

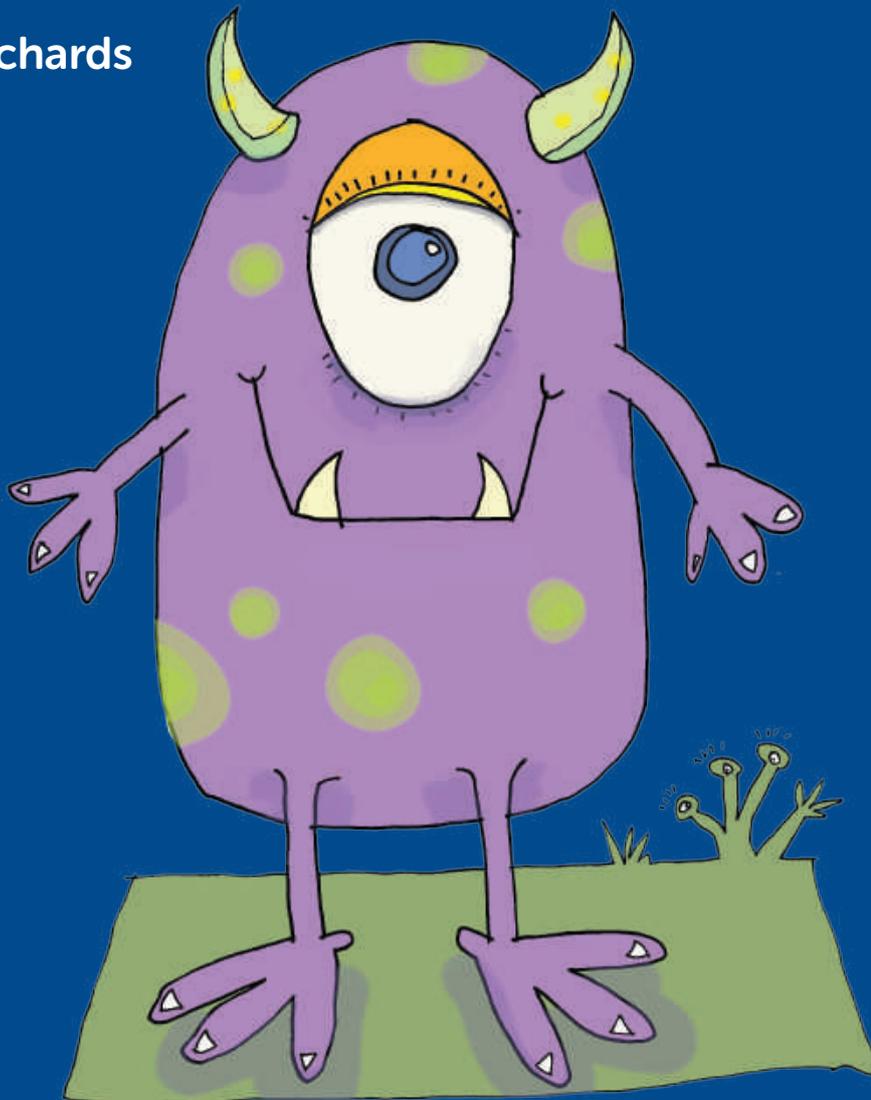


TalkforWriting

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

Marvellous Monsters

by Maria Richards



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Marvellous Monsters

a non-fiction workbook
by Maria Richards



Welcome to the world of marvellous monsters! You'll find lots of fun things to work through that will help you with your writing skills.





For hundreds of years, people all over the world have feared monsters and told tales of how terrible we are. Well, I'm here to tell you that we are not really that bad. In fact, we're marvellous! I'm going to tell you all about us and inspire you to write about your own marvellous monster. Read on and find out more or listen to a recording here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/marvellous-monsters/s-C35T3UjIRZC>

Monsters

What is a monster?

A monster is a colossal creature that usually scares people.

Appearance

Most monsters are enormous and can reach a height of 12 metres. However, some can be the size of an average human and grow to approximately 1.67 metres (five and a half feet tall). All monsters look different. Many are hairy, whereas some have scales. Additionally, monsters can come in many different colours. They range from a simple brown colour to being multicoloured, like the rainbow monster. Amazingly, some monsters have six eyes, eight legs and two sets of arms.

Habitat

Monsters are found across the world. They live in all sorts of different environments and can thrive in extreme heat or cold. The North Pole Monster loves to live under the snow, in icy crevices. However, most monsters prefer living under beds, inside cupboards or up in cosy attics.

Diet

All monsters are omnivores, which means they will eat anything. Furthermore, monsters love 'fast food' and will often raid McDonalds or KFC to grab burgers or chicken buckets. A small

minority of monsters are super healthy and always ensure they eat their '5-a-day' and keep sugary items to a minimum.

Surprisingly, monsters love tea and have been known to drink gallons of it, especially in the mornings.

What do they do?

