

THE WILBUR & NISO SMITH FOUNDATION RESOURCE PACK

WHAT IS ADVENTURE WRITING?

CREATIVE WRITING LESSONS FOR KS2

THE AIM

Have you ever asked your class: what are the essential ingredients of a great adventure story? Does it involve an impossible quest? Plenty of action? Romance? Insurmountable odds? A pacy plot? Or even life-threatening danger? If not, the time is now...

This Resource Pack is designed to get children aged 7–11 thinking about the definition of ‘adventure’, exploring its themes and features before making their own unique mark within the genre.

The activities included here have been created by The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation, a charitable organisation set up in 2015 by Niso Smith, wife of worldwide bestselling author Wilbur Smith. The Foundation is dedicated to empowering young writers, as well as to the advancement of the adventure-writing genre and the promotion of literacy.

This Resource Pack champions these three objectives, supporting teachers in the classroom to inspire a love of adventure writing amongst their pupils.

The lessons included in this pack are based on two classic adventure stories: Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie and The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum – as well as a modern adventure novel, The Wild Robot, written and illustrated by Peter Brown in 2018. These books invite everyone in your class to explore, in every sense of the word, and to test the limits of adventure writing. The six lessons included have been designed as sequential activities and can be taught as whole units or as individual activities to be dipped in and out of. Each activity will guide pupils through the different elements of the adventure genre, giving them the skills and confidence they need to draft, structure and write a creative piece of their own. We hope you enjoy the journey...

ABOUT THE BOOKS

The lessons included in this pack are based on the following three adventure stories:

- *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie
- *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
- *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown

About The Wild Robot:

When Robot Roz opens her eyes for the first time, she discovers that she is alone on a remote, wild island. She has no idea how she got there or what her purpose is – but she knows she needs to survive.

But as Roz slowly befriends the animals, the island starts to feel like home – until, one day, her mysterious past comes back to haunt her.

From bestselling and award-winning author and illustrator Peter Brown comes a heartwarming and action-packed novel about what happens when nature and technology collide. By turns funny, moving, surprising and dramatic, this is a novel that is as thought-provoking as it is enchanting.

About Peter Pan:

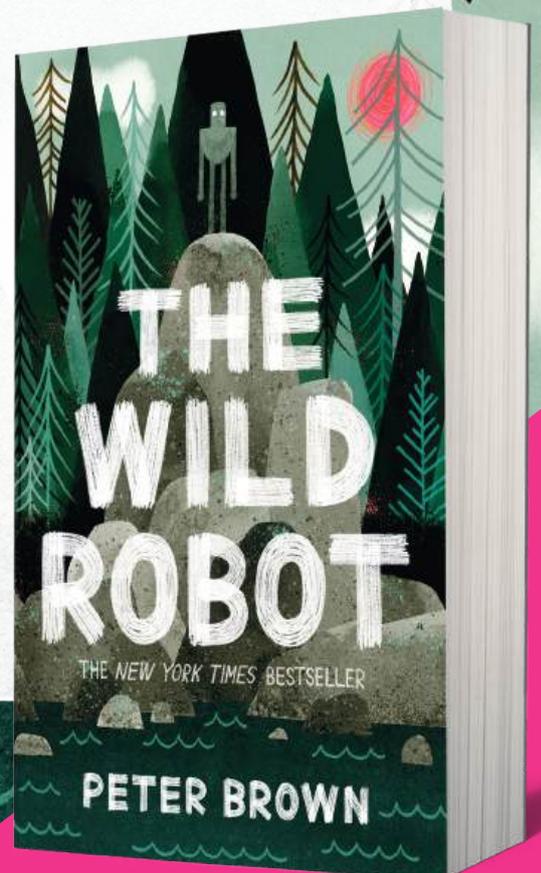
When Peter Pan, leader of the Lost Boys, loses his shadow during a visit to London, headstrong Wendy helps him to re-attach it. In return, she and her brothers, John and Michael, are invited to Neverland – where Tinker Bell the fairy, Tiger Lily and the vengeful Captain Hook await.

This is the much-loved adventure story from J. M. Barrie – in which all children, except one, grow up...

About The Wizard of Oz:

When a tornado rips through Kansas, Dorothy and her dog, Toto, are whisked away in their house to the magical land of Oz. They follow the Yellow Brick Road toward the Emerald City to meet the Wizard, and en route they meet a Scarecrow that needs a brain, a Tin Man missing a heart, and a Cowardly Lion who wants courage.

