

What's the best story you've read recently?
Why?

Were you able to guess what was going to
happen?

Did the author tell you exactly what was going
on in the story, or were clues dropped in here
and there?



Authors don't just drop in clues about the story plot; they do it all the time when they describe a setting, character, action or emotions. They assume that the reader is clever enough to work out a lot of the details without being told.

For example, can you work out these?

The constant drone of insects filled the humid air, punctuated only by the shrill cries of capuchin monkeys. (Setting?)

His feet pounded out the rhythm of his heart, as effortlessly - relentlessly - he gained on the leader; victory would surely be his. (Action?)

Straining to hear any sound, she fought to slow her breathing. Suddenly the pupils of her eyes shrank to tiny points of darkness and she opened her mouth to scream. (Emotions?)

Look at your copy of this scene from 'Kensuke's Kingdom' by Michael Morpurgo, in which the main character, Michael, is exploring his new surroundings on his first morning after being shipwrecked.

What does he tell us about the setting and character's feelings, and what does he *show* us? What details are obvious, and which ones need a little more working out?

Underline/circle the clues he gives us and note down what they mean.

We found our beach once again and set off around the island, keeping wherever possible to the edge of the forest, to the shade. Still we found no stream. Again, I saw plenty of fruit, but always too high, and the trees were always too smooth, too sheer to climb. I found plenty of coconuts on the ground, but always cracked open and empty inside.

When the beach petered out, we had to strike off into the forest itself. Here too I found a narrow track to follow. The forest became impenetrable at this point, dark and menacing. There was no howling any more, but something infinitely more sinister: the shiver of leaves, the cracking of twigs, sudden surreptitious rustlings, and they were near me, all around me. I knew, I was quite sure now, that eyes were watching us. We were being followed.

I hurried on, swallowing my fear as best I could. I thought of the monkeys I had seen back in the zoo and tried to persuade myself how harmless they had looked. They'd leave us alone, they'd never attack us. They weren't man-eaters. But as the rustlings came ever closer, ever more threatening, I found it harder and harder to convince myself. I began to run, and I kept running until the track brought us out on to rocks, into the blessed light of day, and there was the sea again.

From Kensuke's Kingdom, by Michael Morpurgo

When you write your own version of 'The Highwayman' story, the main LO will be to develop your ability to use descriptive details to give clues to the reader. Instead of **telling** the reader where the story is set, what time of day it is or what the characters are feeling, you will try to **show** the reader.

This isn't as hard as it sounds - you are already very good detectives when it comes to working out someone else's clues when you read a book. You're even better at this when you watch something on screen...



UK director David Wilson

Watch the video to 'Titanium' by David Guetta.

How does director David Wilson *show* us what has happened? What clues does he drop in, without actually telling us? How do we know what is happening? How much of it do we have to work out ourselves?

David Guetta - Titanium ft. Sia (Official Video).wmv

L.O. Develop story details by giving clues.

Begin writing your own version of the Highwayman story, including details that give the reader clues about the setting and characters as you introduce them. Use the language from the poem, but add your own ideas, and don't forget that there is quite a lot of **suspense** in this; think back to your work earlier on in the term. If you wish, your story would also be a great one to tell in **flashback**, another of our learning units this term.

