



# Action toolkit

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To create a description that the reader can imagine, making it sound real and using it to intrigue, you might want to:

N/R	Y1/2 As in N/R plus:	Y3/4 As in Y1/2 plus:	Y5/6 As in Y3/4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use verbs that have emotion. Avoid <i>walked, ran, sat, jumped</i></li> <li>• Use sequential openers to advance a story e.g. <i>First, Next, After that, Then, Finally</i></li> <li>• Create a simple story that starts and ends at the same place</li> <li>• Use all the senses to discuss and describe – look, touch, taste, hear and smell</li> <li>• Use a wordless picture book and discuss what a character might be doing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose verbs that have emotion. Avoid <i>got, came, went, said, looked</i></li> <li>• Add detail to how the character moves by adding in an adverb, e.g. <i>she tiptoed <u>quietly</u></i></li> <li>• Generate pace with a sentence or power of 3, e.g. <i>He <u>leaped</u> over the wall, <u>hid</u> behind an empty crate and <u>waited</u>.</i></li> <li>• Use similes to create atmosphere, e.g. <i>The trees lined the streets like an army.</i></li> <li>• Use onomatopoeia to interrupt and interject, e.g. <i>Snap!</i></li> <li>• Use range of dramatic fronted adverbials to advance the action, e.g. <i>At that moment, Suddenly, Unfortunately</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Show’ not ‘tell’ - reveal or hint at a character’s feelings through their actions e.g. <i>trudged, tiptoed, glanced, sighed</i></li> <li>• Use personification e.g. <i>the bushes seemed like they were holding their breath</i></li> <li>• Use a variety of progressive -ing openers to drop the reader straight into the action, e.g. <i>Leaping out from behind the car,...</i></li> <li>• Extend the action using an -ing clause, e.g. <i>The trees lined the streets like an army, <u>standing to attention.</u></i></li> <li>• Vary sentence length to affect the reader, e.g. short punchy sentences to build tension and pace</li> <li>• Use a wider range of dramatic fronted adverbials to advance the action, e.g. <i>In an instant, Without warning, In the blink of an eye</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a character’s reaction or the author’s comments to show the effect of a description, e.g. <i>Joanna shuddered.</i></li> <li>• Mirror the character’s feelings through the setting, e.g. <i>The murky water lay dead before him.</i></li> <li>• Choose vocabulary that connects to the desired mood and feeling, e.g. <i>mocking, dominating, despondently, relentlessly</i></li> <li>• Use speech to advance the action and show emotion, e.g. <i>“Come back you scoundrel!”</i></li> <li>• Use repetition to build tension whilst advancing the action, e.g. <i><u>Towards</u> the lake...<u>towards</u> the bowl...<u>towards</u> my fish!</i></li> </ul>

## Useful ideas for teaching action – always co-construct the toolkit with the class



Model all aspects of the toolkit and display word banks, sentences and ideas on prompt cards, washing lines or learning walls

N/R	Y1/2 As in N/R plus:	Y3/4 As in Y1/2 plus:	Y5/6 As in Y3/4 plus:
<p>Plays 'Simon Says' with a variety of new verbs – link actions to strengthen understanding;</p> <p>Use simple story mountain to orally invent 5 part stories, sometimes starting and ending in the same place;</p> <p>Develop the use of the 5 senses and related language through specific experiences, e.g. feely bag, curiosity corner, nature table, nature walks, etc.;</p> <p>Use drama to bring scenarios to life;</p> <p>Guided discussion, focused on a stimulus with word gathering;</p> <p>Constant modeling of language associated with action by adults.</p>	<p>Use drama to model how to imply feelings through actions;</p> <p>Constant modeling of language associated with by adults;</p> <p>Train children to generate language associated with action and add to their word banks with new vocabulary;</p> <p>Use collections to reinforce language, e.g. <i>synonyms for walk, run, said, looked, etc.</i>;</p> <p>Collect interesting action words and sentences from quality books and 'bank' for future use.</p>	<p>Use drama to model how to imply feelings through actions;</p> <p>Build banks of actions that we associate with humans and apply to something non-human;</p> <p>Narrate a drama lesson, manipulating the position of the progressive verb and discuss how it alters the meaning;</p> <p>Play with sentence length and discuss how it changes the impact on the reader;</p> <p>Brainstorm banks of vocabulary, list and use when writing;</p> <p>Use magpie books and boards to gather great descriptions from quality books.</p>	<p>Avoid overwriting. Learn how to trim/tighten sentences to maximise effect;</p> <p>Brainstorm lists of emotions and experiment connecting these to settings;</p> <p>Discuss how good authors balance description and action;</p> <p>Gather creative action into banks and discuss effects on the reader;</p> <p>Map, learn and write in the style of the best action passages available, e.g. opening of <i>Cogheart</i>;</p> <p>Gather specific words banks through short-burst writing before writing narrative;</p> <p>Draw on previous writing and raid for effective action and reaction.</p>