English narrative workbook S3

Name:				
Class:				

Overview

During this sequence of learning you will explore what narrative is and why it is important to understand it both for your writing, reading and in everyday life.

Resources

Everyday you:

- will need an adult so you have the opportunity to discuss elements of your work.
 Your adult can debate elements of the tasks with you, and you can explain concepts
 and tasks to them. Your adult will also check your work and can help you if you need
 it. Adults come in handy at many times, and when you are working, your adult can
 bounce ideas around with you and critically question your current thoughts and
 ideas. Adults can be good like that.
- will need access to stationery. This will include pens, coloured pencils, textas, highlighters, scissors and glue.
- will need to use the workbook your teacher has sent home with you, or some paper.
- are expected to engage in a reading task, and a writing task.
- are expected to write legibly and present your work just as well as you would to your teacher in school. Your teacher's bookwork expectations are also expected here too.
- are encouraged to engage, read and critically think about texts from a wide range of sources. This means your teacher wants you to read a range of non-fiction and fiction, across a variety of subjects, with different forms and features. This means texts like: plays, movies, comics, novels, novellas (that's fancy for short stories), picture books, poems, and everyday texts like: ads that are print and digital, text messages, menus and timetables. It has been said reading opens a whole world to you from your chair, and there may be some truth in that go and test that theory!



Texts

Printed and accompanying this workbook

- 'The Flying Test' by Sarah Matson from The School Magazine
- 'Midnight in Gnome City' by Terry Lavelle
- 'April Fool' by Katherine Battersby from The School Magazine (optional)

Included in this booklet

'A picnic for the tortoise family' a jumbled narrative

Resources

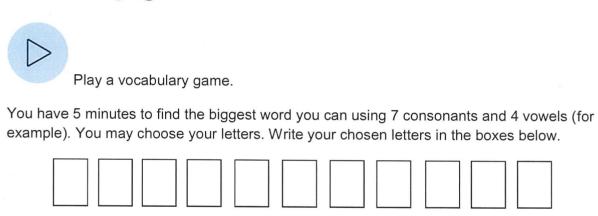
- Stationery (pens, pencils, coloured pencils, highlighters)
- Blank workbook
- Adult support (writing, spelling, discussion)

Activity 1

During this activity you will explore what narrative is and why it is important to understand it both for your writing and in everyday life.

Resources – spelling words and activities, a pencil or pen, adult support (spelling and discussion), narrative video script. If you have access to the internet you may wish to watch the video using this link https://vimeo.com/398136873.)

Warm up game



Tuning in

Think about what you know about narrative. What is narrative? Why is narrative useful? How can knowing about this help me? Read this script of the video on narrative.

NARRATIVE VIDEO SCRIPT

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MR CRANNA is drawing in his sketchbook as STUDENT 1 runs in shocked and horrified, clutching their head.

STUDENT 1

Help! It's drawn blood!

Mr Cranna looks up from his sketch book.

MR CRANNA

What has?

STUDENT 1

Out there!

STUDENT 1 points O/S. MR CRANNA looks in the direction STUDENT 1 is pointing.

MR CRANNA

Where?

STUDENT 1

It flew down!

MR CRANNA

What flew down? From where? You're not making any sense.

STUDENT 1

Why not?

MR CRANNA

Because you haven't told me what's happened in a way I can understand. Your thoughts aren't organised and I can't make sense of them.

STUDENT 1

How do I make you understand?

MR CRANNA

Why don't you try telling me what happened in a narrative form?

SFX: record scratch. STUDENT 1 looks to camera, thoroughly confused.

STUDENT 1

Er, what's narrative?

CLOSE ON MR CRANNA as he addresses camera.

MR CRANNA

Narrative is the way we organise thoughts and make sense of things that happen to us or to other people.

WIDE ON MR CRANNA.

STUDENT 1

Can you help me make what happened to me into a narrative?

MR CRANNA

Sure. Why don't you start by telling me where you were when this happened?

STUDENT 1

I was in the park.

MR CRANNA

Okay, So the narrative takes place in the park.

Mr Cranna draws a picture of Student 1 in the park. He blue tacks it on the wall behind him.

MR CRANNA

Got it! What where you doing in the park?

STUDENT 1

I was skipping with the skipping rope under the big gum tree.

MR CRANNA

Okay...

Mr Cranna draws a picture of Student 1 skipping with a rope under a big gum tree. He blue tacks the picture on the wall.

MR CRANNA

Okay, what happened next?

STUDENT 1

Something hit me on the head. I was bleeding. It really hurt.

Mr Cranna draws a picture of Student 1 clutching their head and blue tacks it on the wall behind him.

MR CRANNA

How did you feel?

STUDENT 1

I was freaked out. It was such a shock. I didn't know what had hit me!

Mr Cranna draws a picture of Student 1 looking up at the tree in shock and blue tacks it on the wall behind him.

MR CRANNA

Hmm, did you hear anything before you were hit?

STUDENT 1

I heard a swooshing, wooshing, flapping sound. Then a squawk and smack! Something hit me on the skull!

MR CRANNA

Interesting...

Mr Cranna draws a picture of Student 1 hearing a swooshing flapping sound while skipping the rope. He blue tacks the picture on the wall behind him.

Mr Cranna looks at all the pictures on the wall and starts arranging them into order.

