



TalkforWriting™

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

Beware of Dragons

by Pie Corbett



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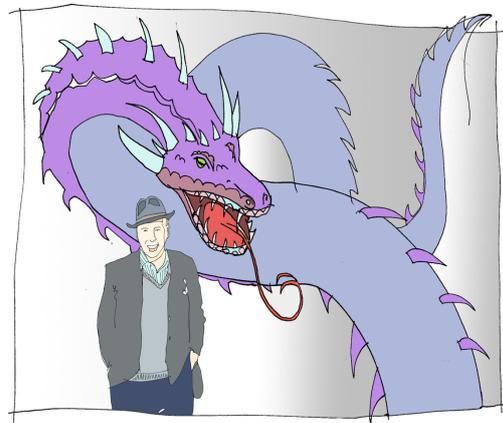
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Beware of Dragons!

Dragons have been sighted in your area! World-famous dragon specialist Pie Corbett is going to help you deal with this dragon invasion.



Your job, should you accept this mission, is to join the local 'Dragon Watch' to protect the local area from this mighty beast.

Information with a touch of 'faction'

*In this workbook, we are going to be writing an information text about a type of dragon. Of course, these are mythological creatures. Even though we will be writing non-fiction, we can still be inventive and creative. We like calling it **FACTION** because the form fits information about facts but the content is fiction.*

To get us started, here is a 'newsbreak' about a variety of dragon being sighted. As you are reading or listening, you might want to think about which type of dragon you will write about.

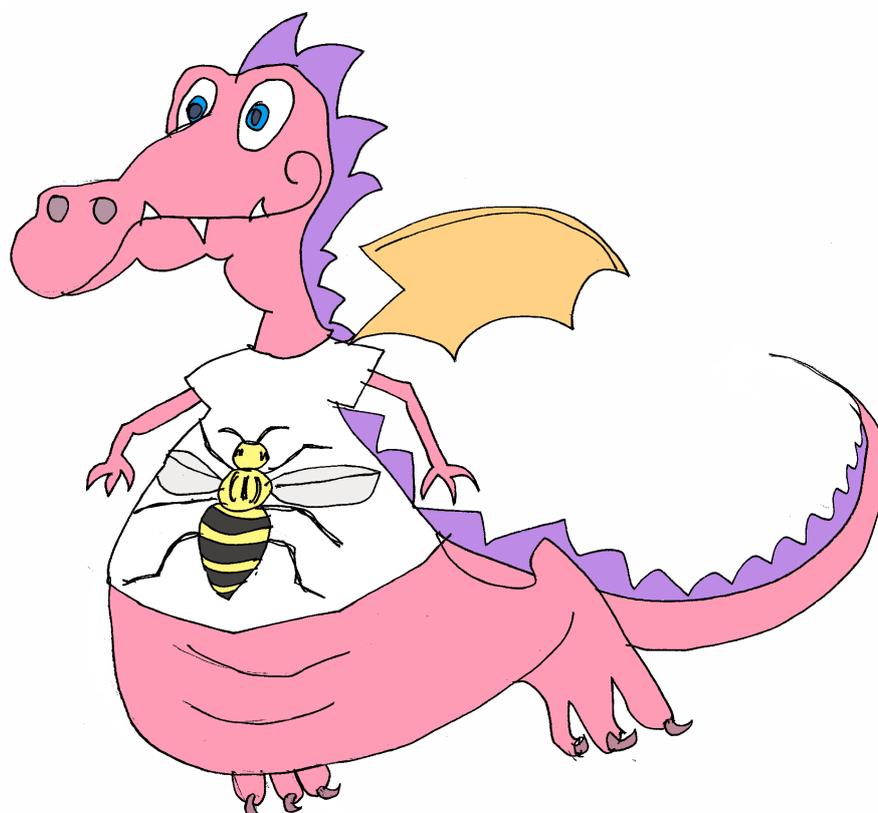
Activity 1: write a 'news break'

Have a read below and listen to me read the text aloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/newsbreak/s-5cybdYhKhMB>

News break - Dragon spotted!

We are interrupting this programme to announce that dragons have been sighted over Salford. At lunchtime, police were disturbed to see an adult Manchester Ridgeback Dragon



swooping over the city. Local residents have been warned to keep away from windows as these venomous pests have been known to smash windows when hungry. Residents have recently claimed that baby dragons have been seen breaking out of their shells. "We found a nest of baby dragons chewing on a black bin of rubbish," one resident claimed.

The council is concerned that this could lead to dragon infestation. Further updates in the six o'clock news.

As a member of the local Dragon Watch, you have been asked to write a newsbreak about what has happened locally. Use the structure from the text above to help you:

Structure	Model text	Your ideas
Introductory sentence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when did it happen? - what happened? - where did it happen? 	<p>We are interrupting this programme to announce that Dragons have been sighted over Salford.</p>	
More information - add detail	<p>At lunchtime, police were disturbed to see an adult Manchester Ridgeback Dragon swooping over the city.</p>	
Human interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reactions - what people have seen 	<p>Local residents have been warned to keep away from windows as these venomous pests have been known to smash windows when hungry. Residents have recently claimed that baby dragons have been seen breaking out of their shells.</p>	
Quote	<p>"We found a nest of baby dragons chewing on a black bin of rubbish," one resident claimed.</p>	
Reaction of those in charge	<p>The council is concerned that this could lead to dragon infestation.</p>	
When will we hear more?	<p>Further updates in the six o'clock news.</p>	

Rehearse the basic structures and grammar before writing:

This morning/afternoon/ evening ...

A report has come in from ...

A dragon has been ...

