



English Language Out Of Hours Reading + Writing Intervention



The Birds

THE HARDER
YOU WORK
FOR SOMETHING,
THE GREATER
YOU'LL FEEL
WHEN YOU
ACHIEVE IT.

- On December the third the wind changed overnight and it was winter. Until then the autumn had been mellow, soft. The leaves had lingered on the trees, golden red, and the hedgerows were still green.
- Nat Hocken, because of a war-time disability, had a pension and did not work full-time at the farm. Although he was married, with children, his was a solitary disposition; he liked best to work alone. At midday he would pause and eat the pasty his wife had baked for him, and sitting on the cliff's edge would watch the birds. Autumn was the best for this, better than spring. Great flocks of them came to the peninsula, restless, uneasy, spending themselves in motion; now wheeling, circling in the sky, now settling to feed on the rich new-turned soil, but even when they fed it was as though they did so without hunger, without desire. Restlessness drove them back to the skies again.
- Black and white, jackdaw and gull, mingled in strange partnership, seeking some sort of liberation, never satisfied, never still. Flocks of starlings, rustling like silk, flew to fresh pasture, driven by the same necessity of movement, and the smaller birds scattered from tree to hedge as if compelled.
- Nat watched them and he watched the sea-birds too. That same impulse to flight seized upon them. Crying, whistling, calling they skimmed the placid sea and left the shore. Make haste, make speed, hurry and begone; yet where, and to what purpose? The restless urge of autumn, unsatisfying, sad, had put a spell upon them and they must flock, and wheel, and cry; they must spill themselves of motion before winter came.
- Perhaps, though Nat a message comes to the birds in the autumn, like a warning. Winter is coming. Many of them perish. And like people who apprehensive of death before their time, drive themselves to work or folly, the birds do likewise.



- Go back through the extract – what words could you use to link to this picture?

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Quick fire questions

- What do we learn about Nat?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What kind of sentences are used to describe the actions of the birds?

Why might the writer have used these?

- What are we told about the birds?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What verbs are used to describe the actions of the verbs?

Identify

- What are we told about Autumn in the first para?

- Remember this MUST be in full sentences.

- _____

- _____

- _____

Language

- Look at the description of the birds in the second paragraph.

- Select 3 quotes from this.

- What do these show about the birds?

- Quote - _____

- What it shows - _____

- Quote - _____

- What it shows - _____

- Quote - _____

- What it shows - _____

Structure

- How does the piece open? _____
- What does this suggest? _____
- How does the focus shift in the piece? From who to who?
- _____

- How does the piece close? _____
- How do we see a connection between the start and end?
- _____

Evaluate – ‘I agree’

- ‘The writer has created a successful description of both the birds and Nat’s feelings whilst watching them’.
- What do we need to find quotes related to?
- 1 - _____
- 2- _____
- Look at the extract again and decide what quotes you would use

Getting our answer together

- Birds
- What verbs?
- How are they acting?
- What they are doing?
- Any other descriptive words?

- Nat
- How do we see a link between him and the birds?
- What do we see about him again at the end?

Spend 15 mins writing up this answer at the back

Writing a description based on picture

- What aspects of the picture would you zoom in on?

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Creating your picture plan –

Write up either
description or picture

Aspects	- Ideas
Who is your key focus on? Who will be your character?	
How will you open / create sense of mystery?	
What will happen next?	
What is your quest / moral challenge / dilemma?	
What could your flashback be?	
How will you resolve / end story?	