

Monday 18th May 2020

WALT retrieve information and infer from a text

Good morning Year 6. It is a new week and the last week of term. What have you been reading over the weekend? We would love to see your suggestions on the padlet page for this week:

<https://padlet.com/abroomfield/olq4kpg82df09a4v>

This week, we will not be reading an e-book. Instead, you will have a different reading comprehension to do each day.

Here is your reading comprehension for today (*text and questions from talkforwriting.com*):

Task 1

Read this extract from *The Snow-Walker's Son* by Catherine Fisher. You can listen to the extract here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/doors/s-ltAy0hpt715>.

The door was the last one in the corridor. As the flames flickered over it, they showed it was barred; a hefty iron chain hung across it, and the mud floor beneath was red with rust that had flaked off in the long years of locking and unlocking. The keeper hung his lantern on a nail, took the key from a dirty string around his neck, and fitted it into the keyhole. Then he looked behind him. 'Get on with it!' the big man growled. 'Let me see what she keeps in there!' The keeper grinned; he knew fear when he heard it. With both hands he turned the key, then tugged out the red chain in a shower of rust and pushed the door. It opened, just a fraction. Darkness and a damp smell oozed through the black slit. He stepped well back, handed the stranger the lantern, and jerked his head. He had no tongue to speak with; she'd made sure he kept her secrets. The stranger hesitated; a draught moved his hair and he gazed back up the stone passageway as if he longed suddenly for warmth and light. And from what I've heard, the keeper thought, you won't be seeing much of those ever again. Then the man held up the lantern and pushed the door. The keeper watched his face intently in the red glow, and his great hand, as it clutched a luck-stone that swung at his neck. The man went in, slowly. The door closed.

© Catherine Fisher 2011 from *The Snow Walker's Son*, published by Red Fox, by permission of the author.

Task 2

Answer these questions about the text:

1. The door was the last one in the corridor. What is the significance of the word last? Can you think of another context where the word last has a significant meaning? e.g. the last chance.
2. How do the opening lines (highlighted above) set the mood of the story? What are your immediate impressions?
3. Having spent a great deal of time reflecting on the significance of doors and their appearance, what does this description suggest to you?
4. Why has Fisher described the iron chain as being 'hefty'? What could the significance of this word be in the context of the story?
5. Darkness and a damp smell oozed through the black slit. How does this make you feel as a reader? What is the relevance of both darkness and a damp smell? Do either of these surprise you; if so, why?

Answers

1. The word 'last' exaggerates the distance the characters had gone to reach it. It makes it more dramatic. Examples include: the last chance, famous last words, have the last laugh, the last one left.
2. The opening lines set the mood of the story in several different ways. Firstly, the language used such as 'hefty iron chain', 'red with rust', 'mud floor' tell us the door and corridor was old and dim. This creates a gloomy, eerie mood.
3. The description suggests the door is very old. The keeper hangs a lantern on a nail for light suggesting this is somewhere in the world without electricity. Later in the passage the smell from inside the door was 'oozing' and darkness was described as coming out of the door. This suggests the door hasn't been opened for a while.
4. 'hefty' means big. This suggests the door itself is very large. It helps us to get an idea of the scale of the door and corridor. This helps us to imagine what it looks like better.
5. The darkness makes the mood more creepy and eerie. The damp smell suggests this door leads to a room that hasn't been looked after very well or is very old. As a reader, it makes me curious to learn more but also nervous in anticipation about what is behind the closed door.