

# Advance the Action

## Notes for Teachers

The purpose of this activity is for pupils to rewrite description into dialogue. It will involve them carefully selecting information from the text and considering how it is written. There is a modelled example to support them in the process. It may also be useful to use the activity as a guided or modelled write, or as a stop/start activity where pupil responses are shared at the end of each section. A copy of the text from this resource is included without the response boxes in case you would prefer students to write into their workbooks.

# Advance the Action

Below is a short piece of description. However, there is far too much description!

**Can you edit and improve the original text by using dialogue to move the action along?**

Matthew stepped over the crumbling gate and peered into the darkness ahead of him. His friend, Amar, followed closely behind.

“What are we going to do now?” asked Amar. Matthew shrugged. He knew the stories about the house ahead of them. The ramshackle old building—which looked as though it might collapse at any moment—was haunted.

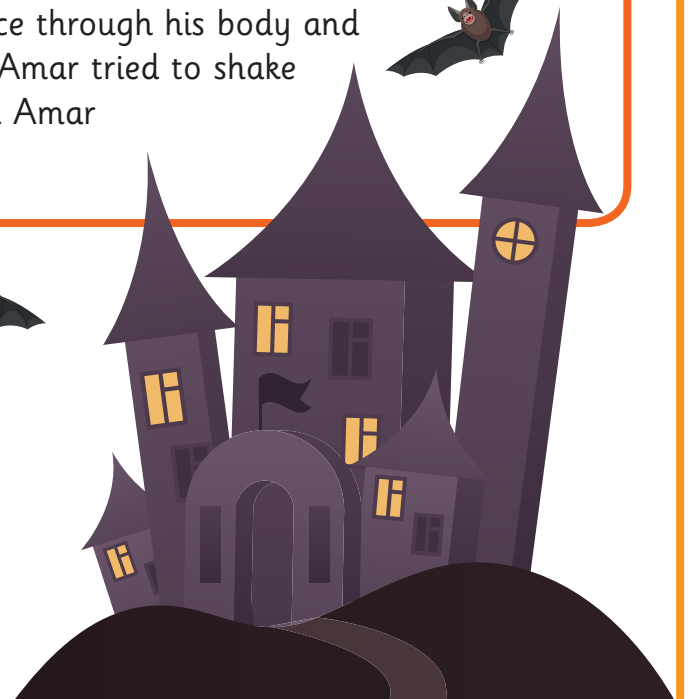
Amar had heard that the ghost of old Mrs Macready roamed the hallways and slammed the doors at night.

Matthew was nervous but didn't want to show it. “It's just a stupid story,” he scoffed.

He forced himself to put one foot in front of the other and keep moving. Amar seemed to take ages to make up his mind to follow, but then Matthew heard Amar's pounding footsteps as he chased after him.

“You're not leaving me out here on my own!” Amar said. He was breathless and Matthew knew that it was from fear rather than the run. They reached the house and Matthew stretched out a trembling hand to turn the door handle.

But as he touched it, he felt an icy shiver race through his body and he was frozen, motionless on the door step. Amar tried to shake him free but it was no good. Matthew heard Amar begin to scream in terror.



# Advance the Action

Below is a series of short pieces of description which create a short narrative. However, there is far too much description! Can you edit and improve the original text by using dialogue to move the action along? **The first is done for you.**

**Matthew stepped over the crumbling gate and peered into the darkness ahead of him. His friend, Amar, followed closely behind.**

“Where are you going?” asked Amar. “Matthew! Don’t step over  
that gate! I said . . . ugh. It’s really dark down there.”

“You coming or not?”

“Yes, I’m coming,” Amar grumbled.

**“What are we going to do now?” asked Amar. Matthew shrugged. He knew the stories about the house ahead of them. The ramshackle old building—which looked as though it might collapse at any moment—was haunted.**

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"You're not leaving me out here on my own!" Amar said. He was breathless and Matthew knew that it was from fear rather than the run. They reached the house and Matthew stretched out a trembling hand to turn the door handle.

But as he touched it, he felt an icy shiver race through his body and he was frozen, motionless on the door step. Amar tried to shake him free but it was no good. Matthew heard Amar begin to scream in terror.

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## Answers

Below is a series of short pieces of description which create a short narrative. However, there is far too much description! Can you edit and improve the original text by using dialogue to move the action along? **The first is done for you.**

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“Where are you going?” asked Amar. “Matthew! Don’t step over  
that gate! I said . . . ugh. It’s really dark down there.”

“You coming or not?”

“Yes, I’m coming,” Amar grumbled.

The answers below are examples — you might have written something different.

**“What are we going to do now?” asked Amar. Matthew shrugged. He knew the stories about the house ahead of them. The ramshackle old building—which looked as though it might collapse at any moment—was haunted.**

“What are we going to do now?”

“Look, that house might look like it’s falling apart. But we both know the stories. If that house is haunted, then I want to know.”

“But the roof—” Amar began.

“Yes, I know! It looks run-down, but it would be. No-one lives here.”

**Amar had heard that the ghost of old Mrs Macready roamed the hallways and slammed the doors at night.**

**Matthew was nervous but didn’t want to show it. “It’s just a stupid story,” he scoffed.**



“No-one except the ghost of old Mrs Macready,” Amar replied. “I can see you’re scared like I am, so why don’t we just go home?”

“It’s just a stupid story,” Matthew scoffed.

“You’re just telling yourself that so you sound big and tough!”

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## Answers

He forced himself to put one foot in front of the other and keep moving. Amar seemed to take ages to make up his mind to follow, but then Matthew heard Amar's pounding footsteps as he chased after him.



“What are you doing now?” Amar continued. “Why are you walking down the . . . he’s walking down the path. Why am I standing here talking to myself? Alone? In the—” Amar stopped speaking and ran after Matthew.

“You’re not leaving me out here on my own!” Amar said. He was breathless and Matthew knew that it was from fear rather than the run. They reached the house and Matthew stretched out a trembling hand to turn the door handle.

“You’re not leaving me out here on my own!” Amar said.

“Why are you out of breath? Are you really that scared?”

Matthew laughed.

“Wait! Just, wait!” said Amar. “You don’t need to go in there.

Don’t open the door. Just wait.”

But as he touched it, he felt an icy shiver race through his body and he was frozen, motionless on the door step. Amar tried to shake him free but it was no good. Matthew heard Amar begin to scream in terror.

“Matthew? Matthew? What are you doing? Come on, you’re

scaring me now. Why aren’t you moving? You’re like a statue, an

icy statue! What the—” Amar stopped. Then he began to scream

in terror.