This timeless classic is a strange and enchanting adventure that continues to delight readers young and old with its magical tale of witches, flying monkeys and silver shoes.



WHAT IS ADVENTURE WRITING?

OBJECTIVES

This Resource Pack provides material for six, one-hour lessons that can take place during KS2 classes or as extra-curricular activities. The pack covers Literacy objectives that include but are not limited to:

English

Reading: comprehension

- Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:
 - i. listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction
 - ii. discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- Understand what they read, in books they read independently, by
 - i. identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
 - ii. drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Writing: composition

- Plan their writing by:
 - i. discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- Draft and write by:
 - i. in narratives, describing settings, characters and atmosphere and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action
- Evaluate and edit by:
 - i. assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing and suggesting improvements

LESSON ONE FIRST SENTENCES

Objective: To understand and be able to list the features of different genres in fiction, including adventure

Lead-in questions:

- What do you know about *Peter Pan* and *The Wizard of Oz*? What genre of story do you think they fall into?
- What does the title '*The Wild Robot*' make you think about? What sort of story do you think this might be?

TASK 1:

In pairs, read out the opening sentences of the three books below: *Peter Pan*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Wild Robot*. Complete the tasks:

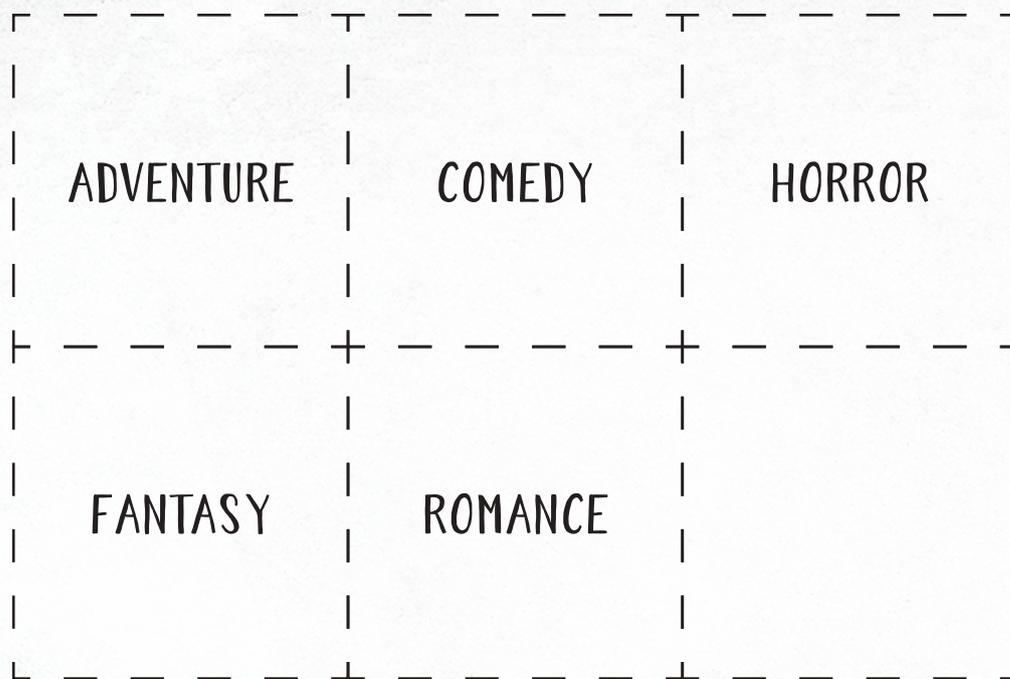
- *Our story begins on the ocean, with wind and rain and thunder and lightning and waves.*
 - *Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife.*
 - *All children, except one, grow up.*
1. Which of these sentences is your favourite? Why?
 2. Which sentence draws the reader in the most? How?
 3. Which sentence creates a feeling of adventure? Why?
 4. Can you pick out effective words and phrases that create atmosphere in these sentences?
 5. Do any of the sentences make you feel that something important might happen next? How?

TASK 2:

Can you match each of the three opening sentences to the right book? Give reasons for your choices. It might be based on prior knowledge, or a clue in the sentences themselves.