There have been reports of ...

A dragon has been ...

Residents described ...

Residents saw/heard/noticed ...

One resident said that ...

The police are ...

This example was written by Finlay from Southdale CofE Primary Academy and posted on Radioblogging.net.

Breaking News - Dragons have been spotted in Wakefield

This is the 6 o'clock news. The main headline today is that astonishingly dragons have been sighted in Wakefield!

There have been reports that they are burning dustbins with their ferocious flames. Residents have described them as "overgrown lizards with wings." One farmer said it had "burnt all his crops!"

The police are asking anyone who has seen these terrifying yet magnificent creatures to get in touch with them immediately.

The fire brigade say that they don't feel they have enough fire-fighters to put these fires out. "We are sad to report we have yet to contain the fires of Wakefield Cathedral."

Tune in later for further updates.

Activity 2: circle the signs

Choose 6 signs that you think make the best evidence of a dragon?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>trees stripped bare</i>• <i>charred bark</i>• <i>scorch marks</i>• <i>smouldering or deserted buildings</i>• <i>open front doors</i>• <i>unfinished meals</i>• <i>TVs still switched on</i>• <i>robbed shops</i>• <i>chewed cattle</i>• <i>claw marks</i>• <i>fragments of broken shell</i>• <i>piles of jewels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>a huge claw</i>• <i>scorched grass</i>• <i>dragon footprints</i>• <i>hot air</i>• <i>a twisted, white horn</i>• <i>the tip of a tail</i>• <i>a tough scale</i>• <i>a muddy, giant tooth</i>• <i>a dragon egg</i>• <i>a dragon roar in the distance</i>• <i>smell of burning</i>• <i>missing pets</i>• <i>strange shadows at night</i>

Activity 2: extension work

List below any other signs of evidence of dragons that you can think of:

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

Activity 3: create a map to show where the dragon lives

On a separate piece of paper, draw a map of where you live, in a magical world, showing where the dragon lives. Begin by drawing the outline. Then gradually add in your landscape. If you can, listen to the author of Podkin One-ear explain how to draw a story-world map:

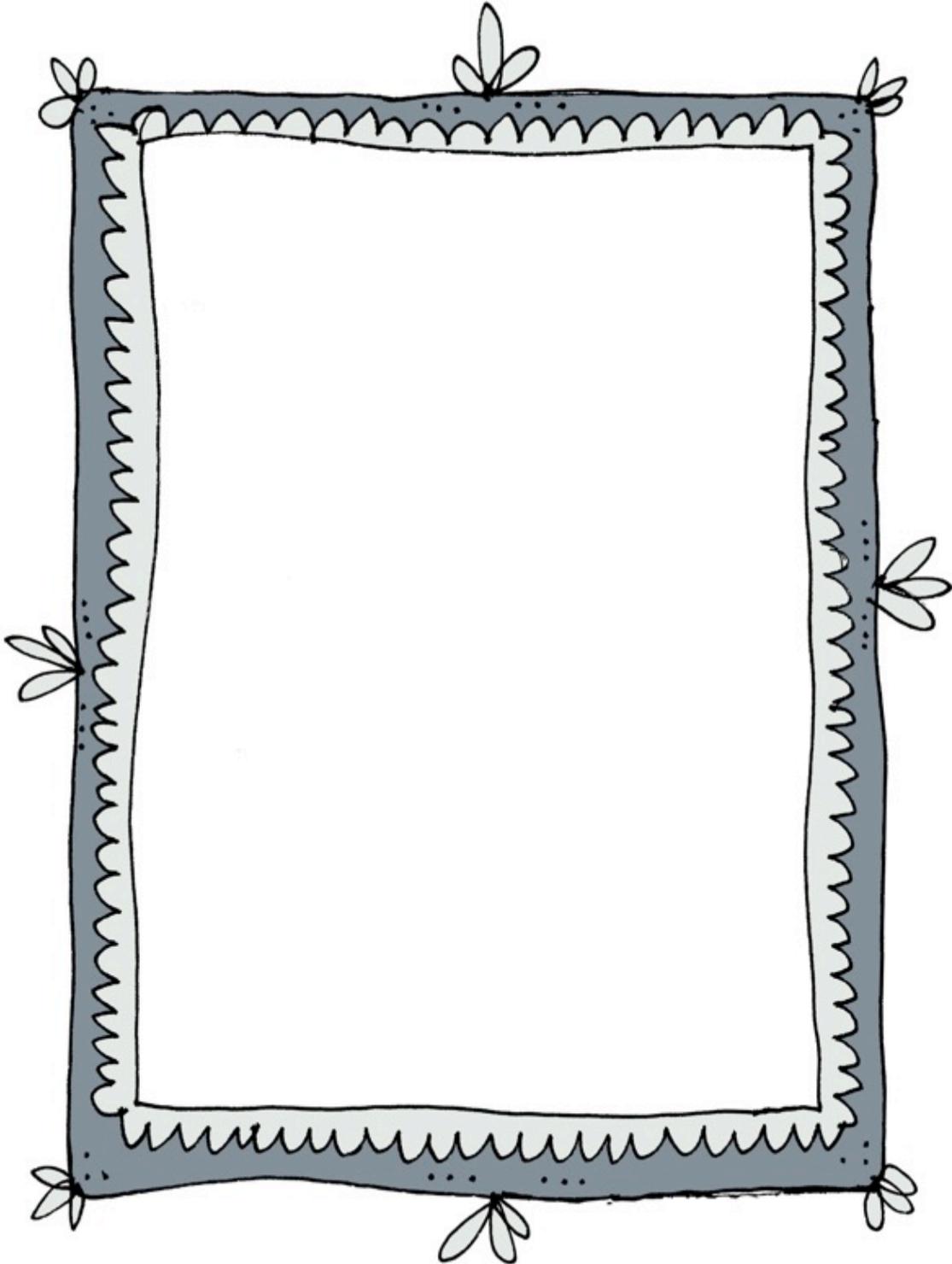
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLGLrWBtfyU>

Here is a story-world map. Label different places with different names. Can you see any dragons? Where do you think they might live?



