

In this extract <https://blog.whsmith.co.uk/greg-james-and-chris-smith-read-an-extract-from-kid-normal/>, the authors Chris Smith and Greg James read a passage from the start of Kid Normal 1 where Murph finds himself in a new class with new classmates but no one has explained what the subject is or what he is supposed to do. As the passage develops, Murph has to try and work out, from the clues, what the lesson is about and try to make sense of a series of strange events in order to work out what he is supposed to contribute to Mr Flash's class when it is his turn.

Collect a set of words to describe how Murph feels.

Baffled, puzzled, perplexed,

Think about what might have helped Murph to feel more confident before he went into class and during the lesson.

Think of 3 things that could help and list them in order of importance.

The pupils in the class are all demonstrating their super power or "Cape" (capability). Murph has no idea and thinks a cape is a cloak! The students are not very good at their super powers and their super powers are quite odd so poor Murph can't really work out what they are doing and why. This makes the story quite funny and the reader enjoys Murph's confusion whilst also feeling confused themselves. The reader can see the situation from Murph's point of view.

Notice in the extract how Greg James reads the part of the teacher and also supplies facial expressions to illustrate the ideas in the book. He is able to do this because the text gives him instructions by describing the characters. Mary doesn't speak to Murph but her eye brows and her expression communicate her thoughts.

In this extract, <https://www.thebookseller.com/insight/greg-james-and-chris-smith-kid-normal-569831#> Chris Smith and Greg James explain how they approached writing the book.

How did you come up with the characters' super powers?

When someone on TV or in comics gets a super power, it always seems to be really useful, doesn't it? And when they're bitten by a radioactive animal, they only get the really useful attributes of that animal. You never see Cat Woman licking her own bottom and sleeping on a radiator, do you? So we thought: why don't people get weird and useless powers as well? What if you just had the ability to shoot flowers out of your hands, and had to go to school to learn to control it in case you got locked up? Coming up with incredible and silly powers was one of the most fun parts.

Imagine you are new to a school, joining in a lesson for the first time where people rehearse their superpower homework and you are totally unaware of what is going on.

1. Think of a teacher for a lesson at this new school. The teacher might be strict and shouty or sweet and softly-spoken; the teacher might be mean and grumpy or very kind and understanding. Decide a few characteristics for the teacher. **Write them down in note form.**

2. Choose the setting for the lesson. Is it a tidy room with tables in rows and books neatly stacked or is it a dusty, untidy grot spot with mismatched tables and chairs and a view out over the school dustbins? **Make a few notes for your setting description.**
3. Choose a couple of characters in the class with you. You are the normal one but you don't know what is going on. What might the strange superpowers be of the children about to demonstrate their progress so far? What do they do? Describe them. Remember, the superpowers have to be weird and useless. **Make a few character notes about each character**

Now: You are going to write a short part of a story where you are the new person and you are in a lesson for the first time, you don't know what is happening but you realise that, in a moment you will be called upon to show what you did for your homework. **Make sure the reader understands how puzzled you are about what is going on**

You should include description of the new people you meet in the lesson and describe their totally weird and useless super powers. Enjoy this and make it funny! You should also describe the teacher and show their characteristics in the way they react.

You can end at the point when you realise the teacher is talking to you and it is your turn. You stand and turn to the class.....

Check you describe the place and the people, the events and your confusion. You can use speech to move the story along but remember to punctuate correctly (new person, new line, inverted commas around the words spoken and punctuation for the speech sentences) *but don't allow your main character to talk to themselves throughout.*

Editing

When you have written your first draft, go back through it and check it all makes sense.

Look for sentence punctuation. Check you have used “ ” , ; ! () - ? ... correctly.

Go back through and check spelling – you should have underlined words you were not sure about so you can check them when editing. For example, look for the double consonant rule and check rules for adding endings.

Read your writing aloud and listen to it. Do you like it? Maybe read it to someone. Do they laugh? It is meant to be funny! Ask them to tell you what they like to say what works well and how it would be even better if.....