

Monday

Adverbs and simicolons

A semicolon can be used between independent clauses that are closely related in theme. In the following sentences, Catherine Fisher chooses to use semicolons in both of these sentences rather than using a joining word (conjunction) like *because*.

- 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.

Consider why the writer had made the choice of putting a semicolon instead of a full stop.

Practice – Rewrite these sentences using a semicolon.

1. It rained heavily this afternoon. We managed to have our picnic anyway.

.....
.....

2. They couldn't make it to the summit and back before dark. They decided to camp for the night.

.....
.....

3. The Leaning Tower of Pisa is in danger of falling over. Engineers are trying to stabilise its foundations.

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.....

4. The computer can perform millions of operations in a split second. It cannot think for itself.

.....
.....

5. The artist preferred to paint in oils. He did not like watercolours.

.....
.....

Tuesday

Through the Eyes of a Character



One of the things I love exploring when I'm writing is what must be going on in a character's mind. Whenever I read great portal stories, I always try to put myself into the shoes of the character, to try to imagine how they must be feeling as they discover this passageway to a new world. How must Alice have been feeling as she fell through the never-ending tunnel into Wonderland?

First, think of your character – it's easier if you base this on someone you know.

- What are they called?
- What do they look like?
- What sort of a person are they (miserable/friendly/kind/aggressive)?
- What do they say?
- What do they do?
- How do they treat other people?
- How do other people treat them?

Now compose a short piece of descriptive writing based on seeing a mysterious door through the eyes of your character. To do this, we will use a simple opener to drop the reader straight into the action:

Samantha stared. ...

Ali hesitated. ...

We will also try to use some of the tools we explored in *The Snow Walker's Son*. Look at this example:

Samantha stared. There, rising out of the cliff, was an unfamiliar door; its metallic panels were tarnished in rust. Paint flaked off the brittle walls that made up its frame and the door handle rattled in the bitter breeze. Slowly, Samantha gazed all around her, took a deep breath and stepped forward.

Here are the tools I used:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the setting through the eyes of the main character (MC) 	<p>Samantha stared.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the door/portal. (You may like to use two sentences that are closely linked in meaning and connect them with a semicolon.) 	<p>There, rising out of the cliff, was an unfamiliar door; its metallic panels were tarnished in rust.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add some more detail. 	<p>Paint flaked off the brittle walls that made up its frame and the door handle rattled in the bitter breeze.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an adverb to hint at how the MC feels. Remember, you can move the position within the sentence. 	<p>Slowly,</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the pattern of three to advance the action and inject a sense of pace into your writing. 	<p>Samantha gazed all around her, took a deep breath and stepped forward.</p>



Now imagine your main character is walking along the road when they come across a mysterious doorway. How does the door stand out in comparison to the rest of the road/street? Why did it catch your character's attention? What is mysterious about it?

Describe this through their eyes. Use my model above to help you.

Wednesday

Planning a Portal Story

Nearly all portal stories follow similar pattern:

- Main character (MC) finds magical portal and enters a new world
- Describe new world
- MC explores this new world and encounters a problem
- MC has to escape and return through the portal
- MC cannot find the portal again
 - Various ways to solve this conflict; sometimes MC brings back a memento of the new world

Once you have identified the pattern of the story, the possibilities are endless. Let your imagination run free – but remember that there still has to be some sort of logic to a new world. Brainstorm lots of ideas and then decide which captures your interest as a writer.

Before you start, take a look at these tips first:

- Start in a world/a setting that you know well – it is far easier to describe something familiar to you, e.g. a garden, your school, your local town, etc.
- Use a stimulus (e.g. picture) for the new world – an image will help you focus in on detail and describe what is there.
- Let your ideas flow – don't worry about spelling, handwriting or presentation ... you can go back and edit this later.

Here are a couple of ideas to open your mind to the world of possibility:

Underlying Pattern	Story idea 1	Story idea 2
Main character (MC) finds magical portal and enters new world	Elif is playing in her Grandmother's garden and notices a small fairy door. Touches door and shrinks/ enters.	Josh and Archie playing hide and seek in their house. Archie opens hatch in the roof and discovers new world.
Describe new world	Arrives in an underground world full of caves, giant toadstools and magical creatures.	Transported to life onboard an enormous sailing ship in Tudor England.
MC explores new world and encounters a problem	Elif explores new world and enters an area strictly forbidden. Picks magical flower.	Ship is thrown into battle.
MC has to escape and return through the portal	Alarms sound and Elif runs. She is chased through the magical world by unknown threat and escapes.	Archie desperately searches for portal and way back to own world.

MC cannot find portal again (sometimes has brought back a memento of new world)

Elif cannot find fairy door again, but the cut flower lives on forever reminding her of her journey.

Archie escapes with small pouch of gunpowder in his pocket.

★ Using this underlying pattern, plan a few portal stories of your own. You may like to draw upon your own personal experience as well as your wider reading and imagination. I have also included two pictures in case they help you.



Thursday

Writing Your Own Story

You now have all of the tools required to write your own portal story. You may like to write about a more traditional portal that leads you to a magical world, or you may prefer to draw upon your personal experiences, as we have explored throughout this unit.

To recap on all the key points we've been learning:

- a. **Describe the portal in detail.** You may want to show the portal through the eyes of the main character.
- b. **Think about what lies on the other side of the door.** Allow yourself the opportunity to write about what interests you and what is important to you.
- c. **Great writers steal ideas ('magpie') from other great writers.** Reflect upon the portal stories that you have loved reading and consider what made these so engaging. Try to bring in some of these skills and techniques into your own work.
- d. **Enjoy it.** Writing is all about sharing a passion for words, stories and the world of possibility. If you love the story you are writing – so too will your reader.

Choice: You can either write half the story today and the other half tomorrow. If you do that, you need to proofread the first half today.

Friday

Proofreading and Editing

- full stops and capital letters, including capital letters for names and place names
- direct speech laid out correctly: punctuation and new speaker-new line
- commas, question marks, semicolons, brackets ...
- paragraphs
- spelling: spelling of words and application of spelling rules
- strong vocabulary
- enough detail to capture the reader
- variation in sentence structure