Activity 4: draw and Label - Have you seen this dragon?

In the box below, draw a sketch of the dragon that has been sighted. Label it with descriptive information so that people can recognise it.



Activity 5: write a newspaper report

As a member of the Dragon Watch, you have been asked to write a newspaper report about what has happened. To help you, giants were spotted a few months ago. Use the newspaper report below to help you write about the dragon sighting. Have a read below and listen to me read the text aloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/giants-spotted/s-U0lbp5QTOx>

Giants Spotted!

Last week, Peyton Paget, 8 years old, saw three giants arguing in Deadman's Forest.

Peyton, who lives in Tree Cottage on the edge of the forest, was gathering firewood when she heard a huge noise that sounded like thunder. She crept closer and, through the trees, could see three huge giants. They were arguing about whose turn it was to play a tin whistle! Peyton ran home as fast as she could.

When 'The Tale End Informer' interviewed Peyton yesterday, she told 'The Informer' that she was still feeling very frightened. 'Giants are very rare and to hear them arguing was scary.' Woodland police have warned all locals to be careful when walking in the forest and to report any sightings or unusual sounds.

You can innovate on this article by using the same structure but adding in your own ideas. Have a look at how I've innovated on my opening paragraph below:

Last week, Peyton Paget, 8 years old, saw three giants arguing in Deadman's Forest.

On Friday, Jade Galms, 10 years old, saw an enormous dragon drinking from the boating lake in Hardswood Park.

Activity 6: hiring a dragon hunter

The local Dragon Watch have decided to hire a dragon hunter. You have to write an advert to attract a good candidate. To help, below is an advert that was used to find a giant whisperer! Have a read of the text below and listen to me read the text aloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/giant-whisperer/s-jNwSbA7GnGO>

Wanted - Urgently - 'A Giant Whisperer'

Do you have the ability to tame giants? Can you calm even the most dangerous of marauding ogres? Does the prospect of whispering into a giant's shell-like ear not scare you? Can your softly-spoken words help to rid our valley of several tree giants?

If you feel that this is the job for you, you will be expected to:

- travel to our valley
- seek out the giants
- tame them
- or scare them away.

In return, we will reward you with:

- a sack of fire berries, gathered from a Phoenix's nest
- the promise of a free trip to the well of eternity where you may taste the cool waters of life
- plus the bonus of a full breakfast for the rest of your days.

You are guaranteed the protection of a band of a dozen trusty dwarves to help you.

If you are interested in helping our village, please contact us by leaving a message at the foot of the Mountain of Silence, marked 'Giant Whisperer'.



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When you write your advert for a dragon hunter, try using some of these sentence starters taken from the text above to create your advert for a dragon hunter. Keep an eye out for the punctuation and follow the patterns below if you use them.

Sentence starters	Example sentences for tree giants
Are you ... ?	Are you down and out?
Do you have ... ?	Do you have the qualities needed to hunt giants?
Do you want to be ... ?	Do you want to be renowned throughout the land?
If so, ...	If so, read on!
We are looking for ...	We are looking for a tree giant specialist.
First, imagine ...	First, imagine the triumph when you capture a tree giant.
Furthermore, ...	Furthermore, we will offer you wealth beyond anything you have ever known.
Our unimaginable offer includes ...	Our unimaginable offer includes free hemplefruit juice for the rest of your days.
Additionally, we will ...	Additionally, we will supply you with a tame house goblin to tend to your needs.
If successful, you will ...	If successful, you will become world famous!
Don't miss ...	Don't miss this chance to be a winner
Grab ...	Grab a tree giant and you too will be able to turn over a new leaf!

Planning your advert

Use this boxed-up planner to bullet point your own ideas and then write your advert for a dragon hunter.

Underlying pattern	Language features	Plan your version
Title	Wanted ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanted – Dragon Hunter
Introduction	Rhetorical questions to tempt hunters + If so, ...	
Main persuasive reasons	We are looking for ... First imagine ... Furthermore, ... + guarantee ... Our offer ... Additionally, we will ... If successful, you will ...	
Final points	Don't miss ... Grab ...	

Activity 7: describe the dragon

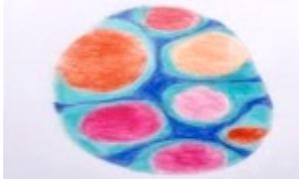
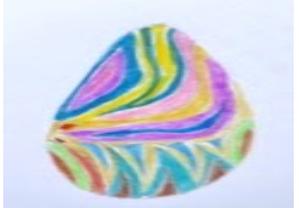
To write your own version of this poem, notice how I have written a sentence about different parts of the dragon. Try using alliteration and similes just like I have.

On this diagram, write your poem with a sentence about each part of the dragon. To start each line use the phrase *The dragon's ...* .

The dragon's bulging head is bigger than a bus.	<i>The dragon's ...</i>
The dragon's scarlet eyes glow like fiery headlamps.	
The dragon's silver scales are tougher than diamonds.	
The dragon's cruel claws curve like crescent moons.	
The dragon's mighty jaws crunch bones like candy.	
The dragon's jagged tail can knock blocks of flats over with one single swipe.	