MR CRANNA

So you were in the park, skipping with a rope under the big gum tree. Then you...

He moves the picture of STUDENT 1 hearing the flapping sound to be third in the sequence.

MR CRANNA

...heard a swooshing, wooshing flapping sound and smack, something hit you on the head but we don't know what. It hurt, so you clutched your head and then you felt shocked because you didn't know what had hit you.

STUDENT 1

That's right!

MR CRANNA

I wonder what it was... When did this happen?

STUDENT 1

Today. At lunchtime.

MR CRANNA

Today, at lunch... what's special about today? (thinks) Well, it's spring... you were under a tree... you heard a flapping sound... oh I know!

Mr Cranna draws a picture of a magpie dive bombing STUDENT 1. He blue tacks it on the wall in between the picture of STUDENT 1 hearing the swooshing, and STUDENT 1 clutching their head.

MR CRANNA

You must've been pecked by a magpie! It's spring, which means its nesting season for magpies. They often swoop unsuspecting humans who they think are a threat to their babies. There must have been a magpie nest in the tree you were skipping underneath!

STUDENT 1

Wow, it's all making sense now!

MR CRANNA

Because you've organised your thoughts in a narrative form. You've made a story.

Mr Cranna admires his drawings.

MR CRANNA

If it's spring, someone else might get swooped by a magpie. We should put this narrative in the magazine.

STUDENT 1

But don't narratives usually have a meaning? Or a moral?

MR CRANNA

Yes...

STUDENT 1

So I guess the moral of my narrative is don't forget to wear your zip tie hat during magpie season!

STUDENT 1 puts on a helmet covered in zip ties.

MR CRANNA

Excellent!

Mr Cranna looks at his drawings again.

MR CRANNA

This is good inspiration for my next comic. If it hadn't been a magpie that hit you, I wonder what it could have been...

Mr Cranna takes down the drawing of the dive bombing magpie. They all start thinking...

Task 1

Think about what you know about narrative. What questions do you have? Write them here.
Some of the words are missing from this definition of 'narrative'. Can you use the words in the box below to complete this passage? Once you have filled in the missing words read the passage out loud to make sure it makes sense. Check to make sure you have spelt all the words correctly.
Narrative is the way we our thoughts and sense of things that happen to us or to other Narrative is a part of life and also helps us to create texts by using a recognisable Narratives usually have a meaning or a
When we use the word '' we can be talking about a itself or the conventions used to create it. These conventions are adapted for different text forms such as a novel, or advertisement.
narrative, people, organise, recognisable, moral, everyday, make, comic, structure, story

Task 2

Using a variety of sentence structures create texts that are more interesting and paint a vivid picture in the reader's head. You can enhance your writing by using sentence structures (simple, compound or complex) for effect.

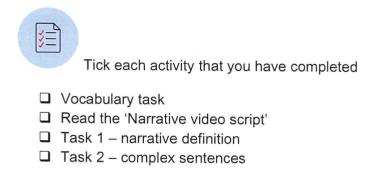
One way to create a complex sentence is to begin the sentence with a word that ends with 'ing' or 'ed'

For example:

- Slithering down the trunk of the tree, I ripped my best pants.
- Hoping to escape the teacher's attention, Matt crawled into the classroom.
- Impressed by the ceremony, we left the room in silence.
- Overjoyed with his present, Omar hugged his grandmother.

ose your vocabulary words from your spelling list to write 3-5 complex sentences.

Check your work



Reflection

Think about what you have learnt in this activity. Use this structure to guide your reflection.

3		
things I learnt today		
2		
things I want to know more about		
1		
question I still have		

Extension activity

If you would like to continue learning you can read a story of your own choice. Think about how what you have learn about narrative might connect to the text you are reading. Discuss your connections with someone else, giving them examples from your reading.

Activity 2

During this activity you will explore what narrative is and how we can recognise and identify narrative conventions and language conventions.

Resources – The Flying Test' by Sarah Matson (provided with the workbook), narrative video script (in Activity 1), pencil/pen, highlighter or coloured pencils, adult support (writing and discussion).

Warm up game



Play a vocabulary game.

Choose a word from your spelling list or select a word from the list below. Find as many smaller words within this word as you can. The words can be made by shuffling around the letters.

For example, in the word 'because', we can find the words: be, cause, sauce, see, use and so on.

jurisdiction

sustainability

parliament

collection

kindness

Tuning in

(<u>)</u>	Think about what you know about narrative. What questions do you still have?
Record th	nem here.

Read 'The Flying Test' by Sarah Matson from The School Magazine. This narrative came separately with your workbook. You may want to compare the 'Narrative video script' and 'The Flying Test' by placing them side by side as you read. Consider the following questions while you read.

Compare this narrative to the script you read yesterday? How are they different? Why?

Task 1

Write your answer to these questions and highlight are evidence for your answer.	parts of 'The F	Tying Test' that
are evidence for your answer.		
What do you notice is different about this narrative from the so	ript you read y	yesterday?
	19.	
		4
		2
Why do you think they are different?		

What are conventions?

You will have noticed that these two narratives, the 'Narrative video script' and 'The Flying Test', look very different. Some parts remain the same; they each have an orientation, series of events, complication and resolution. However, some things are different because scripts and short stories use some different conventions

Let's create a definition for conventions together.

