

Reading Comprehension

The Balrog, by JRR Tolkien

Year 5/6

HIAS English Team
Spring 2020
Final version

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Using the Home Learning Materials

The materials

- Each reading booklet contains a key text and suggested activities that can be used to develop comprehension and understanding.
- The sequence should take no more than 1 hour to complete.
- Reading for pleasure, fluency and stamina should be developed through regular sustained reading using the books identified by the school.

How to use

- Read the instructions carefully before you start a task.
- Each sequence contains simple explanations and examples to help you.

How can parents, carers and siblings help?

- Read the extracts aloud with your child
- Check your child understands any new or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Adapt any of the resources and materials as you feel necessary to support your child's needs

5 day reading sequence

This sequence is developed around an extract from 'The Fellowship of the Ring,' by J.R.R. Tolkien. The extract describes the arrival of The Balrog, a monster from underground.

Children will explore the language used for effect.

Teaching sequence:

- 1) Read with enjoyment and expression
- 2) Language for effect
- 3) Exploring effect on the reader
- 4) Get creative!
- 5) Comprehension

The Balrog

The Balrog: J.R.R. Tolkien

"Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and go before it...Its streaming mane kindled and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs....His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadows about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils."

1. Read aloud and enjoy together

The Balrog: J.R.R. Tolkien

"Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and go before it...Its streaming mane kindled and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs....His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadows about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils."

Enjoy reading this challenging and descriptive passage together, both in your head and aloud with expression. Discuss unknown vocabulary and focus on how the use of punctuation affects reading with fluency.

2. Language for effect

The Balrog: J.R.R. Tolkien

*"Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a **great shadow**, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and go before it...Its streaming mane kindled and **blazed** behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs....His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadows about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils."*

Imagine you are the illustrator: which words and phrases would you highlight to help create the illustration which accompanies the extract? (examples above)
This task will help the children to understand how authors use language to paint a vivid picture in the reader's mind.

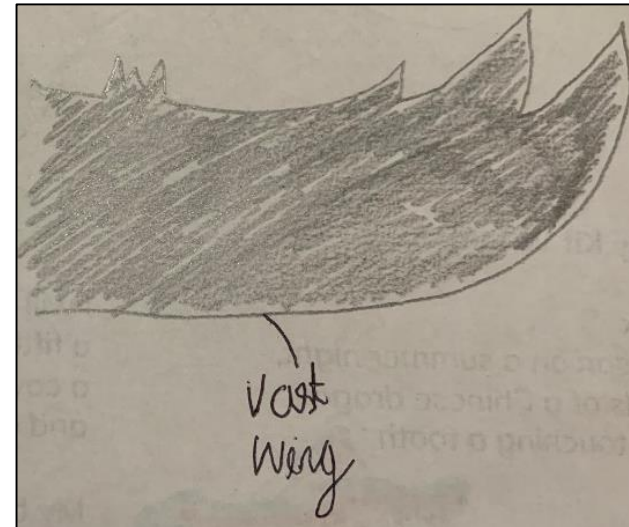
3. Exploring the effect on the reader

Read the extract once more for pleasure and discuss the words and phrase highlighted yesterday.

Word or phrase	Effect on the reader
great shadow	This makes the reader feel that a dark shape is looming behind them
blazed	This makes the reader imagine that the Balrog's mane is on fire...

Transfer the words and phrases that you highlighted yesterday onto the blank table (page 10) and write the effect this has on you as a reader. Two examples have been modelled above to help you.

4. Get creative!



Draw and label the Balrog (or parts of it) using the vocabulary in the extract.

5. Quick quiz

Using the extract, explore these questions and encourage your child to respond using evidence from the text to back up their answers.

- 1) What is the Balrog carrying?
- 2) '*Something was coming up behind him...*' Why do you think Tolkien started the description with the word '*something?*'
- 3) What impression do the words '*whined*' and '*cracked*' give you of the way the whip moved through the air?
- 4) If you were faced with The Balrog, would you be afraid? Use evidence from the text to back up your answer.

3. Exploring the effect on the reader

Word or phrase	Effect on the reader

HIAS English team

The HIAS English team offer a wide range of high-quality services to support schools in improving outcomes for learners, including courses, bespoke consultancy and in-house training.

During the current school closures, we are still offering school support in a variety of ways such as video conferencing, phone calls and bespoke creation of resources remotely. Coming soon will be teacher training via virtual classrooms. We would be happy to discuss your needs.

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