

Year 6 Writing Task Week 3: 11th May 2020

For our writing unit this half term, we are going to be exploring doors as portals. Have you ever looked at a door and wondered what might be on the other side? Where it may lead? What may be hiding within? At first glance, a door is just a piece of wood, plastic or metal that can be opened and closed. But in the hands of a writer, a door represents a world of possibility.

There are a few activities to do before completing your two **compulsory** writing tasks on Purple Mash. The skill you are looking at this week is semi-colons. We have looked at this before in English lessons, but you may find this video useful to consolidate your understanding:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zvwwxnb/articles/zshfdxs>

This website provides a bit more information if you are still unsure:

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/what-is-a-semi-colon>

Tasks:

- Read the extract below from *The Snow-Walker's Son* by Catherine Fisher. If you'd rather, you can listen to it being read aloud at <https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/doors>
- Answer the comprehension questions in your home learning exercise books.

The door was the last one in the corridor.

As the flames flickered over it, they showed it was barred; a hefty iron chain hung across it, and the mud floor beneath was red with rust that had flaked off in the long years of locking and unlocking.

The keeper hung his lantern on a nail, took the key from a dirty string around his neck, and fitted it into the keyhole. Then he looked behind him.

'Get on with it!' the big man growled. 'Let me see what she keeps in there!'

The keeper grinned; he knew fear when he heard it. With both hands he turned the key, then tugged out the red chain in a shower of rust and pushed the door. It opened, just a fraction. Darkness and a damp smell oozed through the black slit.

He stepped well back, handed the stranger the lantern, and jerked his head. He had no tongue to speak with; she'd made sure he kept her secrets.

The stranger hesitated; a draught moved his hair and he gazed back up the stone passageway as if he longed suddenly for warmth and light. And from what I've heard, the keeper thought, you won't be seeing much of those ever again.

Then the man held up the lantern and pushed the door. The keeper watched his face intently in the red glow, and his great hand, as it clutched a luck-stone that swung at his neck. The man went in, slowly. The door closed.

1. **The door was the last one in the corridor.** What is the significance of the word last? Can you think of another context where the word last has a significant meaning e.g. the last chance.
2. How do the opening lines (in bold) set the mood of the story? What are your immediate impressions?
3. Having spent a great deal of time reflecting on the significance of doors and their appearance, what does this description suggest to you?

4. Why has Fisher described the iron chain as being 'hefty' What could the significance of this word be in the context of the story?
5. ***Darkness and a damp smell oozed through the black slit.*** How does this make you feel as a reader? What is the relevance of both darkness and a damp smell? Do either of these surprise you; if so, why?

Compulsory Writing Tasks:

- **Purple Mash Task 1: Semi-Colons.**

Look at the use of semi-colons from the extract in the following sentences:

The keeper grinned; he knew fear when he heard it.

He had no tongue to speak with; she'd made sure he kept her secrets.

On the 2Do set on Purple Mash, answer the following question and complete the following task:

Question: In your opinion, why has she made the choice to use a semi-colon in these sentences and what impact does it have on you as the reader?

Task: Write three sentences of your own that use a semi-colon instead of a conjunction effectively.

- **Purple Mash Task 2: Continue the story.** Continue writing the story, following on from ***'The door closed.'*** It will help to re-read or re-listen to the extract and jot some ideas down about what might happen next – you could create a small plan or mind map in your home learning exercise book to help. Once you are ready, continue the story on the 2Do set on Purple Mash. Use the checklist to help you ensure you've included everything I'm looking for. Remember, your skill for this week is semi-colons. If you want to challenge yourself, see if you can include one of our previous skills, colons, in your writing.