



Toolkit Focus: Action

To create action that the reader can imagine, which sounds real and using it to intrigue, you might want to:

EYFS	Year 1 & Year 2	Year 3 & Year 4	Year 5 & Year 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use time openers to advance the story, <i>e.g. first, next, after that, then, finally.</i> • Use action verbs, <i>e.g. jumped, crashed, pounded, dashed, leapt, grab, grip, chase</i> • Use sound effects of the action <i>e.g. The crocodile jaws snapped. The rocks were crashing.</i> • Use a wordless picture book and discuss what a character might be doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on action with a sentence of 3 verbs, <i>e.g. He ran down the lane, leapt over the wall and screamed!</i> • Carefully selected powerful verbs, <i>e.g. fell → plunged, plummeted, tumbled, descended</i> • Use adverbs to add detail about how a character moves <i>e.g. She tiptoed quietly. He growled aggressively. Gently, the branches swayed.</i> • Use similes to create atmosphere <i>e.g. The trees lined the streets like an army.</i> • Use onomatopoeia to interrupt and interject, <i>e.g. Snap!</i> • Use a range of dramatic fronted adverbials to advance the action, <i>e.g. At that moment...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Show’ not ‘tell’ – reveal or hint at a character’s feelings through their actions, <i>e.g. trudged, tiptoed, glanced, sighed</i> • Use personification <i>e.g. The bushes seemed like they were holding their breath.</i> • Use a variety of progressive ‘-ing’ openers to drop the reader straight into the action, <i>e.g. Leaping out from behind the car...</i> • Extend the action using an ‘-ing’ clause, <i>e.g. The trees lined the streets like an army, standing to attention.</i> • Vary sentence length to affect the reader, <i>e.g. short punchy sentences to build tension and pace: The door slammed shut. He froze. Disaster struck. They ran. etc.</i> • Use wider range of dramatic fronted adverbials to advance the action, <i>e.g. In an instant... Without warning... To her amazement... Just then... All of a sudden...</i> • Double Dilemma – explain the implications of the problem/action <i>e.g. She was stuck, no-one could help now</i> • Use a question to hook/interest the reader <i>e.g. Would she be able to stop? Would the dog ever stop barking?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a character’s reaction or the author’s comments to show the effect of a description, <i>e.g. Joanna shuddered.</i> • Infer the character’s feelings (show don’t tell), <i>e.g. Moving closer, James’ eyes widened as he gasped.</i> • Suggest the character’s attitude linked the action <i>e.g. Trembling, James clenched his fists and demanded the ghosts left him alone.</i> • Mirror the character’s feelings through the setting, <i>e.g. The murky water lay dead before him.</i> • Push for vocabulary that powerfully connects to the desired mood and feeling, <i>e.g. mocking, dominating.</i> • Use speech to advance the action and show emotion, <i>e.g. “Come back you scoundrel!”</i> • Use repetition to build tension whilst advancing the action, <i>e.g. Towards the lake... Towards the bowl... Towards my fish!</i> • Show action by describing what happens and reactions.



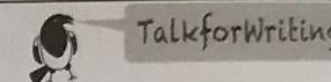
Toolkit Focus: Action

	<i>Suddenly...</i> <i>Unfortunately</i>		
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Useful teaching ideas:



Useful ideas for teaching action – always co-construct the toolkit with the class

Model all aspects of the toolkit and display word banks, sentences and ideas on prompt cards, washing lines or learning walls

N/R	Y1/2 As in N/R plus:	Y3/4 As in Y1/2 plus:	Y5/6 As in Y3/4 plus:
<p>Play 'Simon Says' with a variety of new verbs – link actions to strengthen understanding</p> <p>Use simple story mountain to orally invent 5-part stories, sometimes starting and ending in the same place</p> <p>Develop the use of the 5 senses and related language through specific experiences, e.g. feely bag, curiosity corner, nature table, nature walks, etc.</p> <p>Use drama to bring scenarios to life</p> <p>Guided discussion, focused on a stimulus with word gathering</p> <p>Constant modeling of language associated with action</p>	<p>Use drama to model how to imply feelings through actions</p> <p>Train children to generate language associated with action and add to their word banks with new vocabulary</p> <p>Use collections to reinforce language, e.g. <i>synonyms for walk, run, said, looked, etc.</i></p> <p>Collect interesting action words and sentences from quality books and 'bank' for future use</p> <p>Use short-burst writing to describe action and then use this to support related action writing</p>	<p>Use drama to model how to imply feelings through actions</p> <p>Build banks of actions that we associate with humans and apply to something non-human</p> <p>Narrate a drama lesson, manipulating the position of the progressive verb and discuss how it alters the meaning</p> <p>Play with sentence length and discuss how it changes the impact on the reader</p> <p>Brainstorm banks of vocabulary, list and use when writing</p> <p>Use magpie books and boards to gather great descriptions from quality books</p>	<p>Avoid overwriting. Learn how to trim/tighten sentences to maximise effect</p> <p>Brainstorm lists of emotions and experiment connecting these to settings</p> <p>Discuss how good authors balance description and action</p> <p>Gather creative action into banks and discuss effects on the reader</p> <p>Map, learn and write in the style of the best action passages available, e.g. opening of <i>Cogheart</i></p> <p>Gather specific word banks through short-burst writing before writing narrative</p> <p>Draw on previous writing and raid for effective action and reaction</p>