TASK 3:

Cut out the genre cards below. For each of them, think of an example of a book that fits into that particular genre. One of the cards has been left blank for you to come up with your own! Is it possible for a book to fit into more than one genre?



TASK 4:

Each of the three books that we will be using in this Resource Pack fit into the 'adventure' genre. Can you say why? Working in pairs, create a list of six features of the adventure genre. Give reasons for your choices. Use the examples below to get you started!

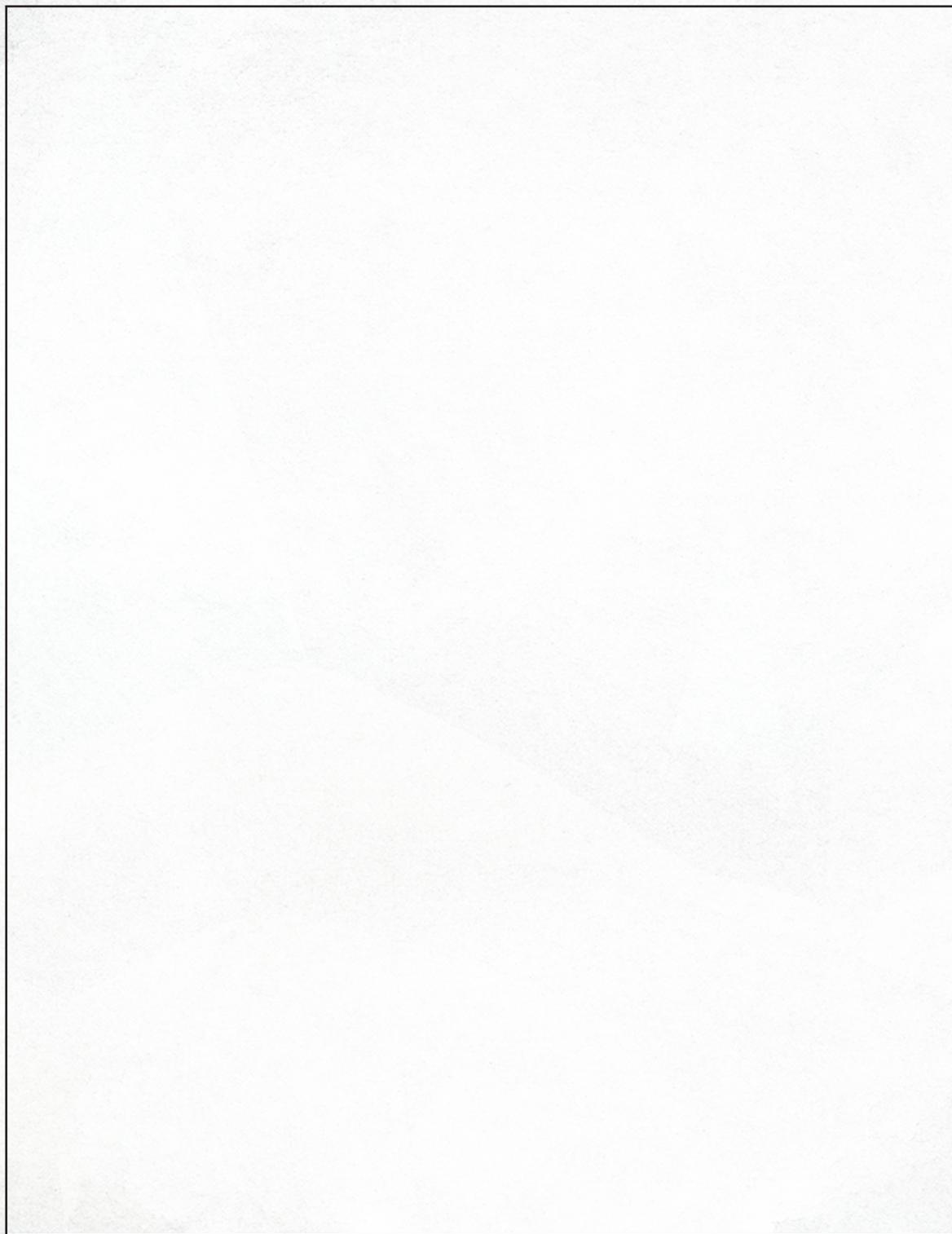
- A journey to a faraway place

- An interesting setting

-
-
-
-

TASK 5:

Finally, choose one of the three books. Using the title, the opening sentence, and your knowledge of the adventure genre, create an exciting book cover to represent what you think the story is about. Remember the following success criteria when creating a book cover: a bold design; strong colours; and a clear title.