Activity 8: dragon eggs

The Dragon Watch has discovered different coloured dragon eggs. Write sentences that tell us what sort of dragon will hatch from each egg, where it lives and what it does. The first one is done for you. Follow the same sort of sentence pattern.

Dragon egg	Type of dragon
	<p>The river dragon lives under riverbanks and can fly as it has tiny gills like a fish.</p>
	
	
	
	
	

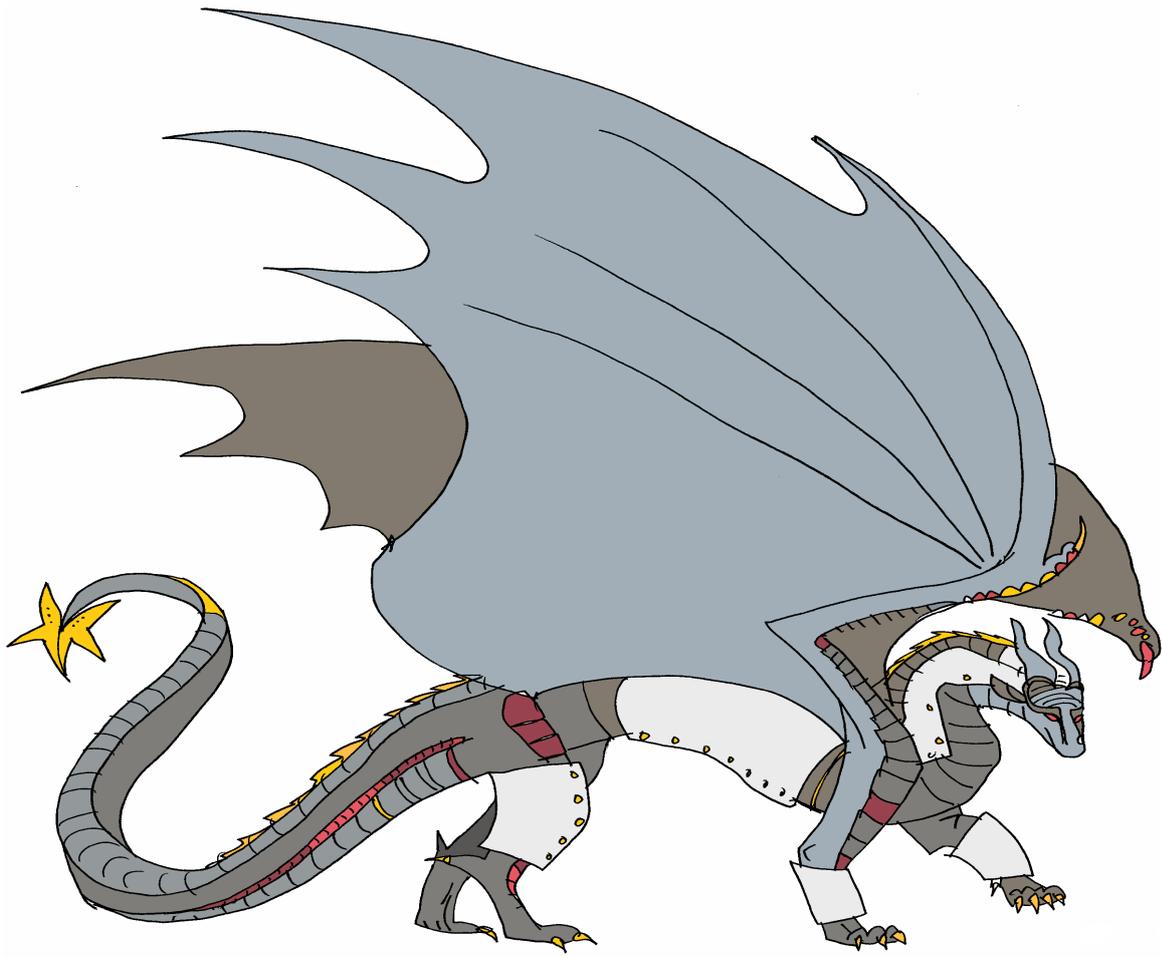
Activity 9: Listen and read

The Dragon Watch has been asked to write an entry from the 'Dragon Hunters Guide to Local Dragons'. To help you, here is an example about storm dragons. When you are reading this model text, notice what the different paragraphs are about, and think about ideas that you might use in your writing. Also, magpie any vocabulary that you can use in your own writing. Have a read below and listen to me read the text aloud here: <https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/storm-dragon/s-fadPKZjxJA6>

The Storm Dragon

The storm dragon is a rare breed of dragon that used to roam freely across the world. Nowadays, it is very unusual to see a storm dragon as they have been hunted almost to the point of extinction. This is because they are supposed to have mythical powers and their scales are tougher than any known metal.

Storm dragons are larger than the majority of dragons. They have enormous, grey, leathery wings which keep them flying even in the wildest weather. They have colossal muscles which have developed over the centuries as they needed to escape being hunted by flying high. Their scales are tougher than diamond shields and they often wear burnished steel plates to protect their bodies. The scales are a grey-blue colour with dashes of scarlet and gold. Storm dragons have extraordinary star-tipped tails which act as rudders as they fly. The golden spines on their backs are poisonous to touch and they breathe bolts of lightning when angry. As a storm dragon moves, it sends out showers of tiny, electric splinters and makes a



thunderous roar; hence their name.

