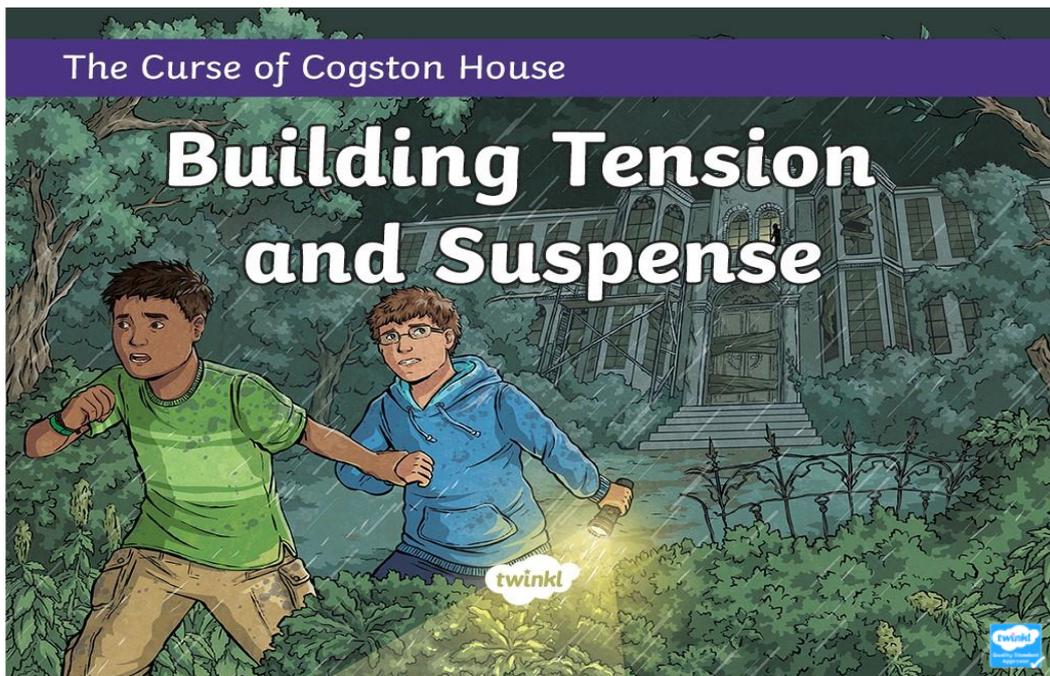


Reading Tuesday 23rd November

Learning Intention: Learning to understand the way in which tension and suspense can keep the reader engaged.

ESSENTIAL TASK 1:



What is Tension?

Tension means feeling fear, worry, nerves or pressure. You can also create tension between characters if they argue.

What is Suspense?

Suspense is something used in stories to make them mysterious or scary. Suspense means waiting for something to happen or being uncertain about what will happen.

HERE IS AN EXTRACT FROM 'THE CURSE OF COGSTON HOUSE'. MOST OF THE TENSION AND ALL OF THE SUSPENSE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE STORY.

Alice couldn't move and she was scared Then, a man started to walk down the stairs towards her.

This isn't very scary because we know exactly who is coming down the stairs straight away. The descriptions are not detailed, so although we know that Alice is scared, we don't feel scared with her.

BUILDING TENSION AND SUSPENSE

Now, read the real extract from 'The Curse of Cogston House'.

Nothing moved. Cogston House was as silent as the grave. Perhaps the only thing worse than hearing her best friend desperately calling her name was being alone in this endless quiet. Alice's eyes searched through the darkness, scouring the corridor which faded into more mirky gloom. She could make out the hallway right in front of her, the door opposite, and beyond it, the enormous winding staircase. As she looked, blinking through the tears which had begun to stream hopelessly down her face, she was met with a sight at the top of the staircase which all but turned to stone.

Some was moving.

Alice watched numbly. Her heart was in her mouth and her breath came in sharp, rattling gasps.

Descending the stairs one careful, agonising, creaking step at a time, a hunched silhouette shuffled out from the darkness

HOW DID THE EXTRACT MAKE YOU FEEL?

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR SCARY STORY:

- Keeping some things hidden makes the reader want to keep on reading to find out more!
- Use some short, sharp sentences to shock the reader. In the short sentences, giving the reader no details at all is scary a bit like being in the dark.
- Adding extra information to sentences can also make the reader wait even longer.
- There is a special piece of **punctuation** used when creating suspense. Three dots together is called an **ellipsis**. **Ellipses** show that something is coming next (like a drumroll), or sometimes that the end of the sentence is missing. (Example: *she was met with a sight at the top of the staircase which all but turned her to stone...*).
- Instead of writing 'walked', exciting synonyms can be used to show the reader exactly how the man was moving.
- The author also uses imagery. **Imagery** means any description which works to create an **image** in the reader's mind.
- The author also uses imagery. **Imagery** means any description which works to conjure up an **image** in the reader's mind. (Examples: **BANG!!!! CRASH!!!! TICK, TOCK.....**)

ESSENTIAL TASK 2:

Prompts taken from **The Curse of Cogston House**

Read the prompts and answer the questions.