Some of the words are missing from this definition of 'narrative'. Can you use the words in the box below to complete this passage? Once you have filled in the missing words read the passage out loud to make sure it makes sense. Check to make sure you have spelt all the words correctly.

Narratives use conventions that are different kinds of texts. We recognise an orientation and resolution in written text, comics even though they might be constructed in different was a second or constructed in different was a second or constructed or constructe	, and film
Conventions can be thought of as elements of spee and visual language that in recognisable patterns. We recognise a wave as a way, a paragraph as a grouping of one in CAPITALISATION as in writing.	ay to
These shared ways of are conventions that change as the way we communica adapts to our over time.	te
complication, recognisable, yelling, communicating, different, writing, combine needs	e, hello,

Task 2

Use your vocabulary words to write a paragraph in your workbook. A paragraph is a common text convention! Make sure your work is written neatly and the spelling is correct. Ask an adult to check your work.

Check your work

Tick each activity that you have completed

- □ Vocabulary task
- ☐ Read 'The Flying Test' by Sarah Matson
- ☐ Task 1 questions and conventions
- ☐ Task 2 paragraph activity

Reflection

Think about what you have learnt in this activity. Use the two stars and a wish structure to guide your reflection.

Star Something that went well!	Star Something that went well!	Wish A goal for next time

Extension activity

If you would like to learn more, you can read a narrative of your own choice and see if you can identify some conventions in your reading.

Title of narrative:

What conventions did you notice? If you don't know how to describe them just copy them here.								

Activity 3

During this activity you will explore the structure of narratives and rhetorical questions.

Resources: scissors, glue, copy of 'Midnight in Gnome City' by Terry Lavelle from The School Magazine (included separate from this workbook), jumbled narrative 'A picnic for the tortoise family', copy of 'April Fool' by Katherine Battersby from The School Magazine (optional).

Warm up game

Play a vocabulary game.

Before reading a text, brainstorm predicted vocabulary using the clues from the front cover, title, prior knowledge of the author or from scanning the text for sub-headings, diagrams and so on. Add any unfamiliar and important vocabulary to this brainstorm during reading and use the dictionary to define the words.

Tuning in - Reading



Read 'Midnight in Gnome City'. Consider these questions as you read.

What has been included in the orientation?

How are the characters developed throughout the text?

What are the complications?

How are the complications resolved?

Why has the author started with a question?

Is there a sequence of events that are logical?

Task 1 – Structure of a narrative



Read the information below.

Structure of a narrative

Purpose

A narrative's purpose is to entertain, stimulate, motivate, guide or teach.

Structure

Orientation – Introduce the characters and describe the setting (time and place).

Complication – Introduce a situation that changes the events and causes a problem for one or more of the characters.

Resolution – Resolve the problem so things are back to normal even though changes have occurred.

Optional – show how the character has changed and what has been learnt.

What could be included?

- Hook to capture the reader's attention
- Descriptive language Show, don't tell
- Conversation
- Variety of sentence beginnings
- Figurative language, could include similes, metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification

Jumbled Narrative

Place the jumbled narrative text, 'A Picnic for the Tortoise Family' from The School Magazine, in the correct order, looking at orientation (setting, time, characters), complication and resolution. Cut and glue in correct order or label paragraphs.

A Picnic For the Tortoise Family from The School Magazine

English folktale retold by Karen Jameyson

Baby Tortoise went to find a blanket to go on the ground. Father and Mother Tortoise got the picnic hamper out. Then they filled it with all their goodies: lemonade, strawberries, grapes, hard-boiled eggs, sandwiches, carrots, cheese, bread and tinned applesauce. They added some carrot cake and chocolate brownies too. After about three months, they were finally ready to go.

Off they went. They walked. They walked some more. (Did I mention that tortoises aren't too quick?) They kept walking. After about a year, they needed a break and stopped under a shady old tree.

Once they were rested, they set off again and walked and walked and walked.

Finally, in a few years, they got to the pretty little park and put the hamper down.

ONCE UPON A TIME Mother Tortoise, Father Tortoise and Baby Tortoise decided to have themselves a lovely picnic. Now tortoises are not known for speed, so it took them some time to plan where to have the picnic. But finally they decided on a pretty little park, even though it was quite a way away. Then they organised the things they needed to take along.

As they'd said, Mother and Father waited. They waited a month. They waited a year. They waited three years!

'My goodness, my tummy is rumbling,' said Mother Tortoise. 'But I know we promised to wait.'

So they waited some more. After five years, Father Tortoise said, 'I wonder if he decided to have a snack at home before coming back? Well, we're hungry too. Perhaps we can have just a few strawberries while we wait.'

'Yes,' agreed Mother Tortoise. 'Surely a few strawberries won't matter.'

So they reached for the strawberries. But just as they were about to pop a few in their mouths, they heard a familiar voice.

'I knew you wouldn't wait for me!' It was Baby Tortoise, who'd been hiding behind a rock all that time. 'Just as well I didn't go back to get those plates!'

'Whew!' said Father. 'All that walking has made me very hungry.'

'Well, it won't be long now,' Mother Tortoise told him.

'We'll just get these delicious things unpacked.'

So they took everything out and put it all on the picnic blanket. Did I say everything? Well, almost everything. Unfortunately, they'd forgotten to bring the plates.