Monsters are best known for scaring people and wreaking havoc. However, this is a popular misconception. Monsters are actually gentle creatures who love to read, take walks and play board games. They are also skilled bakers and make amazing bread and cupcakes. Unfortunately, because monsters look so scary, people often overreact when they see them and want to fight them off. In addition to this, monsters speak a language made up of roars, growls and howls which simply sounds scary to humans. Finally, monsters are extremely clumsy and, as they try to get away from people, they tend to knock things down or crush things under their feet by accident. All of these unfortunate things make monsters seem very hostile when, in fact, they are not.

Fast facts

- * The oldest monster lived to be 1003 years old.
- * Monsters have tiny thorns on their tongues which help them to groom.
- * Monsters have amazing hearing and can hear the slightest noise five miles away.
- * Monsters become adults at the age of eight.

Monster advice

If you happen to meet a monster or find one under your bed, do not fret! Simply smile at them, give them a little wave and offer them a cup of tea. They really are lovely creatures and you'll soon be friends for life!

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Respond to the text ...

1. Now you have found out more about monsters, what are your thoughts about them? Fill in the table below:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>I was really interested in ...</i> | <i>I would like to know more about ...</i> |
| <i>My top facts were ...</i> | <i>Questions I would like to ask about monsters ...</i> |



What do the words mean?

1. Let's take a look at the meaning of some of the words from the monster text.

| Word: | Definition: |
|----------------|---|
| colossal | something that is very, very big |
| approximately | nearly correct or exact |
| environment | the surroundings or conditions in which people, animals and plants live |
| thrive | to grow or develop very well |
| extreme | excessive – going beyond normal limits |
| crevice | a narrow crack or split |
| wreaking havoc | to cause great damage |
| misconception | a wrong idea about something |
| clumsy | doing things in an awkward way – always dropping or breaking things |
| hostile | unfriendly |



Draw images to represent the words

Look at the definitions above. Draw an image in each box below to represent the meaning of the word in it.

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| wreaking havoc | colossal |
| hostile | environment |



Recall the definition

Underline the correct definition of the words below.

Does **thrive** mean 'to run around wildly' or 'to develop really well'?

Is a **misconception** something that's correct or something that's incorrect?

Does **clumsy** mean you are not careful or careful?

Is a **crevice** a small crack or a buttery cake?

Does **approximate** mean 'nearly correct' or 'exactly correct'?

Is **hostile** when you are really kind or really nasty?

1. **Challenge:** Now write some sentences using our words. I have done one for you:



*My coins fell down a **crevice** in the pavement.*



Anything else?

2. Read the information on monsters again. Underline any words you don't know the meaning of. Can you find out the definition? You could ask someone else in your home to tell you, use a dictionary or search the internet. Write your definitions out on a separate piece of paper.



The monster-talk game

As you now know, we speak our own monster language that sounds like roars, growls and howls. However, if you translate our language, you'll find it's full of interesting words. Let's explore monster words by playing the monster-

talk game with compound words. Compound words are made when two words are joined to form a new word, for example: *blackboard*. I have taken compound words from your language and split them up. Your challenge is:

- ★ create a new compound monster word
- ★ invent a definition for your new monster word.



| Group 1 | | Group 2 | |
|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| air | bag | card | board |
| hand | rail | farm | house |
| camp | fire | gem | stone |
| loud | mouth | door | step |

★ Challenge: can you put these new words into a sentence?

| Monster word | Definition of the new alien word |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>airstone</i> | <i>A tiny pebble that floats in the air.</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |



Monster comprehension!

Here's a quick-fire reading quiz about monsters. How many can you answer?

1. How old was the oldest monster?

2. What colour are monsters?

3. What do monsters like to eat?

4. Which word in the text means the same as *enormous*?

5. What is the name of the monster who likes to sleep in extremely cold places?

6. Monsters love to drink milk. True or false?

7. What type of food might be on a monster's shopping list?

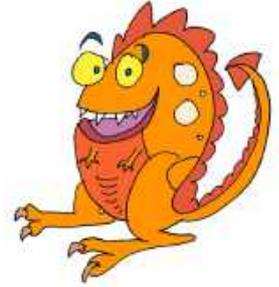
8. Why do humans assume monsters are scary?

9. What should you do if you meet a monster?

10. Where do monsters prefer to live?

Help! I've seen a monster!

2. Let's investigate some of the words and phrases that would help you to describe a monster to a friend if you saw one.



The describe it game:

Adjectives are used to describe things (nouns). For example
The **cold, miserable** dog howled at the **icy** moon.

The adjectives have told us how the dog feels and helped us to picture the moon.



Sometimes, using more than one adjective to describe something can be a good idea. Your challenge is to describe my monster friend pictured here using two adjectives. I have done an example for you. Remember, when you use two adjectives they become a list, so you separate them using a **comma**.

The monster I saw had **smokey, oval** eyes.



Write some interesting adjectives to describe different bits of the monster.

The monster I saw had:

_____ , _____ fur.

_____ , _____ teeth.

_____ , _____ claws.

_____ , _____ horns.

A simile is when you describe something by comparing it to something else using *like* or *as*.

1. Now try adding to your descriptions using a simile starting with *like*. I've done one for you:

The monster I saw had *smokey, oval eyes like burning cauldrons*.