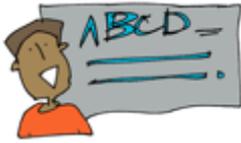
Unlike the common dragon, the storm dragon has adapted to live in the clouds where it is hard to see. To do this, they have developed the habit of drifting inside clouds, blown by the wind. Additionally, they are very shy until roused when they become most frightening, creating massive storms. During the daytime, they may be found sleeping on the mountain tops of high ranges. At night, the storm dragon may be glimpsed flying amongst the clouds. If you are very lucky, you may just see them flying towards the moon where they take long periods of rest as if they were hibernating.

Storm dragons have a fairly limited diet. In the main, they eat from volcanic lava which keeps their bodies warm. This involves them in visiting volcanoes and can be a risky business. The majority love bathing in hot springs and geysers. However, a few can also be tempted with icebergs which they enjoy during very hot weather rather like ice cream! Amazingly, they absorb moisture from their long exposure when flying inside clouds so have no real need to drink.

Furthermore, they ingest electricity through bathing inside lightning storms. So, be careful when you are near a storm dragon because their bodies can give off an electric shock!

Storm dragons are said to possess mythical powers and have therefore long been hunted. Many emperors, kings and dictators have attempted to tame these dragons and harness their powers against their enemies or to conquer other lands. Generally, these attempts have led to failure as storm dragons cannot be tamed and usually turn on their captors. Their scales are prized as the metal is stronger than diamonds and, therefore, provides excellent protection. This has meant that they have been hunted almost to extinction. Over the years, so many storm dragons have been killed that they have learned to stay away from mankind and are therefore hard to track down.

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Activity 10: match the vocabulary to its definition

You might not know all of the vocabulary that is in this model text. Don't worry as this activity will help! Match the word to the correct definition and then check at the end of the booklet on page 29 to see if you have worked them out.

Word from text	Definition
breed	annoyed
extinction	soak something up
rudder	sleep through winter
splinters	melted rock from a volcano
hence	controlling something to make use of it
common	take into their body
adapted	tiny, thin and sharp pieces of something
roused	sort of/type of plant or animal within a species
high ranges	experiencing something
hibernate	something that steers a boat
volcanic lava	changed
absorb	the end of a species – none left
exposure	high mountains that are in a line
ingest	for this reason/consequently
harness	the main type of a species



You could magpie some of these words and use them in your own writing later on.

Activity 11: Magpie openers & useful words

Are there any words in the dragon report that you would like to add to the word bank below and use in your report? Are there any words that start the sentences or phrases that might be useful for your writing? I have found some and added several extra ones. Can you find any more by reading the text again.

Words to add on more information	Adverbs to interest the reader	Generalisers	Change of direction	Other helpful words
additionally	amazingly	generally	However	
also	surprisingly	most/many	contrary to popular belief	
furthermore	interestingly	some/a few	on the other hand	
moreover	weirdly	several	Perhaps	
it is thought that	curiously	the majority	unfortunately	
in addition	similarly	the minority	despite...	
many people believe that	unusually	almost all	alternatively	

When you are writing, use this bank of words and phrases. Look back at the model text to see how they are used in sentences. Of course, you will be inventing your own facts about your chosen dragon.

Activity 12: spot the underlying pattern

I have picked out the underlying pattern by boxing up the structure. This is just a guide. You could add in extra paragraphs, different sections, diagrams etc.

Type of creature	Storm Dragons
Opening hook – introduction hooking the reader to find out more. Fascinating fact for interest.	The storm dragon is a rare breed of dragon that used to roam freely across the world. Nowadays, it is very unusual to see a storm dragon as they have been hunted almost to the point of extinction. This is because they are supposed to have mythic powers and their scales are tougher than any known metal.
Appearance - information about what the creature looks like	Storm dragons are larger than the majority of dragons. They have enormous, grey, leathery wings which keep them flying even in the wildest weather. They have colossal muscles which have developed over the centuries as they needed to escape being hunted by flying high. Their scales are tougher than diamond shields and they often wear burnished steel plates to protect their bodies. The scales are a grey-blue colour with dashes of scarlet and gold. Storm dragons have extraordinary star-tipped tails which act as rudders as they fly. The golden spines on their backs are poisonous to touch and they breathe bolts of lightning when angry. As a storm dragon moves, it sends out showers of tiny, electric splinters and makes a thunderous roar; hence their name.
Habitat - information about the area the creature lives in or is found	Unlike the common dragon, the storm dragon has adapted to live in the clouds where it is hard to see. To do this, they have developed the habit of drifting inside clouds, blown by the wind. Additionally, they are very shy until roused when they become most frightening, creating massive storms. During the daytime, they may be found sleeping on the mountain tops of high ranges. At night, the storm dragon may be glimpsed flying amongst the clouds. If you are very lucky, you may just see them flying towards the moon where they take long periods of rest as if they were hibernating.
Diet – information about what the creature eats	Storm dragons have a fairly limited diet. In the main, they eat from volcanic lava which keeps their bodies warm. This involves them in visiting volcanoes and can be a risky business. The majority love bathing in hot springs and geysers. However, a few can also be tempted with icebergs which they enjoy during very hot weather rather like ice cream! Amazingly, they absorb moisture from their long exposure when flying inside clouds so have no real need to drink. Furthermore, they ingest electricity through bathing inside lightning storms. So, be careful when you are near a storm dragon because their bodies can give off an electric shock!
Ending – summarising the main issue	Storm dragons are said to possess mythical powers and have therefore long been hunted. Many emperors, kings and dictators have attempted to tame these dragons and harness their powers against their enemies or to conquer other lands. Generally, these attempts have led to failure as storm dragons cannot be tamed and usually turn on their captors. Their scales are prized as the metal is stronger than diamonds and, therefore, provides excellent protection. This has meant that they have been hunted almost to extinction. Over the years, so many storm dragons have been killed that they have learned to stay away from mankind and are therefore hard to track down.