'Oh dear!' exclaimed Mother Tortoise. 'Well, Baby Tortoise, you'll just have to go fetch them for us. We can't enjoy our picnic without plates.'

'But I don't want to go back all the way!' whined Baby Tortoise. 'You'll eat everything before I get back!'

Task 2 – Rhetorical Questions



A rhetorical question is a question that is asked, but there is no need to reply. An author will use rhetorical questions to make a point, engage the reader and to get the audience thinking.

Examples of rhetorical questions:

Do I look like I was born yesterday?

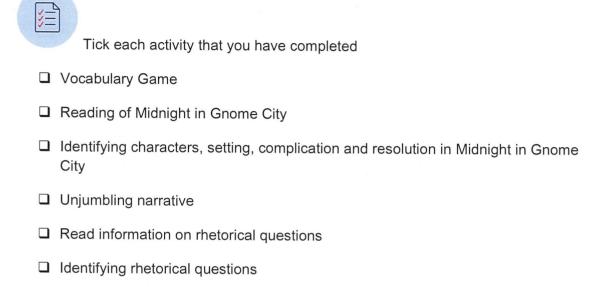
How would you feel if your house was full at rats?

Why don't kids wear their helmets?

Task: Identify and record four rhetorical questions in Midnight in Gnome City

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Check your work



Reflection

Reflect on your learning so far using these questions to structure your thinking.

Think of a book that you have enjoyed reading.

Think about the characters and setting in this book.

Are the characters, time and setting introduced at the start or throughout the story?

Are the problems resolved at the end of the story?

Record your thoughts below.

Extension activity

If you wish to keep learning, read 'April Fool' by Katherine Battersby from The School Magazine.

Can you identify the orientation, complication and resolution for this text?

Write on the story to show your thinking about the structure of this text.

Explain below why you think the author has structured their narrative this way?

Activity 4

During this activity you will explore the structure of a narrative and apostrophe of possession.

Resources – copy of 'Midnight in Gnome City' by Terry Lavelle from The School Magazine (included separate from this workbook), highlighters, pen/pencil.

Warm up game



Play a vocabulary game.

You have 5 minutes to find the biggest word you can using 7 consonants and 4 vowels (for example). You may choose your letters. Write your chosen letters in the boxes below.

		1 1			

Tuning in



Continue reading or re-read Midnight in Gnome City.

Consider these questions as you read:

How has the author engaged you through the characters, events and place?

Is there a moral to the story?

What has the character learnt from the events?

Task 1 – Structure of a narrative



Using Midnight in Gnome City, as the stimulus,

- Highlight the characters, time and setting in one colour
- Highlight the problems faced by the character in a different colour
- Highlight the resolution in a third colour

Task 2 – apostrophe of possession

An apostrophe of possession is normally used with the letter s to show ownership or possession.

Examples:

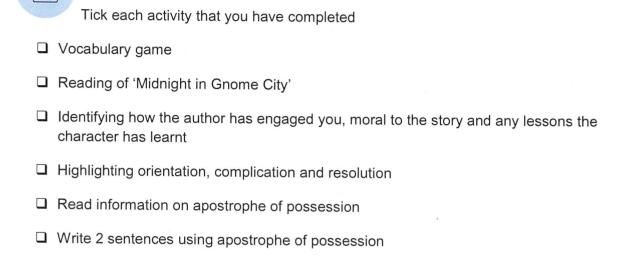
- Most of the library's books were destroyed by fire. (The library owns the books)
- Mary's paintings are amazing. (Mary owns the painting)

Your turn

1.	Using the text 'N apostrophe of po	fidnight in Gnome ossession in the te	City', highlig ext. Example:	ht and rewrit neighbour's	e below 5 ex	xamples of
	•					
	•					
	•					
	•					
	•					

- 2. Write two sentences that use an apostrophe of possession. Example: Declan's birthday is tomorrow.
- Explain why is it important to include apostrophe of possession?

Check your work



Reflection



The beginning of a story usually introduces main characters, the setting, and a possible problem.

This 'hooks' the reader and they want to read on. However, the start of this story hooks the reader by asking direct questions, then describes a sensation caused by something crawling over the main character's ankle.

This makes the reader sit up and take notice!

Can you think of a text that has hooked you from the start?

How did the author hook you? Discuss with someone else and record your thoughts below.

Extension activity

If you would like to learn more, you can experiment writing 'hooks' that will grab the reader's attention.

Have a look at texts you have at home to see what hooks the author has used.

Does the author always include the setting and introduction of characters at the beginning of the text?

Practise writing a few 'hooks' below

Activity 5

During this activity you will apply what you have learnt about narrative structure and conventions to your own writing.



Resources - pen/pencil

Warm up game

See how many questions you can answer in this quiz. Select the answer that is the most correct.

The word narrative can be used to describe

- o a story
- o the conventions used to communicate a story
- o a movie
- o all of the above.

Narrative structure might be described as

- o a beginning, middle and end
- o an orientation, complication and resolution
- o a way to organise your story to help your audience
- all of the above.

An orientation usually includes

- the problem and the resolution
- characters and setting
- setting and resolution
- o all of the above.

