

Day 1 Monday:

What do you think a good mystery story should contain? **How well can you introduce a mystery story?**

Watch:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_aQ6ZiBOqU&list=PL_odjZ7bN8F65VKih3RE0MQIQ_ObkisUU&index=10

Make notes of what they recommend.

We are going to look at a classic mystery story called: The Woman in White by Wilkie Collins (1859).

Wilkie Collins is often credited with writing the first mystery story. It is easy to forget that, once upon a time, writing about a mystery was a new concept! The hero of the story, Walter Hartright, is a kind of detective. The story was incredibly popular at the time and there were even products like perfumes and clothing using the 'Woman in White' branding.

Which image in an extract from Chapter 4, stimulates your curiosity the most?

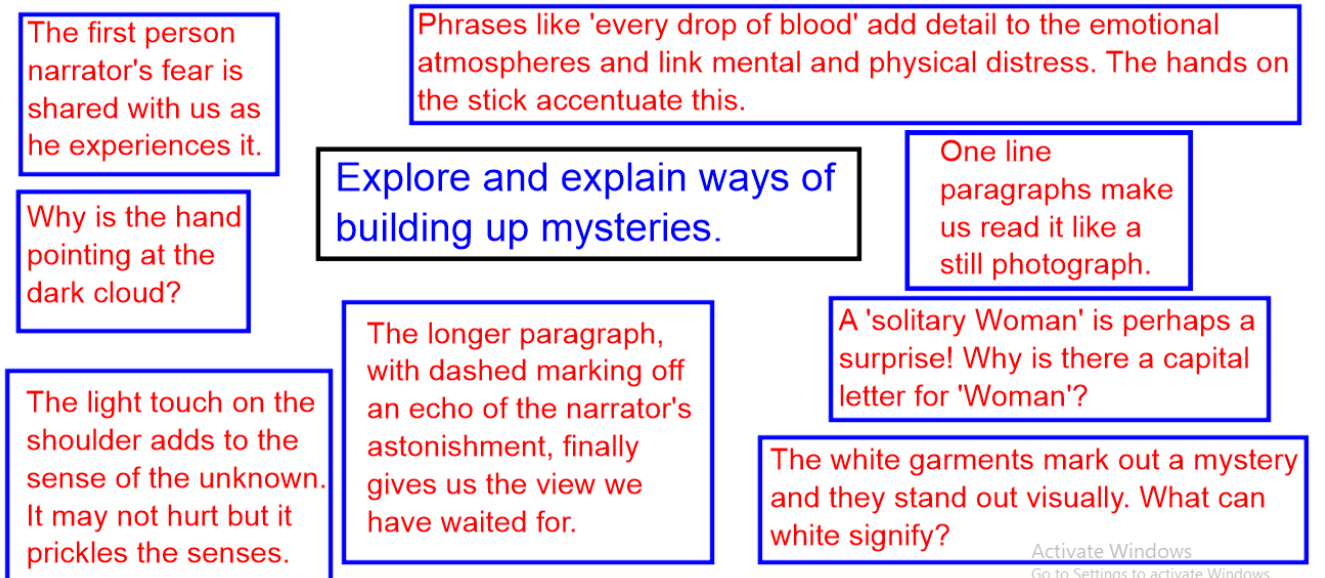
[...] in one moment, every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on my shoulder from behind me.

I turned on the instant, with my fingers tightening round the handle of my stick.

There, in the middle of the broad, bright high-road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments, her face bent in grave inquiry on mine, her hand pointing to the dark cloud over London, as I faced her.

Day 2 Tuesday:

Explore and explain ways of building up mysteries.



Day 3 Wednesday

Now use some of the ideas you have learnt from Wilkie Collins in a brief passage.

- How do you feel about the figure in white?
- Have you ever had any spook encounters or felt that sinister sense of the unknown?
- Which books and films do you know that have the same impact?
- Does TV or film do it in the same way?

Read the next extract:

I had now arrived at that particular point of my walk where four roads met – the road to Hampstead, along which I had returned, the road to Finchley, the road to West End, and the road back to London. I had mechanically turned in this latter direction, and was strolling along the lonely high-road – idly wondering, I remember, what the Cumberland young ladies would look like – when, in one moment, every drop of blood in my body was brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on my shoulder from behind me.

I turned on the instant, with my fingers tightening round the handle of my stick.

There, in the middle of the broad, bright high-road – there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heavens – stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments, her face bent in grave inquiry on mine, her hand pointing to the dark cloud over London, as I faced her.

I was far too seriously startled by the suddenness with which this extraordinary apparition stood before me, in the dead of night and in that lonely place, to ask what she wanted. The strange woman spoke first.

“Is that the road to London?” she said.

Day 4 Thursday:

Write a paragraph in the same style. Here is an example:

The crunch of footsteps over rusty leaves fills me with shock, as I jump back into the darkness of the villainous woods, with the trees looking down at me. A young man with an unusual moustache walks past and lights his pipe. Slowly I bend over and walk towards the man: the moonlight shows the way. I tap his shoulder. trembling with fear I run back before he has had a chance to turn around.

