NOWAY ACADEMY ENGLISH RESOURCE PACK

The Keeper Beneath NOWAY Academy

A suspense-writing sequence for Years 5-6: read, investigate, plan and continue the mystery.

YEAR	Years 5-6
TIME	45-60 minutes, or two shorter sessions
FOCUS	Inference, vocabulary, sentence craft and suspense writing
YOU NEED	This pack, pupils' books and a highlighter

Something has been guarding the oldest corridor for longer than the school has existed. Tonight, it has started knocking back.

Created for inclusive British classrooms by Diamond Education Hub

Teacher guide

Learning objective

To explain how a writer creates suspense and use those techniques in an original continuation.

SUCCESS CRITERIA	I can select precise verbs and sensory details. I can vary sentence length to control pace. I can reveal information gradually. I can end with a question, discovery or danger.

Suggested lesson sequence

1. Hook - 5 minutes
Read only the title and opening sentence. Pupils predict what the Keeper might protect.

2. Read - 8 minutes
Read the model opening aloud once for atmosphere, then again while pupils mark clues.

3. Investigate - 10 minutes
Complete the inference and vocabulary prompts. Require evidence from the text.

4. Craft - 10 minutes
Rehearse sentence-length and show-not-tell activities before writing.

5. Write - 20 to 30 minutes
Pupils continue from the final line, using the planner and success criteria.

6. Review - 5 minutes
Highlight one effective choice and identify one precise next step.

ACCESS WITHOUT LOWERING CHALLENGE	Read aloud; keep the word bank visible; let pupils plan orally; offer the sentence openings; allow speech-to-text or a scribe where appropriate. Keep the same ambitious story outcome.

Model opening

The Keeper Beneath NOWAY Academy

At 4:17, long after the final bell, Daisy-Mae heard the first knock.

It came from beneath the corridor floor: three slow taps, a pause, then three more. The strip lights flickered above her. Every display board seemed to lean closer, as if the paper figures were listening too.

She should have gone home. Instead, she followed the sound past the locked library and towards the oldest part of the academy, where pupils were told never to wander alone. Her trainers whispered against the tiles. Tap. Tap. Tap.

At the end of the corridor stood a door she had never noticed before. It was narrow, painted black and fitted with a brass keyhole shaped like an eye. Cold air breathed through the gap beneath it.

Daisy-Mae crouched. Scratched into the paint were five words: THE KEEPER KNOWS YOUR NAME.

Behind the door, something dragged itself closer.

Then a voice - dry, low and impossibly near - whispered, 'Daisy-Mae.'

STOP AND NOTICE	Which detail creates the strongest picture in your mind? Which sentence changes the pace? What has the writer deliberately not explained?

Quick annotation key

Underline	a sensory detail	**Circle**	a precise verb
Box	a short sentence	**Star**	an unanswered question

Read like a writer

Answer in full sentences and use evidence from the model opening.

1. Why does the precise time, 4:17, make the opening feel believable?

2. Find two details that make the ordinary school corridor feel threatening.

3. What does the phrase 'the paper figures were listening too' suggest?

4. Why does the writer repeat 'Tap. Tap. Tap.' as separate sentences?

5. What can you infer about the black door? Give two pieces of evidence.

6. How does the final word change the danger for Daisy-Mae?

Vocabulary investigator

WORD OR PHRASE	WHAT IT SUGGESTS	MY ALTERNATIVE
flickered		
whispered against the tiles		
cold air breathed		
dragged itself closer		

Suspense craft lab

1. Control the pace

Rewrite this moment twice. First, slow it down with detail. Then speed it up with short sentences.

The door opened and Daisy-Mae went inside.

SLOW VERSION - make the reader wait

FAST VERSION - make the danger hit

2. Show, do not name

Show that Daisy-Mae is frightened without using the words frightened, scared, afraid or nervous.

3. Build a sentence

OPENING	POSSIBLE CONTINUATION
Although every instinct told her to run,	she pressed her ear against the freezing door.
Without warning,	
From somewhere beneath her feet,	
Only when the knocking stopped did she realise	

Plan your continuation

Keep the mystery focused. You do not need to explain everything.

1. THE FIRST ACTION	What does Daisy-Mae do when the voice says her name?

2. THE CLUE	What object, mark, sound or message reveals part of the truth?

3. THE ESCALATION	What makes the situation more dangerous or urgent?

4. THE KEEPER	What small detail will you reveal about it? Avoid showing everything.

5. THE CLIFFHANGER	What discovery, question or danger will make the reader continue?

Useful language

precise verbs	crept recoiled scraped trembled lurched hovered
sound	muffled brittle hollow distant ragged sudden
place	narrow airless shadowed abandoned hidden uneven

Continue the mystery

Begin immediately after the final line of the model. Aim for 250-400 words. Reveal enough to move the story forward, but protect the central mystery.

Remember	Precise verbs | sensory detail | varied sentence length | gradual reveal | purposeful cliffhanger

The voice whispered her name again...

Review and respond

Read your work aloud quietly. Make one improvement before asking a partner to respond.

CHECK	I HAVE...
[ ]	opened with an immediate reaction or action
[ ]	chosen verbs that create a precise picture
[ ]	included sound, touch, sight or movement
[ ]	used short sentences deliberately
[ ]	revealed the Keeper gradually
[ ]	ended with a compelling cliffhanger

Partner response

The line that built the most suspense was...

It worked because...

One place where I wanted a little more detail was...

One question your ending made me ask was...

TEACHER FEEDBACK	Strength: _____ Next step: _____

Keep the reader curious. Make every clue earn its place.