Authors may use rhetorical questions to

- o find out the answer to something they don't understand
- get their audience thinking and interested in the story
- o get the audience to talk out loud as they read
- all of the above

Tuning in



Respond to this writing stimulus:



Task 1

Apply what you have learnt about narrative. You may use the image above to inspire your story. Remember to include an orientation, complication and resolution.	
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AND	
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Check your work



Tick each activity that you have completed

- ☐ Warm up quiz
- ☐ A short story

Reflection

Think about what you have learnt in this activity. Use the two stars and a wish structure to guide your reflection.

Star Something that went well!	Star Something that went well!	Wish A goal for next time

Extension activity

If you would like to rework the story you have written into a play consider some of these changes to the conventions that you use.

Written in prose	Written as a play
	INT. CLASSROOM - DAY
	MR CRANNA is drawing in his sketchbook as STUDENT 1 runs in shocked and horrified, clutching their head.
Mr Cranna sits quietly drawing as the sun streams in through the window. This quiet classroom an unusual moment in his day. Jacinda runs in holding her head, with her clothing and hair rumpled.	STUDENT 1 Help! It's drawn blood!
"Help! It's drawn blood!" Jacinda cried shocked and horrified.	Mr Cranna looks up from his sketch
"What has?" Mr Cranna replies, looking up from his sketch book.	MR CRANNA
"Out there!" Jacinda looks confused and points outside.	What has?
	STUDENT 1 Out there!
	STUDENT 1 points O/S. MR CRANNA looks in the direction STUDENT 1 is pointing.

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The Flying Test

story by Sara Matson, illustrated by Douglas Holgate

'Today is 20 April 3012,' the newscaster announced. 'In top news this morning, Willis Everson returns to Earth for the last time today. After twenty years with the National Space Settlement Program, Everson is retiring to spend more time with his family. The famous astronaut is best known for leading Earth's first mission to Jupiter in 3005. In recent years, Everson commanded multiple supply convoys to Earth's colony on Mars. During an interview with SPACENEWS magazine—'

ANTRIK EVERSON SWITCHED off the cosmovision. He had to get ready for school.

'Are you excited?' Mum asked as she entered the kitchen. She took three eggs from the preserver and placed them in the Insta-Cook, then pressed scramble and start.

'Yeah,' Antrik answered. 'But nervous, too. I sure hope I pass.'

Mum's forehead wrinkled. 'Pass? I was talking about Dad coming home. What are you talking about?'

'My flying test,' Antrik said. 'It's after school today, remember?'

'Oh my stars, I completely forgot. Antrik, you can't take your test today!'

'If I cancel, I won't be able to get another appointment for at least six months,' Antrik protested. 'I'd be thirteen before I got my licence. No-one waits that long!'

The Insta-Cook chimed. Mum took out the now-scrambled eggs and dished them onto two plates. 'I suppose it's okay. Dad has to debrief, and then he has a news conference. He probably won't be home until dinnertime anyway.' Her eyes widened. 'I know! We can celebrate his homecoming and your licence! He'll be so proud of you.'

'If I pass,' Antrik said. What if he failed the test? What would Dad think of him? Over the years, they had connected through cosmovision, but with time zones and equipment glitches and planetary interference, their conversations had been few and far between. What if Dad turned out to be like his friend Laron's dad, who had yelled at Laron for an hour when he failed his flying test?

'Are you okay, honey?' Mum asked. Antrik nodded. Changing the subject, he said, 'So, what are we having for dinner? After being gone for seven years, Dad should get something extra good, shouldn't he?'

Mum smiled. 'Hamburgers. They're his favourite, and there was no way to get one on the spaceship. Or on Mars, of course.'

'I didn't know he likes hamburgers.' Just another thing to add to the list of things he didn't know about his dad.

At school that day, everybody was talking about Willis Everson. The universal history teacher treated the class to a twenty-minute lecture on the famous astronaut's legacy, and the school administrator stopped Antrik in the hallway, saying, 'We'd be very interested in having your father speak at a school assembly. Please mention it to him.' In several of Antrik's classes, various kids shoved slips of paper and moonball caps and even a T-shirt at him, asking for his father to autograph them. Even Laron brought up the subject at lunch.

'So, will you get to meet the World President, now that your dad's back?'

Antrik scowled. 'Why would I?'

Laron flicked an olive off his pizza slice. 'C'mon, your dad's legendary. The World President will definitely want to give him a medal or something. Maybe she'll invite your whole family to The Mansion.'

'I doubt it.' Antrik pushed his lunch tray away. He wasn't hungry anymore. 'Anyway, I don't want to talk about my dad.'

'Okay,' Laron said good-naturedly. 'Let's talk about your flying test then. Did you practise your vertical parking?'





'That's the only part I'm worried about,' Antrik admitted. Somehow, every time he practised vertical parking, he ended up a few feet too high or too low. Once, he'd even dented an expensive sports flier parked beneath him. Of course, the flier's auto-repair had immediately restored it, but if he did that during his test, he'd probably fail.

'Well, you can't do worse than that kid who killed his examiner,' Laron said.

'What!'

'My brother told me about him. It happened a long time ago, back when they used human test examiners instead of robots. The kid was trying to aero park, and he crashed the test pod. His examiner died on the way to the hospital.' Laron took a huge gulp of banapple juice, burped and added, 'That kid probably never got his licence.'

Antrik smiled. Feeling better, he grabbed the pizza off his tray and jammed it in his mouth. Laron's brother had probably made up that story. But whether it was true or not, Antrik knew that he had to be a much better driver than that mythical kid. Even with his parking troubles.

