between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

Writing to describe and narrate: Fog everywhere

How does Dickens fill a whole city with fog?

Lesson 4 of 14 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the English national curriculum at Key Stage 3



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What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Writing to describe and narrate scheme for Year 9. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 4, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 to 3 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared task, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model and an exit ticket. Most Master tasks are What–How–Why paragraphs, and some are creative or other forms: in this lesson, a description.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters.
Strengthening	Some support: prompts for What, How and Why, a planner and a checklist.
Soaring	The most challenge: a debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

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In the full scheme

- 14 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- A checkpoint (Feedback Loop kit) with a whole-class feedback sheet and improvement tasks
- A two-part end-of-unit assessment with a teacher guide, band guidance and annotated models
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson

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Lesson 4: Fog everywhere

SEQUENCE 1: PLACES AND WEATHER · 60 MINUTES

How does Dickens fill a whole city with fog?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how a minor sentence and repetition make Dickens's fog seem to be everywhere
- Analyse how the viewpoint travels from the river to the ships, the people and the bridges
- Write a description of a town or city in one kind of weather, borrowing Dickens's methods

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lessons 3 and 1 and the fogs of Dickens's London. Students self-check from the answer slide.	2–3
8–18	Know	Pre-teach "minor sentence", "panorama" and "haggard". Read the extract aloud while students follow and underline every place the fog reaches.	4–6
18–28	Apply	Sketch the river, the marshes and the bridges on the board, then explode the quotation together. Think aloud about the cruel verb form, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	7–8
28–33	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	9–10
33–53	Master	Students write a description of a town or city in one kind of weather, using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model description in the last five minutes.	11–12
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of the next lesson.	13

Do Now answers

1	What holy object does the boy in 'Araby' imagine he carries through the noisy market?	**A chalice, the cup used at Mass**
2	The man who tells 'Araby' is the boy grown up, looking back. What is this narrator called?	**A retrospective narrator**
3	Does description hold a moment still or move time on?	**It holds a moment still.**
4	A narrator who tells the story as "I" is what kind of narrator?	**A first-person narrator**
5	Why were London's fogs in Dickens's time thicker and dirtier than fog in the countryside?	**Smoke from coal fires in homes and factories mixed with the fog.**

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Vocabulary

minor sentence	a short sentence with no main verb, used for effect
repetition	using the same word or pattern again, so that readers notice it
panorama	a wide view that takes in a whole scene or place
haggard	looking tired, thin and worn out

Reading

Chapter 1: the fog

Dickens opens his novel with the weather. Notice where the fog is and who is caught in it.

> Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all round them, as if they were up in a balloon and hanging in the misty clouds.
>
> Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongey fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.

Charles Dickens, Bleak House (1853), Chapter 1

Word help **aits**: small islands in a river · **collier-brigs**: sailing ships that carried coal · **Greenwich pensioners**: old sailors who lived at the naval hospital in Greenwich · **'prentice**: apprentice, a boy learning a trade · **nether**: lower; below · **divers**: several different

Explode the quotation

Method
Personification. The fog is given a cruel action, like a bully, and it hurts the smallest person on deck.

Zoom in
The harsh adverb "cruelly" gives the fog a cruel nature, and the verb form "pinching" makes the cold feel like fingers.

"fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers"

Effect
The fog stops being weather and becomes something that attacks, so readers feel the cold on the boy's hands.

Purpose
Dickens wants readers to feel the fog reaching every corner of London, even a boy alone on deck.

Hinge question

Dickens begins with the two words "Fog everywhere." and no verb. What does the missing verb suggest?

A. Dickens left the verb out by mistake.

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B. The fog is not doing one thing at one moment: it is simply there. **(the right answer)**

C. It is shorthand for a longer sentence and means the same thing.

What the answers tell you

A treats the sentence as an error: ask what the sentence would lose if a verb were added. C treats it as shorthand: ask what a verb would say about time. These may be your students who start on Securing.

Why the answer is right

With no verb, the fog is not doing one thing at one moment. It is simply there, and the paragraph spreads it everywhere.

Master task: description

Describe a town or city in one kind of weather: fog, snow, rain or heat. Open with a minor sentence, repeat the weather word as your viewpoint travels, give the weather one cruel or kind action, and end on one person.

Securing the most support

A frame for each part, Dickens's patterns as models and a word bank.

"Fog up the river"

"fog down the river"

"a nether sky of fog"

Strengthening some support

Prompts for building the city and a success checklist.

Open with a minor sentence that names the weather and nothing else

Repeat the weather word at the start of clause after clause as your viewpoint travels from far away to close up

Give the weather one cruel or kind action, using a verb a person would use

End on one person, so that the whole city comes down to a single detail

Soaring the most challenge

Describe the weather so that the whole place seems to share one mood, but never name that mood. Use a minor sentence and repetition for effect, and vary your sentence length so that the last sentence lands.

Model description

Rain. Rain on the slate roofs of the terraces, where it runs in thin grey lines towards the gutters; rain on the allotments behind the railway, where it beats the last cabbages into the mud. Rain on the canal, pitting the brown water until it looks like hammered tin. Rain drumming on the bus shelter, rain dripping from the awnings of the high street. Rain sliding down the windows of the library as if the building were quietly crying.
Down in the streets the rain is busier. It fills the gutters and sends the dead leaves racing. It finds the gap at the back of every collar and the hole in the toe of every shoe. It takes a spiteful pleasure in the people without umbrellas. It plasters a newspaper to one man's coat and drags the hair of the schoolchildren into their eyes. It hammers on every dustbin lid as if it wanted to be let in.
The town has stopped arguing. The market stalls are packed away, and the lights in the butcher's window glow yellow and blurred. Even the pigeons have gone. Rain on the war memorial, rain on the clock that has said ten past four since March, rain on the steps of the empty bandstand.
At the end of Station Road, under the only street lamp that works, a small boy in a yellow coat stands in the biggest puddle of all. He lifts one boot and stamps. The water leaps up around him in a bright crown, and for a moment the rain seems to be on his side.

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