Activity 13: What additional paragraphs to include

When you write your own entry for the 'Dragon Hunters Guide to Local Dragons', are there any other paragraphs that you might include?

Think about what your reader might want to know about.

- What sort of person might read this guide?
- What other things would they be interested in?
- What would someone who wanted to find more about dragons want to know?
- What would a dragon hunter want to know about?
- What would someone who wanted to save your species need to know?
- What are their strengths, weaknesses, how would you care for one, should they be hunted, can they perform tricks, do they make safe pets, can they be trained, how do you track one? etc.

Add your ideas for what other paragraphs you could include here:

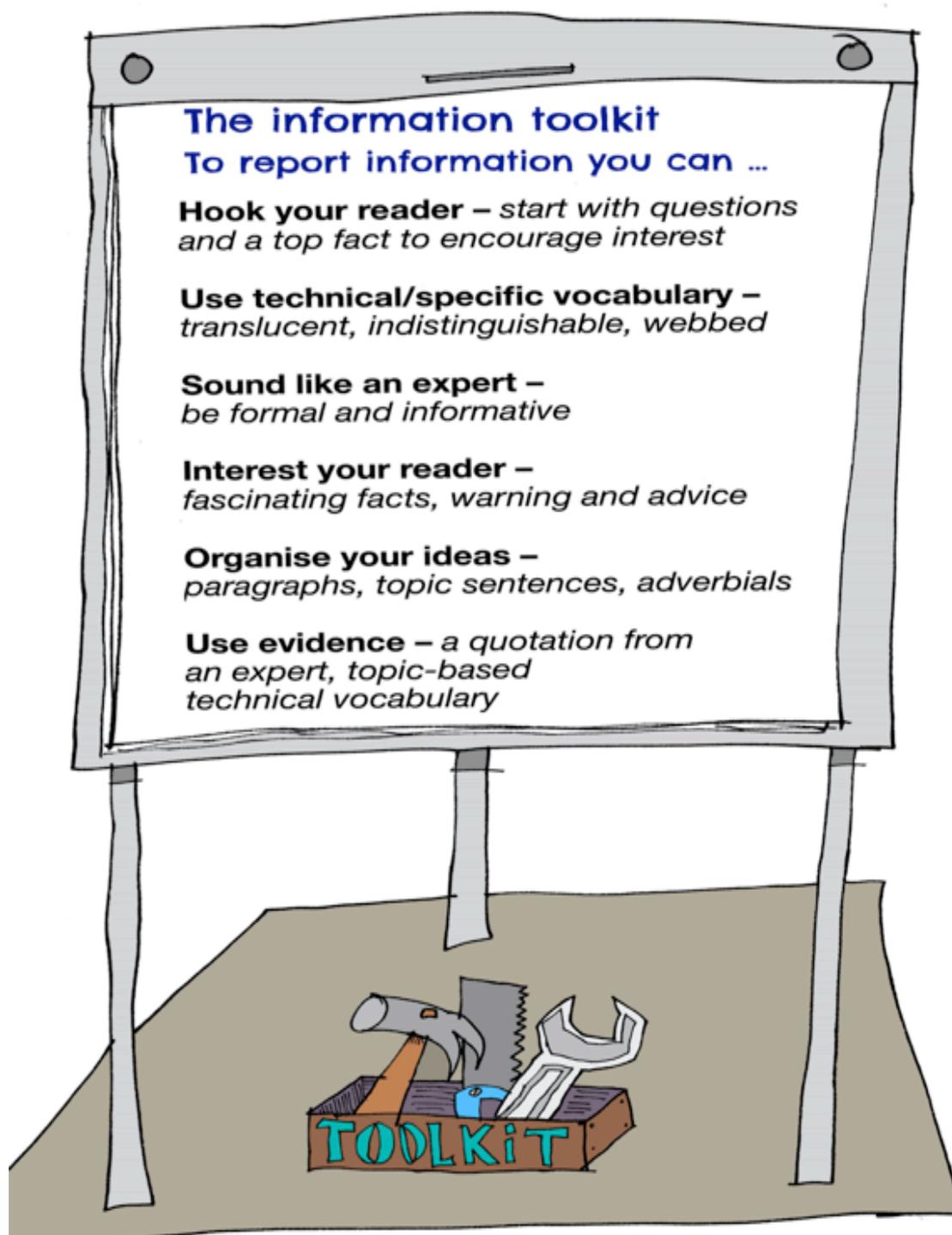
Activity 14: sort the structure activity

In the first column, there is a list of sub-headings for an information report. These are muddled into the wrong order. How would you organise these? Write your suggestions in the second column.

Incorrect structure	Logical structure
Wrapping it up	
How do you track one?	
Equipment you'll need	
Strengths	
Behaviour	
Hooking the reader's interest	
Habitat	
How do you trap one?	
Weaknesses	
Description	
Special powers	

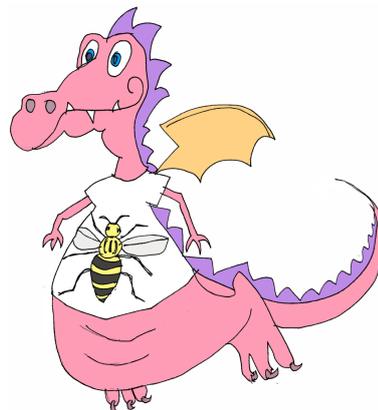
Activity 15: Let's look at the toolkit

Before you start thinking about your own ideas for your species of dragon, we need to look closely at the text and see what writing tools/tips/tricks the author has used so we can do the same in ours. Here is a toolkit I have made for writing information texts.