LESSON TWO AN EPIC JOURNEY

Objective: To write a description of an epic journey.

Recap questions:

- What is genre? What genre do the books Peter Pan, The Wizard of Oz and The Wild Robot fall into?

Lead-in questions:

- Have you ever been on an epic journey? Where did you go? What was it like?

TASK 1:

Read the extracts from the three books below and discuss your first impressions of each with your partner.

The Wild Robot: Extract Taken from Chapter 1:

Our story begins on the ocean, with the wind and rain and thunder and lightning and waves. A hurricane roared and raged through the night. And in the middle of the chaos, a cargo ship was sinking down down down to the ocean floor.

Peter Pan: Extract Taken from Chapter 3:

*“I say,” cried John, “why shouldn’t we all go out?”
Of course it was to this that Peter had been luring them.
Michael was ready: he wanted to see how long it took him to do a billion miles. But Wendy hesitated.
“Mermaids!” said Peter again.
“Oo!”
“And there are pirates.”
“Pirates,” cried John, seizing his Sunday hat, “let us go at once.”*

The Wizard of Oz: Extract Taken from Chapter 1:

The north and south winds met where the house stood, and made it the exact centre of the cyclone. In the middle of a cyclone the air is generally still, but the great pressure of the wind on every side of the house raised it up higher and higher, until it was at the very top of the cyclone; and there it remained and was carried miles and miles away as easily as you could carry a feather.

For each extract, can you underline evidence of the following things:

1. The characters are far away from home
2. The characters are anxious or excited
3. The journey is difficult or dangerous
4. The characters have to overcome obstacles

LESSON THREE SETTING THE SCENE

Objective: To write a postcard describing a new setting.

Lead-in questions:

- What sort of settings do adventure stories have?
- Why is it important to have a strong setting?

TASK 1:

Read the extracts from the three books below and discuss how effective you think the settings are in each:

The Wild Robot: Extract Taken from Chapter 5:

Roz continued exploring the gravesite until a playful little ocean wave washed over the rocks. She automatically stepped away from it. Then a bigger wave sloshed toward her, and she stepped away again. And then a gigantic wave crashed over the rocks and engulfed the entire gravesite. Heavy water pounded against her body and knocked her to the ground, and her Damage Sensors flared for the first time. A moment later, the wave was gone, and Roz lay there, dripping and dented and surrounded by dead robots.

Peter Pan: Extract Taken from Chapter 4:

In the black topper the light was completely hidden, and they flew on in silence. It was the stillest silence they had ever known, broken once by a distant lapping, which Peter explained was the wild beasts drinking at the ford, and again by a rasping sound that might have been the branches of trees rubbing together, but he said it was the redskins sharpening their knives.

Even these noises ceased. To Michael the loneliness was dreadful. "If only something would make a sound!" he cried.

As if in answer to his request, the air was rent by the most tremendous crash he had ever heard. The pirates had fired Long Tom at them.

The roar of it echoed through the mountains, and the echoes seemed to cry savagely, "Where are they, where are they, where are they?"

Thus sharply did the terrified three learn the difference between an island of make-believe and the same island come true.

The Wizard of Oz: Extract Taken from Chapter 2:

The little girl gave a cry of amazement and looked about her, her eyes growing bigger and bigger at the wonderful sights she saw.

The cyclone had set the house down, very gently – for a cyclone – in the midst of a country of marvellous beauty. There were lovely patches of greensward all about, with stately trees bearing rich and luscious fruits. Banks of gorgeous flowers were on every hand, and birds with rare and brilliant plumage sang and fluttered in the trees and bushes. A little way off was a small brook, rushing and sparkling along between green banks, and murmuring in a voice very grateful to a little girl who had lived so long on the dry, green prairies.

For each extract:

1. *Underline any powerful words that stand out to you.*
2. *Underline as many ADJECTIVES as you can.*
3. *Underline as many ADVERBS as you can.*

TASK 2:

For each extract, can you match the following senses to a word or phrase used by the writer?