Shock fills him. I am gone. The darkness hides me as he, still overpowered with questions, stands shaking like leaves in an autumn wind. Slowly walking back over I tap him again but this time I say: 'Is this the way to London?'

Ethan Jones Year 4

Day 5 Friday:

Read the next extract:

I looked attentively at her, as she put that singular question to me. It was then nearly one o'clock. All I could discern distinctly by the moonlight was a colourless, youthful face, meagre and sharp to look at about the cheeks and chin; large, grave, wistfully attentive eyes; nervous, uncertain lips; and light hair of a pale, brownish-yellow hue. There was nothing wild, nothing immodest in her manner: it was quiet and self-controlled, a little melancholy and a little touched by suspicion; not exactly the manner of a lady, and, at the same time, not the manner of a woman in the humblest rank of life.

The voice, little as I had yet heard of it, had something curiously still and mechanical in its tones, and the utterance was remarkably rapid. She held a small bag in her hand: and her dress – bonnet, shawl, and gown all of white – was, so far as I could guess, certainly not composed of very delicate or very expensive materials. Her figure was slight, and rather above the average height – her gait and actions free from the slightest approach to extravagance. This was all that I could observe of her in the dim light and under the perplexingly strange circumstances of our meeting.

What sort of a woman she was, and how she came to be out alone in the high-road, an hour after midnight, I altogether failed to guess. The one thing of which I felt certain was, that the grossest of mankind could not have misconstrued her motive in speaking, even at that suspiciously late hour and in that suspiciously lonely place.

“Did you hear me?” she said, still quietly and rapidly, and without the least fretfulness or impatience. “I asked if that was the way to London.”

How does Wilkie Collins build an image of the woman in white?

- How does the woman look to the narrator?
- What does the picture make you think?
- Can you describe what she wears?
- How do we know whether the narrator feels threatened the woman?
- What do the words 'gait' and 'wistful' tell us?

Make a mind map of what you know.

Day 6 Monday:

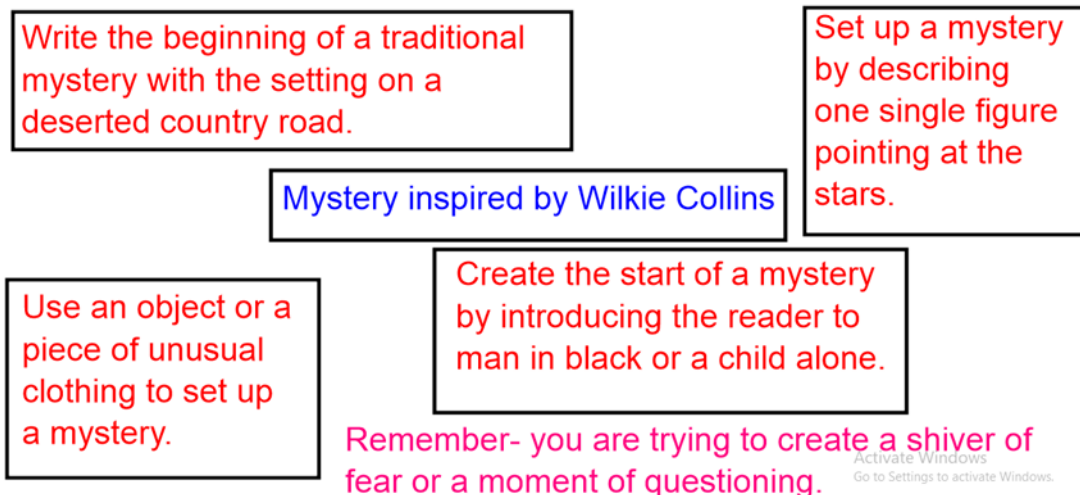
Describe in your own words a profile of the woman in white. Draw a picture of her if it helps.

Physical Features	Clothes	Overall Impression
Nervous uncertain lips	Small bag	Under pressure

Day 7 Tuesday:

Here is some advice from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: 'As a rule, the more bizarre a thing is the less mysterious it proves to be.....a commonplace face is the most difficult to identify. So, mystery does not have to come from the extraordinary. It's the questions readers are posed which start to trigger the tension!

Plan the opening paragraph of your own mystery story. Here are some ideas:



Day 8 Wednesday:

Write an introductory paragraph to your story. Here is an example:

A gentle touch brought him back from his reverie. Whipping his head around he was startled to find a young woman.

A woman in white.

Her face shone, surrounded by a glowing aura. His mouth moved but no sound came out. Then she was gone, disappeared into the shadow of the dark caused by the bruised cloud that hovered above; waiting to let fly its thousand fleets of arrows.

That woman had seemed to recognise him.....

'Sir?' A voice cut through the silence of the lonely place.

By Esme Pykett (Year 6)

Day 9 Thursday and Day 10 Friday:

You might like to watch the film trailer for the film made in 1948 and see if you can work out what the story is about.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1MdH-QMUaE>

Draw a story map of how your story would continue.

Well done Year 6, you are terrific writers!