Activity 16: new ideas

Now comes the fun part! Your challenge is to write an information text for the 'Dragon Hunters Guide to Local Dragons' about the type of dragon that you have discovered. The choices are endless and I am sure that you already have an idea about the type of dragon that you might write about. To help you, here is a list of suggestions that might inspire you. Have a read below and listen to me read the text aloud here:



<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/types-of-dragon/s-taBb5dujSpe>

***The forest dragon** lives in forests, woods and hedgerows. It is a leafy green colour.*

***The mini-dragon** lives in small crevices and under floorboards in abandoned houses. It is as dark as shadows and therefore hard to see.*

***The common city dragon** lives in most town and city areas often hiding in dumpsters and garbage sites. They act like chameleons in that their colour changes depending on where they are standing!*

***The lesser spotted dragon** hides on seashores where there are plenty of pebbles. It is multicoloured and can blend into the background on the shoreline.*

***The Wyrn** is a Saxon dragon that appeared in a famous poem 'Beowulf'. It was hideously ugly and lived in swamp areas.*

Now, it is time to make your mind up. Which type of dragon will you be writing about? Write a couple of sentences to explain which type of dragon you are going to write about, where they live and what they look like. Use the pattern of the above sentences as a model in this way:

***The forest dragon** lives in forests, woods and hedgerows. It is a leafy green colour.*

The storm dragon lives in mountainous regions, distant valleys and cliffs. It is a black and grey colour.

Activity 17: planning

Now you are going to organise your ideas into a boxed-up planner to help structure your writing for the 'Dragon Hunters Guide to Local Dragons'. Remember to pick extra topics other than appearance, habitat and diet. I have left four blank sections for extra sections. I have also left the right-hand column blank so you can bullet point in your ideas.

Do NOT write the whole text in the right-hand column – use bullet points to list ideas. This is a planner.

Structure of information text about an animal	Plan your ideas using bullet points
Type of creature	
Opening hook – to make the reader interested in finding out more. Fascinating fact for interest	
Habitat - information about the area the creature lives in / where it is seen	
Appearance - information about what the creature looks like	
Diet - information about what the creature eats	
Behaviour - information about what the creature does	
Ending – involving the reader	

Activity 18: talk your plan through

It is really important to have a good read through your plan to make sure that it makes sense. Why not read it aloud to someone in your house/class and see if they have any suggestions for how to improve it. Then try saying out loud exactly what you are going to write.

Activity 19: Write your report

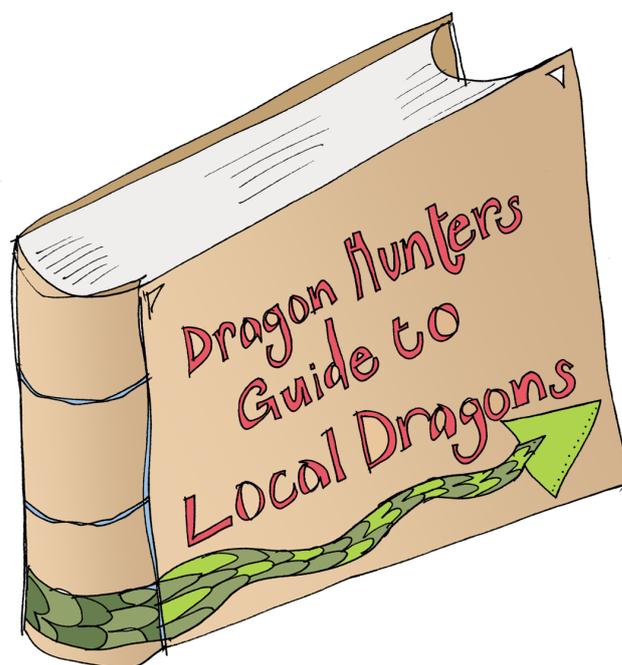
It's time to write your report about your chosen type of dragon for the 'Dragon Hunters Guide to Local Dragons'.

To help you with your writing, there are lots of things to help you:

- ✓ The texts about the storm dragon
- ✓ The boxed up plan and structure and toolkit
- ✓ Your ideas page
- ✓ The vocabulary we magpied from the model
- ✓ And, most importantly, your plan

Draft your ideas and edit, thinking about the following:

- Make sure that when you read the text aloud, it flows. If you find a sentence hard to read aloud then so will your reader.
- Check that you haven't muddled up the information.
- Does it sound like storm dragon text?
- Read it through again to check spelling and punctuation.
- Then write your final draft.
- Add in some design and illustrate.