SMELL _____

SOUND _____

TOUCH _____

TASTE _____

SIGHT _____

TASK 3:

Imagine you are stranded in a new place, just like the characters in these extracts. Complete the following sentences.

I can see... _____

I can hear... _____

I can smell... _____

I can touch... _____

I can taste... _____

I feel... _____

TASK 4:

Now, still imagining that you're stranded in a faraway place, write a postcard describing what it is like and how you feel. Use the techniques that you have learned throughout these lessons to help you. If you have time, draw a picture of your setting on the other side of the postcard! Share them with us on Twitter at @Wilbur_Niso_Fdn!

LESSON FOUR COURAGEOUS CHARACTERS

Objective: To create a character profile for a fictional character.

Lead-in questions:

Read the following extract from the *The Wild Robot*:

Taken from Chapter 6:

Crack!

Thunk!

Clang!

Roz was having a little trouble climbing the cliffs. She had a new dent on her rear and a long scrape down her side. And she was just about to get another ding when a crab scuttled out from under a piece of driftwood.

The crab looked up and immediately showed off his giant claws. Everyone was afraid of his claws. But not the robot. She just looked down and introduced herself.

“Hello, crab, my name is Roz.”

What can you tell about Roz’s character from this extract? Discuss it with the person next to you and share your ideas with the class. How can you tell that she is courageous and resilient?

TASK 1:

Imagine that you are the protagonist of an adventure story. What type of character would you be? What sort of personality would you have? How would you be courageous and resilient? Complete a profile for your character:

MY CHARACTER PROFILE

DRAWING OF
MY CHARACTER

NAME:

LOCATION:

EPIC JOURNEY:

HOW I AM RESILIENT:

SPECIAL SKILL:

HOW I AM COURAGEOUS:

BEST FRIEND:

CLOTHES:

TASK 2:

If your character was interviewed on the television, what do you think he or she would be like in real-life? Brainstorm your ideas using the following headings:

Appearance: _____

Voice: _____

Body Language: _____

Facial Expressions: _____

TASK 3:

Pair-up with someone in your group and swap your character profiles from Task 1. Try to use body language and voice to make your characters come to life!

Listen to your partner's profile. As you listen, think of a list of questions that you would want to ask your partner in an interview about their courage and resilience. Write your list of questions here:

QUESTIONS I'D LIKE TO ASK MY FELLOW CHARACTER:

1. E.G. What would you do if a strange beast attacked you?
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

TASK 4:

In pairs, conduct an interview between the two characters. Remember to stay in role. Share your interviews with the class or, better still, ask your teachers to film them and share them with us on Twitter at @Wilbur_Niso_Fdn!

LESSON FIVE PACEY PLOTS

Objective: To understand how to create pace and tension in writing.

Lead-in questions:

- What is pace? Why is pace important in an adventure story?
- How does increasing pace in a story make the reader feel tense or ‘on the edge of their seat’?
- Can you think of a book that you’ve read which had a moment of tension? How did it make you feel?
- What is a cliffhanger?

TASK 1:

Read the following extract from the *The Wild Robot*:

The bears slammed into Roz, knocking her against the trunk of a towering tree. Then one bear dove at her legs, and the other clawed at her chest. If only the robot had swung her fists or kicked her feet, she could have scared them off. One good bop in the nose would have sent them running. But the robot’s programming would not allow her to be violent. Clearly, Roz was not designed to fight bears.

Powerful jaws chomped her arms. Sharp claws slashed her face. A massive head rammed her chest.

“Please stay away!” said the robot.