* * *

After school, Antrik took the community aerobus to the testing centre. Once inside, he went through the retinal scan and fingerprint identification. Then he sat down to wait. The longer he waited, the more nervous he got. The reading material in the waiting room didn't help either. Everywhere he looked, he saw a headline about famous spaceman Willis Everson.

'Everson?' intoned the receptionist. 'Antrik Everson?'

Antrik rode the conveyor belt into the test hangar and entered the test pod. Once he was seated, he wiped his sweaty hands on his jacket and took a few deep breaths. Finally, an automated voice filled the pod: 'Antrik Everson, your flying test will now begin. Please perform a standard safety check of your pod before igniting the engine.'

* * *

An hour later, he exited the hangar feeling totally drained. Hovering had been easy, and he'd had no trouble linking onto the commuter wire or ascending and descending the aerovator. However, parking hadn't gone so well. He hadn't dented anything this time, but he had scratched the test pod while navigating into a narrow slot between a nine-person aerovan and one of those new rover hybrids that resembled a funny-looking octopus. He hoped that what he'd done right was enough to earn him a passing grade.

He had just reached the aerobus station when his communication watch beeped and flashed a message from the testing centre:





TEST RESULT: FAIL. LICENCE DENIED.

No! Antrik stepped onto the aerobus and slumped into the first empty seat. Now he wished he had postponed the test like Mum had suggested. He could have used that extra six months to practise parking.

Another beep announced a message from Mum:

DAD HOME. CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU. HURRY!

Dad! Suddenly, Antrik felt like he'd eaten a kilo of moon dust. This was the worst thing that had ever happened to him! What if the media heard about it? He pictured the headlines: Famous Flyer Will Everson Arrives Home to Wife and Flying Failure Son. He pictured his family at The Mansion, the WP saying that she bet Antrik was a chip off the old block, and his dad replying, 'Not really. Antrik didn't get the flying gene from me. In fact, I don't think he'll ever get his licence.'

The aerobus let him off, and he walked home as slowly as possible. Outside his flat, he hesitated. What if he just didn't go in? Maybe the library was still open ...

Another beep.

WHERE ARE YOU?

There was no avoiding it. He waved his watch under the scanner and unlocked the door.

'Antrik?' Mum called as he stepped inside. The entry way smelled of hamburgers and chocoberry pie.

He sighed. 'Yep.'

He heard footsteps and then both his parents were in the entry way, and Dad was hugging him. In spite of how awful he felt—or maybe because of it—the hug was pretty good. You couldn't get hugs like that over cosmovision.

But then came the moment he'd been dreading.

'You're so late,' Mum said. 'How did the test go?'

Antrik looked down. 'I ... well, I failed. I messed up on parking.'

Surprisingly, Dad laughed. Okay, so he was going to make fun of the situation. Laron's dad did that sometimes. Antrik didn't like being laughed at, but maybe it was better than a lecture.





But Dad didn't say anything sarcastic like Laron's dad might have. Instead, he shook his head. 'That pesky parking. It's the curse of the Eversons.'

'What do you mean?' Antrik asked.

Dad put his arm around Antrik's shoulder. 'Haven't you heard about the guy who crashed his test pod and—'

'Killed his examiner?'

Dad blinked. 'My examiner hit his head and had to stay in the hospital overnight. I didn't kill him.'

'Wait. That was you?' Antrik asked. 'I thought it was just a story.'

Dad pointed at himself and grinned. 'That was me, famous astronaut Willis Everson ... thirty years ago.'

'No way!' Antrik said, suddenly feeling as weightless as he had at his sixth birthday party. (It had taken place in an anti-gravity chamber.)

'It's true,' Dad said. 'Come have a hamburger, and I'll tell you about it.'





Midnight in Gnome City

story by Terry Lavelle, illustrated by Douglas Holgate

HAVE YOU EVER found yourself freezing, shivering in your neighbour's front yard in the middle of the night, asking yourself how on Earth you got into this situation? No, me neither, until now. I just hope that whatever crawled over my ankle was only a bug and not a spider or something.

We've lived next door to the 'gnome house' for just over a week. I call it that because it's got more garden gnomes than I've ever seen in one place. And right now I am sitting with them in the darkest part of the front yard I could find.

Like to know why?

We moved into this town called Banks's Gully because my father lost his job: He's working in a mine now, so we've moved in with my aunty for a while. I really don't know why anyone would want to live in a town like this. There's nothing, and no-one, here. At least no-one my age. And to make matters worse I'm starting at a new school at the end of the holidays and I don't know anyone. I'm not happy. Mum tells me I need to give it a go and be more willing to try new things. I don't mind new things. Disneyland would be a new thing I'd like to try. But a one-horse town with a dead horse is a new thing I'd like my worst enemy to try.

So when I ran into this kid called Dylan at the shop a couple of days ago I was pretty pleased. He seemed happy to meet someone new too. Like I said, not much happens here, so I guess a new kid could be pretty interesting. The same afternoon we went to the pool and he introduced me to another boy named Josh.

I really like the water, so I was having a great time until they started jumping off the three-metre board. I've never jumped off anything that high in my life. I told them I'd keep on swimming, but they didn't want to take no for an answer.

'What's the matter?' yelled Dylan.

'Nothing. I don't feel like it.'



'Come on, don't be a chicken!'

