

## The Dragon Machine by Helen Ward

Read the story on the Book Trust website.

### **Phase 1**

Get to know the story.

This is a narrative with a clear beginning, middle and end. There are characters and settings. There is a problem to resolve.

### **Activity 1.**

Draw a story map to show the outline of the story. Note where settings change. Note where characters arrive and leave.

Label the build-up, the problem and the resolution of the story. How does the story end?

Make notes about the main character, George.

What is he like? How do you know? Where is the evidence in the text? How does he feel? Does he feel the same way throughout the book? What changes and when?

Look at the section that describes the trouble with dragons. Notice the repetition of the phrase starting "They.... "

Look at the picture of George in the sweetshop. What do you think happened at the sweet shop?

### **Activity 2**

Write a short description of George in the sweet shop. Describe the jars of sweets on the shelves: use a list of expanded noun phrases e.g. *George's mouth watered as he examined the jars of multi-coloured, minty gobstoppers that sat on the top shelf; the boxes of sticky chocolate fudge which were placed underneath ; the delicious rhubarb and custard hard-boiled sweets that shone in the dim light of the sweet shop on the next shelf down and, finally, his gaze came to rest on his favourites: sherbet lemons!*

Choose your favourite sweets. Describe the shop counter and the lady behind the counter. Include a short conversation between George and the shop keeper. **(Remember speech punctuation – new person/new line and full punctuation for the sentences in speech marks. Look at the examples in the book if you are not sure.)**

You are going to write your own story. Follow the guidance below and write in stages, checking as you go. You should aim to write in detail and expand your ideas. The number of paragraphs is for guidance only. You should not write the whole story all at once: each section is a session of writing. You can write on a story book format on Purple Mash or in your homework book. Leave spaces for illustrations. You can design a book cover and blurb when your story is finished.

Draw a detailed, labelled diagram to show what the flying machine looks like. LABEL MOVING PARTS. How is it powered? Solar? Batteries? An old lawn mower? Pedals?



Plan your opening paragraph – set the scene and introduce your character.

1. You need to choose a main character – a child of about your age. Give your character a name, age, background and some characteristics.
2. Your character should discover a strange creature in an unlikely place and realise it is in danger. The child must rescue the creature and return it to its original home. When the child takes the creature home, they must build together a machine from

**old junk and interesting things from around the house and garden-shed to fly to the creature's land. Afterwards, the child will then return home.**

Decide where your story starts. Perhaps your character is walking home from school or is wandering along the beach....

Decide what time of day it is. Which season – is it chilly or warm?

Is your character happy or sad? Looking for a lost football or studying caterpillars? – choose a reason for your character to be on their own so they can discover the creature.

Write your paragraph and then read it through.

Check with your PIP. (Any colour will do!) *See check list below.*

#### **Paragraph 2/3/4**

Plan what happens as you discover your creature and it proves difficult to hide/feed/live with. You can have fun with this! You could take it to the library, the sweet shop, school....?

Describe the antics and chaos that ensues.

Plan/write/ check

#### **Paragraph 5/6/7**

**Plan:** How does your character now where the creature is from? You could include a map. Where was the map hidden?

Plan how your character will build the flying machine – maybe there is an old shed at the end of Grandad's garden or an old unused room in the cellar behind the changing rooms in school... you decide.

How does your character collect all the bits? Where do they come from? Behind the shed? Under the stairs? Next door's skip? What do they collect? An old bike? An old fan / A broken radio?

How does your character know what to do? old books and magazines? Years of watching mum or dad in the work shop? Do they look it up on line?

Plan/write/ check

#### **Paragraph 8/9/10**

Decide when your character will set off – in the middle of the night? Early morning?

How does take off go? Is it hard to steer to begin with? Is it a bumpy ride? Describe the scene below and the starry sky above or the sunrise. Are there shocks or surprises along the way?

Plan/write/ check

#### **Resolution**

Your character must land and leave the creature behind. How does this happen? Your character needs to return home. What happens when the fly back? DOES LIFE RETURN TO NORMAL?

Plan/write/ check

**End**

How will your story finish? How is your character changed by the experience? What memories do they have?  
Plan/write/ check

**Check list for writing. Make sure you look for these things when you PIP:**

Check the story has a logic and makes sense.

**I need a range of punctuation:**

- Capital letters for proper nouns/full stops or exclamation mark for end of sentences;
- Question mark for asking sentences;
- Inverted commas for speech and new character /new line. Link parts of speech sentences together with commas.
- Sentences with colon (write a sentence: give an illustration)
- Sentences with semi-colon (write two main clauses that are very similar and join with a semicolon)
- List with commas (or semi-colons for expanded items in the list)
- Dashes or brackets or commas to show parenthesis

Check – Do not tell the story by writing in speech alone. There should be description and action and characters should only talk to each other to add to the story and move it on (Don't let your characters stand around chatting!)

**I need descriptive language:** ADVERBS ADJECTIVES SIMILE METAPHOR

**I can link ideas together in paragraphs:** so, as, because, when, but therefore, afterwards, finally, before long....

I need to change and up-grade vocabulary and sentence structures as I check. I should use a range of sentences: simple/compound/complex; command/question/statement. I should aim to improve my writing.

I can check for spelling - look for patterns and roots of the word – are there prefixes and suffix patterns I need to look out for? Ask a family friend to help you if you find checking difficult. Read your story to them and you will spot things you need to change.