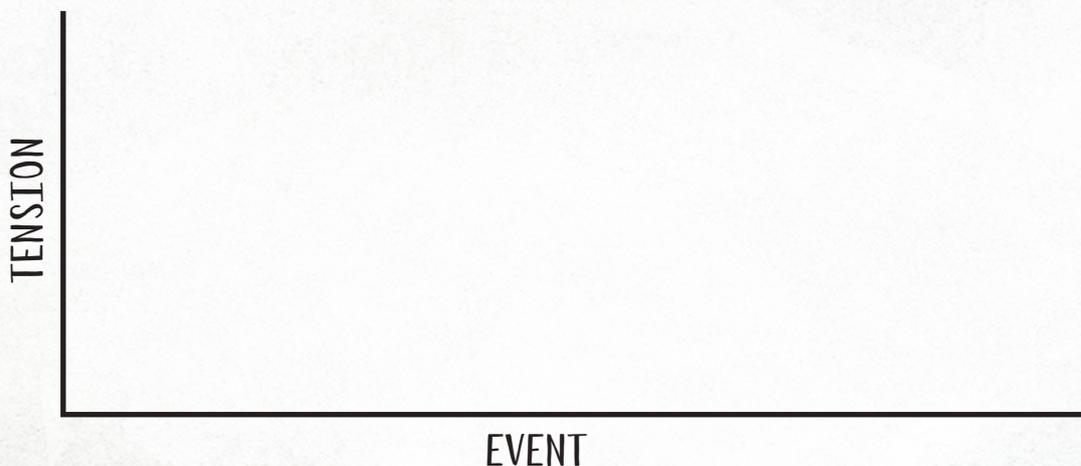
“Roarrrr!” said the sister bear.

“Grrrrrr!” said the brother bear.

And then the bears went in for the kill.

But the robot had vanished.

After reading the extract, plot the moments of tension on the graph below. Consider when the tension is at its highest and at its lowest. How does the author achieve this?



LESSON SIX NEW WORLDS

Objective: To write the opening paragraph of an adventure story.

Recap questions:

- What have you learned about the adventure genre?
- Which feature of adventure writing interests you the most?
- Which book would you most like to carry on reading?

TASK 1:

One of the important parts of adventure writing is the creation of a completely new world, culture, setting or reality. Can you match the world to the book?

NEVERLAND

THE WIZARD OF OZ

THE LAND OF OZ

THE WILD ROBOT

A REMOTE, WILD ISLAND

PETER PAN

TASK 2:

Read the extracts from the three books below and consider the features of each 'new world' using the table below:

A Remote, Wild Island, The Wild Robot

*Clouds scudded through the sky.
Spiders spun intricate webs.
Berries beckoned to hungry mouths.
Foxes stalked hares.
Mushrooms rose up from leaf litter.
Turtles plopped into ponds.
Moss spread across tree roots.
Vultures hunched over carcasses.
Ocean waves beat against the coastline.
Tadpoles became frogs, caterpillars became butterflies.
A camouflaged robot observed it all.*

Neverland, Peter Pan

*Feeling that Peter was on his way back, the Neverland had again woke into life. We ought to use the pluperfect and say wakened, but woke is better and was always used by Peter.
In his absence things are usually quiet on the island. The fairies take an hour longer in the morning, the beasts attend to their young, the redskins feed heavily for six days and nights, and when pirates and lost boys meet they merely bite their thumbs at each other. But with the coming of Peter, who hates lethargy, they are under way again: if you put your ear to the ground now, you would hear the whole island seething with life.*

On this evening the chief forces of the island were disposed as follows. The lost boys were out looking for Peter, the pirates were out looking for the lost boys, the redskins were out looking for the pirates, and the beasts were out looking for the redskins. They were going round and round the island, but they did not meet because all were going at the same rate.

The Land of Oz, The Wizard of Oz

She was surprised, as she walked along, to see how pretty the country was about her. There were neat fences at the sides of the road, painted a dainty blue colour, and beyond them were fields of grain and vegetables in abundance. Evidently the Munchkins were good farmers and able to raise large crops. Once in a while she would pass a house, and the people came out to look at her and bow low as she went by; for everyone knew she had been the means of destroying the Wicked Witch and setting them free from bondage. The houses of the Munchkins were odd-looking dwellings, for each was round, with a big dome for a roof. All were painted blue, for in this country of the East blue was the favourite colour.

FEATURES	A REMOTE, WILD ISLAND	NEVERLAND	THE LAND OF OZ
CHARACTERS			
COLOURS			
OBJECTS			
NATURE			

TASK 3:

When creating an adventure story of your own, you need to make sure that it includes a completely new world, culture, setting or reality; use the table above to help you to come up with ideas and make notes for your own story. Remember, it can be real or imagined – set in a foreign country, or a complete fantasy world.

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU'VE COMPLETED THE WHAT IS ADVENTURE WRITING? RESOURCE PACK

Don't forget to hold on to everything that you've created. It might come in handy when you come to write your very own bestselling adventure novel! We can't wait to see your amazing, creative talents at work.

The Wilbur & Niso Smith Foundation