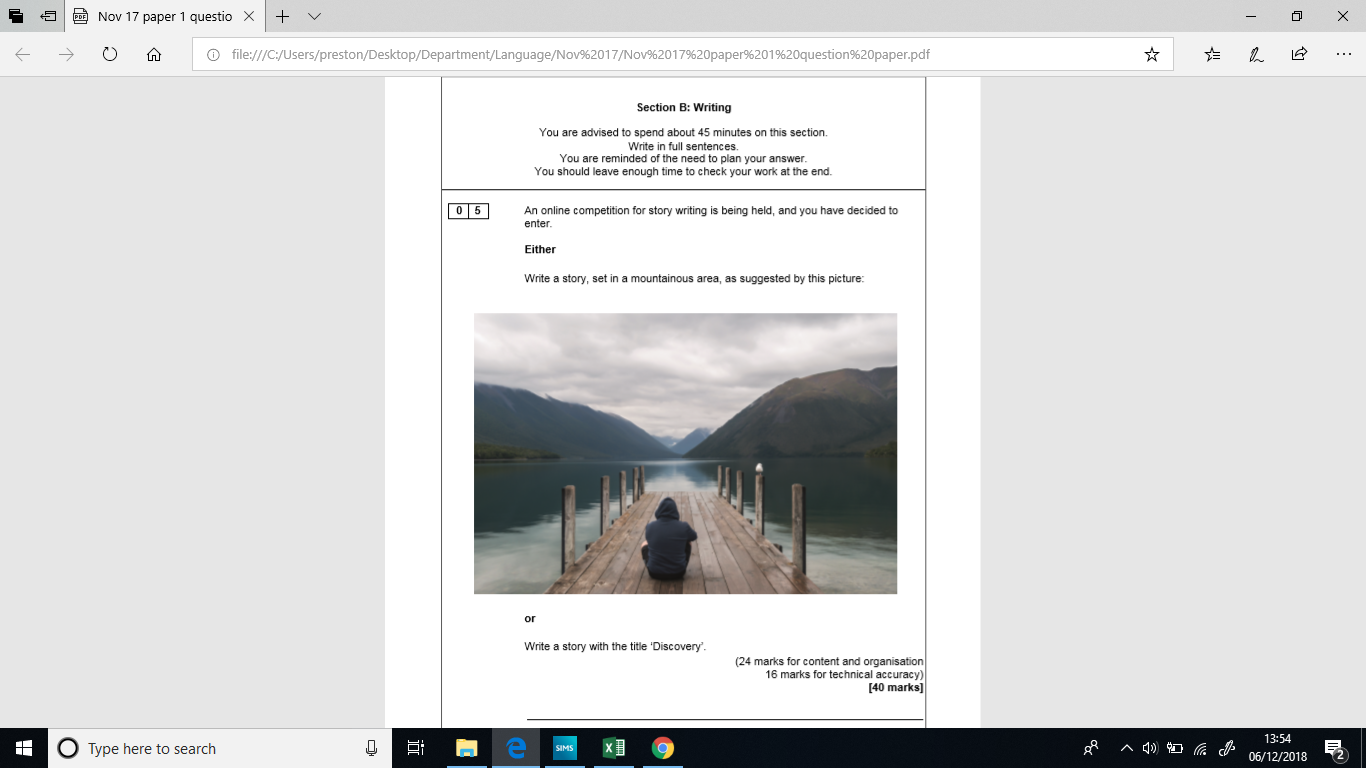
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
|  |  |
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You are now going to plan and write your own short story, based on your understanding of short stories.

Read the tasks carefully, and PLAN your story:

**Either**

Write a story, set in a mountainous area, as suggested by this picture:



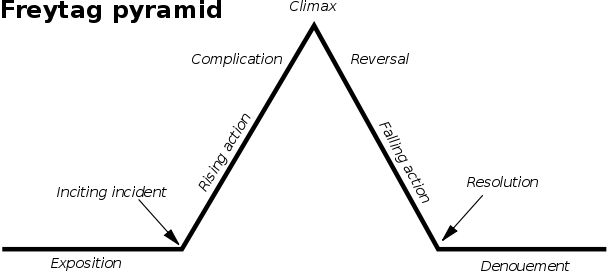
**Or**

Write a story with the title ‘Discovery’.

When writing, ensure that you:

* Write in full, clear sentences.
* Use a range of interesting language choices.
* Use a range of punctuation accurately.
* Use clear paragraphs.

Planning – ensure you meet the expectations of a short story through Freytag’s pyramid:



Planning – ensure you have clear, developed ideas for your story:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ‘Part’ of story: | Content |
|  |  |
|  |  |
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What is your story’s title? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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