1. Jack strode up an overgrown path away from the park as though relishing a mission through the jungle, dodging the occasional stinging nettle with an effortless skip or jump.

"Come on, Luca. This is going to be epic!" Dipping his head and swiping away leaves like some intrepid explorer, he manoeuvred under a tree branch which hung over the narrow track.

Luca dawdled behind. Only a few minutes earlier, he had been perfectly happy practising his limited gymnastics moves upside down on the monkey bars. Now, he was torn between making the effort to keep up with his friend and deliberately getting left behind.

"Speed up – we're nearly there!" Jack called eagerly over his shoulder.

What can you tell about Jack's personality? Explain your answer.

2. Luca wasn't at all sure that they should be leaving the park swings, where they had been allowed to hang out without their parents since both recently celebrating their eleventh birthdays in the same week.

He was even less sure that he wanted to be venturing towards the Top End, as everyone called that part of the park grounds. He spun around to look behind him. The monkey bars were now way out of sight and the watery evening sun above was being muscled out of position by ever-darkening shades of grey, layering over each other in the sky like a collage.

"Maybe it's getting too late for today," Luca suggested hopefully. He looked down towards his watch. Scowling at the time – 10:31 – he shook his wrist vigorously. Clearly, the watch had stopped working, as it was only just beginning to go dark. He was going to need a new excuse.

"We could come back tomorrow, when it's lighter. I think it's going to rain, from the look of those clouds, and Dad's making bolognese for tea. We don't want to miss that!"

Being two days older than his friend clearly gave him no superiority at all.

Can you find an example of a simile?

3. "Forget about your stomach for a minute! I can see the scaffolding through this gap!" enthused Jack, trampling undeterred over the thorny undergrowth.

Luca followed him unhappily along the gradually dwindling path. Hands up in front of himself and elbows tucked in, he was now having to place his trainers precisely onto prickly stems to pin them down with his soles and avoid any contact with his bare arms or legs.

On the other side of a tangled row of bushes, the broken-looking building loomed. Fifty-foot-high scaffolding encased the crumbling walls of Cogston House like a rusty exoskeleton. The long, metal poles, bolted together at regular right angles, seemed as though they were keeping the whole house from falling apart.

About a hundred years ago, the house had apparently been quite a grand sight, belonging to a rich family who owned the entire park. Until about thirty years ago, it had still been inhabited but for decades now, it had wasted away, shedding scraps of brickwork and hiding itself under a cloak of creeping ivy.

Even from the outside, it had a look of being infested with sadness.

What do you think the following words mean?

'enthused'

'undeterred'

4. Everyone had a story about Cogston House. No one quite knew what was true and what was rumour, and Luca didn't want to stick around to find out.

"Ow!" he squealed, as Jack reached back and hauled him through the gap he had just made in the twisted greenery. Luca rubbed at a fresh, pale scratch on his arm.

Unconcerned, Jack stood triumphantly, his hands on his hips, admiring the enormous house. His eyes swept the building as if they belonged to an ancient explorer who had just discovered a long-forgotten corner of the world.

"Told you it would be epic," Jack grinned.

"'Epic'? Looks like it's barely still standing up."

How is Jack feeling? Find some evidence to explain your answer.

5. At home, Luca had heard his stepmum say that it was about time Cogston House was renovated, and that it would be good for the area if it was properly restored with access opened up again. In reply, his dad had said that it would be better to take a wrecking ball to it, after everything that had gone on. Luca didn't know exactly what 'gone on' meant, but he was now regretting mentioning the place at all to Jack.

The house had always been there, as long as both boys could remember, but was just somewhere that they had never visited. Of course, it had been Jack's idea to go and investigate, after Luca had brought it up that day at the swings. No doubt, Jack would know some story about the place, and if he didn't, he'd be making one up anyway.

"Have you heard the story of what happened to those two girls here?"

Right on cue, thought Luca. Here it comes.

Why are the words 'right on cue' written in italics?

6. "I heard it from my cousin's next-door neighbour," Jack went on. "Her mum knew one of the girls from school, years ago, and her grandad worked in the factory that the Cogston family owned."

"What are you going on about?" Luca asked with a shake of his head, distracted by pulling furry goosegrass buds from his shoulders.

Before an answer came, the crack of snapping wood grabbed Luca's attention and he looked up, eyes widening, to see Jack grinning back at him from a narrow doorway at the side of the house. The

splintered length of rotten wood in his hand matched a large panel, daubed with graffiti, which hung limply at an angle where a proper door should have been.

“Come through here and I’ll tell you,” said Jack.

Can you find an example of onomatopoeia?

ESSENTIAL TASK 3:

Writing a Spooky Setting Description



1. Where is this setting located?	2. What might you find here?
3. What does it smell like?	4. Write a simile about this place.
5. What can you hear?	6. What can you see?

7. How does the place make you feel?	8. What effect does it have on your body?
9. What does it feel like (temperature, movement, texture)?	