How did he know I was scared?

I walked to the board and looked up. It was a long way.

'Just walk to the end and keep on walking,' said Dylan.

'That's it,' said Josh. 'All you've gotta do is step off, and gravity will take care of the rest.'

So I climbed up with them. Three metres looks high from the ground, but it's a lot higher from on top of the board. When I got to the end I almost didn't care what the others thought of me; I was seriously thinking about crawling back along the board and climbing down. But there was a little girl behind me, waiting for me to move so she could jump, and Dylan and Josh were in the pool below, looking up at me, so I held my breath and stepped off.

Gravity instantly grabbed my body and turned it into a missile. When the water slapped my feet and swallowed me, I realised that the air from my lungs had stayed with my stomach up on the board. I came to the surface gasping, but I was over the moon at what I'd just done.

It was terrifying. And awesome.

I'd tried something new. Mum would be proud of me.

* * *

Yesterday I met Dylan and Josh at the park, with another kid named Daniel. We rode our bikes out of town, to their hideout. One good thing about a small town is that everything is close to the edge of the town, so we didn't have far to go.

Their hideout was full of cool stuff. There were hubcaps and number plates, a shopping trolley, a garden hose, a wheelbarrow, a few road signs, some books and a couple of chairs. It's like a collection, but not a collection you could give a name to. I don't know what to call it, other than ... stuff.

The best thing was that they said I could join their gang. Dylan and Daniel are a bit older than me; they're in Year 7, and Josh will be in my year.

So when they asked me if I wanted to join their gang, I had to think about it. For about one second. 'Sure,' I said, 'I'm in.'

Then Dylan said there was a condition to joining. Uh-oh. There had to be a catch. 'What's the condition?' I asked.

'You have to bring something to add to our collection. That's the initiation.'

I tried to think. 'Mum chucked most of our old stuff out when we moved, but my aunty's probably got something I could bring.'

'No,' said Dylan. 'That's too easy. It's got to be a challenge. I'll tell you what to get, and you'll get it.'

It was only then that I realised that the stuff in the clubhouse was stolen. Dylan reckoned it's not stealing if it's junk. 'We're like the garbage man, only better. We take people's rubbish without them even having to go to the trouble of putting it in the bin.'

Then he told me what he wanted me to get. You've probably figured out by now what my challenge was. Yep, a gnome.

I told him that the guy with all the gnomes lives right next door, but he just said that that made the challenge better. 'It's got to be a bit dangerous, James. That's the point.'

'I don't know ...' I said, hesitantly.

'It's up to you,' said Dylan. 'But if you want to be in the gang, you have to pass the initiation.'

What was I supposed to do? I needed friends. It's only one gnome, right? I could probably pick the oldest one, and then it wouldn't be so bad, would it? There was even a pair that looked exactly the same. Surely the guy next door wouldn't miss one if he had another one just like it? Maybe this would be like jumping off a diving board—you just stop thinking and jump.

* * *

Things got even more complicated this morning.

I heard the postman's scooter, so I went to the letterbox to see if there was any mail. The guy next door was in his front yard on the way to his letter box.

He said, 'G'day', so I said, 'Hi.' Mum tells me not to talk to people I don't know, but she also tells me to be polite, and I figure if he lives next door and he's talking to me in my own front yard, it should be okay.

He looked in the letterbox and said, 'No mail today. That's good, no bills.' He didn't look very happy, though. I think maybe he was waiting for a letter.

He asked me my name, so I told him.

'James,' he repeated. 'I had a brother named James. We called him Jimmy. I'm Bob.' It seems a bit funny calling an older man by his first name, but that's what he said so I guess that's what I call him.

He asked me how I liked living in Banks's Gully. I told him it was great. I was being polite, and not very honest.

He looked at me like he could tell I didn't mean it. 'Where are you from?' Country people ask a lot of questions.

I told him, 'The Sunshine Coast.'

'Sunshine Coast, hey? You like the beach?'

'Oh, yeah. I'm not a surfer or anything, but I love the beach.'

'No beaches near here,' he said. 'Closest thing we've got is a big puddle they call a dam.'

No-one had told me about that. 'Can you swim there?'

'Yeah, you can swim. They take boats out there, and they waterski as well. But it's no ocean. No sharks, though, so that's good.'

'That's true.' Sharks were the one thing I didn't like about the beach. Not that I ever saw one.

'Yeah, there's no sharks, because the crocodiles ate them.'

I must have looked shocked, because he added, 'Only joking. There are no crocs within a thousand kilometres of here.'

I'm not surprised. I wouldn't be within a thousand kilometres of here either if I had a choice.

He asked if I had any brothers or sisters and I told him I had a little sister. I asked him if he had any kids and he told me they'd grown up and gone to the city. 'It's just me and the gnomes now.'

I wondered what had happened to his wife, but I didn't want to ask.

'I noticed the gnomes,' I said. 'You must really like them.'

'There's quite a few, aren't there?' Then he told me how he gave his wife one for their first wedding anniversary, and she thought it was funny, so he gave her one for their second anniversary too, and then every anniversary after that. 'I still buy one every year, even though Annie's not here anymore. Old habits die hard.'

His face seemed to come to life more as he pointed to the gnomes. 'That's Rudolph. He came to live with us the year we had our first son; that's Henry—from the year our daughter was born. Arnold arrived the year Annie's mother died; lan was the year our younger son came along; those are Graham and Neville. Those two ladies are Hilda and Mildred.'

