Going Solo
Green Mamba

Overview

Learning objective
• To explore the features of suspense writing.

Learning outcome
• To write an ending to the Green Mamba story.

Book reference
• The Green Mamba chapter up to page 48: “He took a step forward towards the snake, holding the pole out in front of him.”

Cross-curricular link
• Literacy, Drama, Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship.

Resources
• Film showing examples of suspense.

Starter

• Tell the class a ghost story, using lots of pauses and repetition.
• Ask the class what made the telling of the story exciting and scary.

Main teaching activity

• Use the class responses to identify features of suspense writing:
  - Lots of pauses – shown through lots of commas, short paragraphs, short sentences.
  - Repetition.
  - Unanswered questions.
  - Setting.
A minute went by... two minutes...three... four... five. Nobody moved. There was death in that room. The air was heavy with death and the snake-man stood as motionless as a pillar of stone, with the long rod held out in front of him.

And still he waited. Another minute... and another... and another.

Discuss how this extract creates suspense through use of language, such as:
- Pauses through short paragraphing and lots of punctuation.
- Repetition.
- Setting – the Narrator is unable to see everything that is going on as he is outside.
- Unanswered questions – we do not know where the snake is.

• Read the extract from “The snake-man and Fuller and I walked over the grass towards the house” to “He took a step forward towards the snake, holding the pole out in front of him.”
• Pairs turn to each other and continue the story.
• Independently, the children write a story using Roald Dahl’s style. What happens to the Snake-Man and the green mamba?
• The story must use the features of suspense writing.
Plenary

- The children read their stories to the rest of the class.

Other activities

- Watch a short clip of a B-Movie (low budget) suspense thriller. Ask the class what makes it scary and use the answers (waiting, pausing, etc) to translate to writing style (short sentences, lots of punctuation, etc).
- Pairs act out role play versions of their stories.
- The children discuss their greatest fear (spiders, rats?) and write their own suspense story about the confrontation with the fear.
- Hold a class discussion on how to overcome fear.