

Lasting Literacy

1. **PAGE 1** Explain that the group will be looking at description over the next few sessions and there will be competitions in which they can win prizes (something with e-numbers!).

2. Either with print-outs (or uploading the PDF onto iPads) look at the first page. Tell the children that they can either read along or close their eyes and listen but that their task is to think about which paragraph about a dragon is better.

Read both. Make sure there are no words the children don't understand.

Questions:

Which is better? Why? Which one do you think took more effort?

Ask the children to find one example of where the writer has improved the writing. **What have they done to improve the writing in the example?**

Can you find an example where the writer has replaced a boring verb with an interesting one? Why would he do that?

Looking at the first sentence, the first example uses the word 'flew' and the second uses the word 'shot', which is faster? Can you see how different verbs have different levels of power?

Can you find an adjective to describe the dragon in the first line? In number 1 it is just 'The dragon' but in number 2 it is 'The snarling dragon' – what does the word snarling make you think that the dragon is feeling?

Can you see how adding detail to description can give much more information? This lets the reader build a more detailed picture in their mind.

3. **Page 2** Get the children to look at the picture and come up with some adjectives – give fierce scary as a boring example. Share words and decide which three would be best to use to describe the dragon, make sure the children understand the use of commas in a listed description. Write down the resultant description. **If we wanted to make our description longer we could add 'with' after 'dragon' – which body part would be interesting to describe on the dragon? Can you describe its eyes for me? Are there any other parts I could describe? Would I use another listed description? Why?** Add in the description with a list and demonstrate how the sentence becomes clumsy and boring – re-write it with only one adjective.

A ferocious, fearsome, evil dragon with red eyes.

The children have just used an expanded noun phrase. Explain to them that the description before the noun makes a noun phrase and by using 'with' they have created an expanded noun phrase by sandwiching the noun in on both sides through the use of description.

Ask the children to come up with a simile to add to the end. You should end up with something like this:

A ferocious, fearsome, evil dragon with red eyes like rubies.

4. Page 3 Ask the children to come up with some words to fill in the first three blanks and then discuss which words are the most successful at creating a picture. Write this out on the whiteboard. **What have they just made?** Ans: Noun phrase. **How do we create an expanded noun phrase?** Ans: Use 'with'.

Now, ask the children to think about a feature to describe such as his spear or his helmet and to add an adjective to it so we can add it to the description sandwich. Add this part to the example on the whiteboard and discuss why it is now an expanded noun phrase. Fill in the final word to describe the dragon with the children's help and re-read to evaluate success.

5. Page 4 Tell the children this is now a competition to see who can come up with the best adjectives and similes by describing some dragons using expanded noun phrases. Explain the meaning of expanded noun phrase again as you write:

A _____, _____, _____, dragon with _____, _____.

Now go back in and fill in the word classes that fit the blanks.

A adjective, adjective, adjective, dragon with adjective, noun.

The rules are that the children CANNOT use the same word more than once to describe the dragons they will see next (this is to test their vocabulary) and they MUST use an expanded noun phrase (a simile too if they are brave enough!).

Get the children to look at the example and identify word classes, simile etc. Explain that they can use the words from the example if they wish in their own work and prompt them to keep checking that their descriptions follow the format shown for an expanded noun phrase that you have written on the board.

Allow the children time to work through each dragon picture and write their own expanded noun phrases on a white board. After 5-10 minutes, share the work and evaluate success – choose some as examples to improve.

6. Page 5 Allow the children time to apply their new knowledge at the sentence level in their books. You may wish to provide them with a word bank to get them started and have a chat about the various features of the creatures which could be described after using the word 'with'. Once finished, share the work and evaluate success – choose some as examples to improve.

7. Page 6 Allow the children time to apply their new knowledge at the text level in their books. You may wish to provide them with some ideas of how to finish off the opening sentence and what the letter can contain as well as an expanded noun phrase. Get them to think about where they saw it and what it was doing, get them to think about the features which can be described and where they will use an expanded noun phrase. Once finished, share the work and evaluate success – choose some as examples to improve. You may wish to discuss the fact that expanded noun phrases, when used too often, make writing slow and boring.