I was looking at the two old ones that looked identical. He must have noticed. 'Those two were lucky to get here. I was in the army in Vietnam, so it was a bit tricky. Luckily my brother helped me out, and we got the twins to Annie right on our anniversary. Their names are An and Bao. I named them with some help from a Vietnamese mate of mine. *An* means peace and *Bao* means protection. We were thinking a lot about things like that while the war was on. And An and Bao sound a bit like Annie and Bob.'

By now he wasn't looking at the gnomes anymore. He seemed like his mind was in another place, or maybe another time. Then he came back and looked at me again. 'Sorry, James. I get a bit carried away sometimes when I think about the old days.'

'It's okay,' I said. 'It's interesting. So you were in the war? That must have been scary.'

'Yeah, it was, but life is scary, James. The funny thing is that Annie worried like mad when I was away, but I came back here safe and sound. Then, after all the danger I'd been in, she was the one who got sick and died. Neither of us ever worried that that might happen. It just happened. It just goes to show you how much good worrying does, hey? You can worry all you like, but chances are you're worrying about the wrong things.'

That was when Mum called me in for lunch.

* * *

And now, here I am, on a midnight stake-out in Gnome City, and I'm feeling very uncomfortable. Not just because my knees are getting sore on the hard ground, but because I don't feel at all right about this.

Okay, I know that technically you shouldn't take things from other people without their permission, but after I'd talked to Dylan I thought of some reasons where there might be an exception.

Number one: it's not stealing. It's a dare. It's just like jumping off a diving board.

Number two: if I do it, I'm in the gang. And when I turn up at my new school, I'm not alone.

Number three: Bob's got dozens of gnomes. Heaps of gnomes. Nobody needs that many gnomes.

So, for him it's not a big deal, but for me it's huge.

So why am I hesitating? I tell myself I must just be scared. Don't be such a baby. Just jump. Do it.

My decision is made. I reach for the gnome ...

There's a snail on its head, so I take it off.

And I leave the gnome exactly where it is.

Why didn't I do it?

Reason number one: it doesn't matter how many gnomes there are; they're not mine. They're Bob's. How do I know which one is which, and what memories of his wife they hold for him?

Reason number two: how do I really know that Dylan and Josh and Daniel will stand by me, whether I take the gnome or not?

Reason number three: jumping off a diving board is just between me and gravity and water. It doesn't take away an old man's memories. So it's not the same.

So now I'm right back to where I started. No gnome. No friends. Well, maybe one friend, but he's a bit old for school.

Maybe Dylan and the guys will understand if I explain it to them.

Maybe not.

But that's for them to decide.

I've made my choice, and I feel okay about it. I guess it's like Bob says—you can worry all you like, but how do you know you're worrying about the things you need to worry about?

I'll have to leave that for tomorrow. Right now, I'm tired, and cold, and I'm going home. Have a good night, An and Bao, and all the rest of you. I'm off to bed.

6 The School Magazine





April Fool

story by Katherine Battersby, illustrated by David Legge

LIFE INSIDE A piano's not so bad.

Sure, it's small, but some would say it's cosy. If I were a real estate agent, I'd say: it's a unique compact space, with lovely wooden floorboards and decorative ceilings. A fixer-upper. Heaps of potential.

There are some bonuses to being cramped. I've got to know myself a lot better in here. And I don't just mean that wishy-washy emotional stuff either, but important things. Like the fact that I have twenty-three hairs on my left foot, but only seventeen on my right. Weird. And there's a freckle the shape of a hamburger on my knee—but maybe I'm just hungry.

Having my own place is great. Sure, Mum might miss me, but she'll get over it. My sister will go on to do great things. Might even become a hairdresser or something. They'll put a plaque in my room: **TOBY—Loved a good joke.**Missed by all.

You hear all sorts of strange things from inside a piano. You can still hear Mrs Pumpernickel screaming. But I also heard Yasmin tell Ben that she liked him. And I heard Ben tell Yasmin that she's got funny feathery hair. Then I heard Yasmin crying.

I think Ben's an idiot. I banged the keys around a bit, just to scare him.

It's not all sunny skies, though. There is one teensy problem with my new home. No-one's into playing 'Mary had a little lamb' anymore. No; Mrs Pumpernickel likes to teach complicated pieces, like Pachelbel's 'Canon' and Joplin's 'The Entertainer'. Pieces that use every key on the piano. Great acoustics in here, but the hammer thingies keep clacking along my ribs like I'm a xylophone.

I only wish I wasn't stuck here for the best day of the year: a day my mum calls Toby's Trickster Tirade. April 1st is my time to shine. I had big things planned. But Mrs Pumpernickel just doesn't understand my genius.

On the upside, no-one knows I'm here, so I have plenty of time to myself. I've thought up all sorts of new practical jokes—real crackers. And I've always wanted a spider for a pet. Mum would never let me have one, but now I have at least five. As far as roommates go, they're a little hairier than I might have hoped for, but they don't whinge as much as my sister.

All in all, I'm pretty happy. Life inside a piano's really not so bad. I think I'll stay here. For a while anyway. Until I can grow a beard. Or maybe just until high school. Well, at least until Mrs Pumpernickel calms down about the frog I put in her tuba.