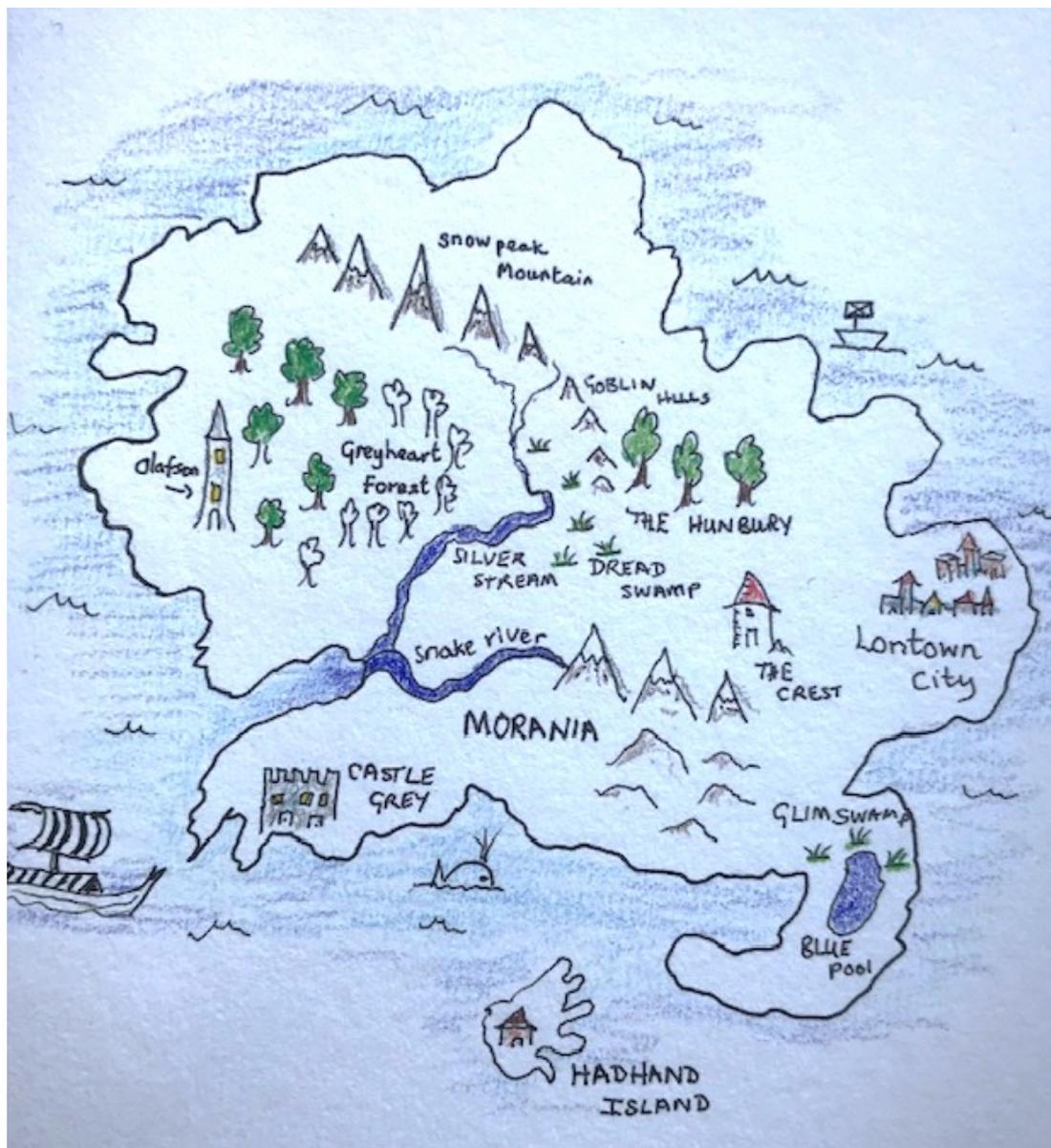


Activity 20: map your imaginary land

Draw your own map of where your type of dragon lives. If you can, check out on the internet to see how Kieran Larwood, author of *Podkin One-Ear*, draws maps of his story worlds:

<https://www.kmlarwood.com/resources/>

- ★ Step 1: draw the outline of your map
- ★ Step 2: fill in the landmarks: trees, rivers, boulders, mountains, volcano, cities, sea, swamps, etc
- ★ Step 3: make up names for the different areas of your map



Activity 21: extension writing choices

You are not finished yet! There are lots of different bits of writing you could do if you are enjoying this unit. You could even create and illustrate a whole booklet about your chosen creature:

- Write another report about a different mythological creature (elf, sprite, Pegasus, griffon, ogre, giant, phoenix, dragon, goblin).
- Write a fact-file for your chosen creature.
- Write a story about your chosen creature, using ideas from your report. What would happen if you found your creature hiding near your house or flat?
- Write a newspaper report about a sighting of your creature.
- Write up an interview with a dragon hunter.
- Write a set of instructions for *How to trap a dragon*.
- Write an explanation about how a dragon breathes fire.
- Write a discussion, 'Should dragons be hunted?'

Book recommendations

If you enjoyed this unit, then here are some exciting books to read:

'The boy who grew dragons' series by Andy Shepherd;

'Eragon' series by Christopher Paolini;

'The Land of Roar' series by Jenny McLachlan;

'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes;

'Dragon Mountain' by Katie and Kevin Tsang;

'Darwin's Dragons' by Lindsay Galvin;

'The Hobbit' by J.R.R. Tolkien.

The best non-fiction book about dragons is 'Dragonology'.

Answers to vocabulary activity on page 18.

Word from text	Definition
breed	sort of/type of plant or animal within a species
extinction	the end of a species – none left
rudder	something that steers a boat
splinters	tiny, thin and sharp pieces of something
hence	for this reason/consequently
common	the main type of a species
adapted	changed
roused	annoyed
high ranges	tops of mountains that are in a line
hibernate	sleep through winter
volcanic lava	melted rock from a volcano
absorb	soak something up
exposure	having no protection from something
ingest	take into their body
harness	controlling something to make use of it

I hope you have enjoyed working through this workbook. Please share any work produced by tweeting me @piecorbett

Pie Corbett was a Head Teacher, Inspector and Teacher Trainer. He now works as a poet and author, and leads Talk For Writing.

Edited and designed by Julia Strong

Prepared for online distribution by Nick Batty

Thanks to Jon Ralphs for the cartoons: jonralphs.com

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