The monster I saw had:

_____ , _____ fur like _____

_____ , _____ teeth like _____

_____ , _____ claws like _____

_____ , _____ horns like _____



Now try describing the monster in any way you choose:



The 'talk like an expert' game

Now let's invent some facts about monsters. Imagine you are a world expert on them and you are answering the interview questions below. Make up one fact for each question.

Start your answers with one of these generalisers. These are words like *most, all, some, many, a few, usually* that sum up things. For example, in response to the question, *What do monsters eat?* you could answer:

Most monsters like hamburgers.

Where do monsters go on holiday?

What do monsters like to do to relax?

How do monsters travel to work?

Why do monsters live in groups?

Challenge: Add to your facts above by using the adverb 'additionally'. Use it to start a NEW sentence to add to your facts. For example:

Most monsters like hamburgers. Additionally, they enjoy eating ice cream covered in gravy.



Now write your own questions to ask a monster. Start with a question word like *what, when, where, who* and *how*. Don't forget to end your question sentences with a question mark.

1. Now it's time to invent some really juicy facts. We can use engaging adverbs to hook our reader's interest, like these:

Amazingly,

Interestingly,

Surprisingly,

Weirdly,

Intriguingly,

Confusingly,

Invent some really juicy facts about monsters and start them with one of these engaging adverbs. And remember to add the comma after the adverb, just like I have. Be as creative as you like with your inventions.

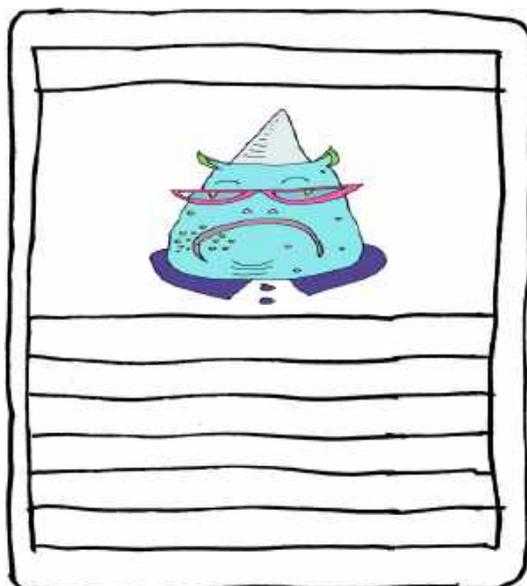
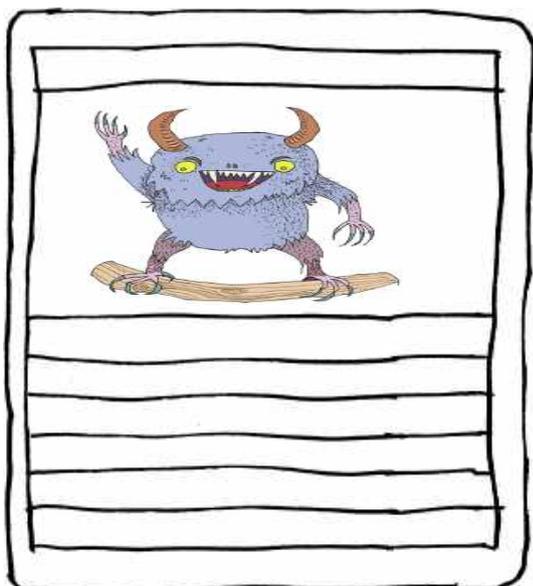
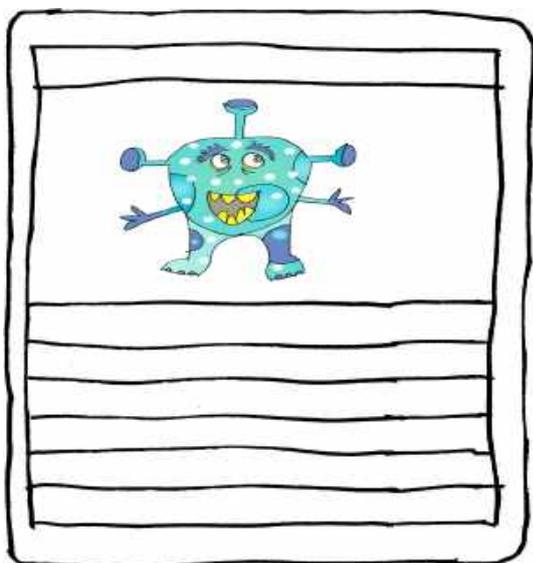
For example: *Weirdly, monsters will sleep with one eye open.*

Monster power!

Have you ever wondered just how many monsters there are? What do they look like? How strong are they? Let's put all your ideas onto 'Top Monster' cards in Top-Trump style. First, take a look at mine:

Your turn! Make a set of monster 'Top Trumps' and play with someone else at home or school. Here are some monsters to get you going but you can create as many as you like.

| BONZER FLATHORN | |
|-----------------|-----|
| STRENGTH | 79 |
| COURAGE | 13 |
| BRAIN POWER | 1 |
| CLUMSINESS | 99 |
| TEMPER | 32 |
| AGE | 146 |



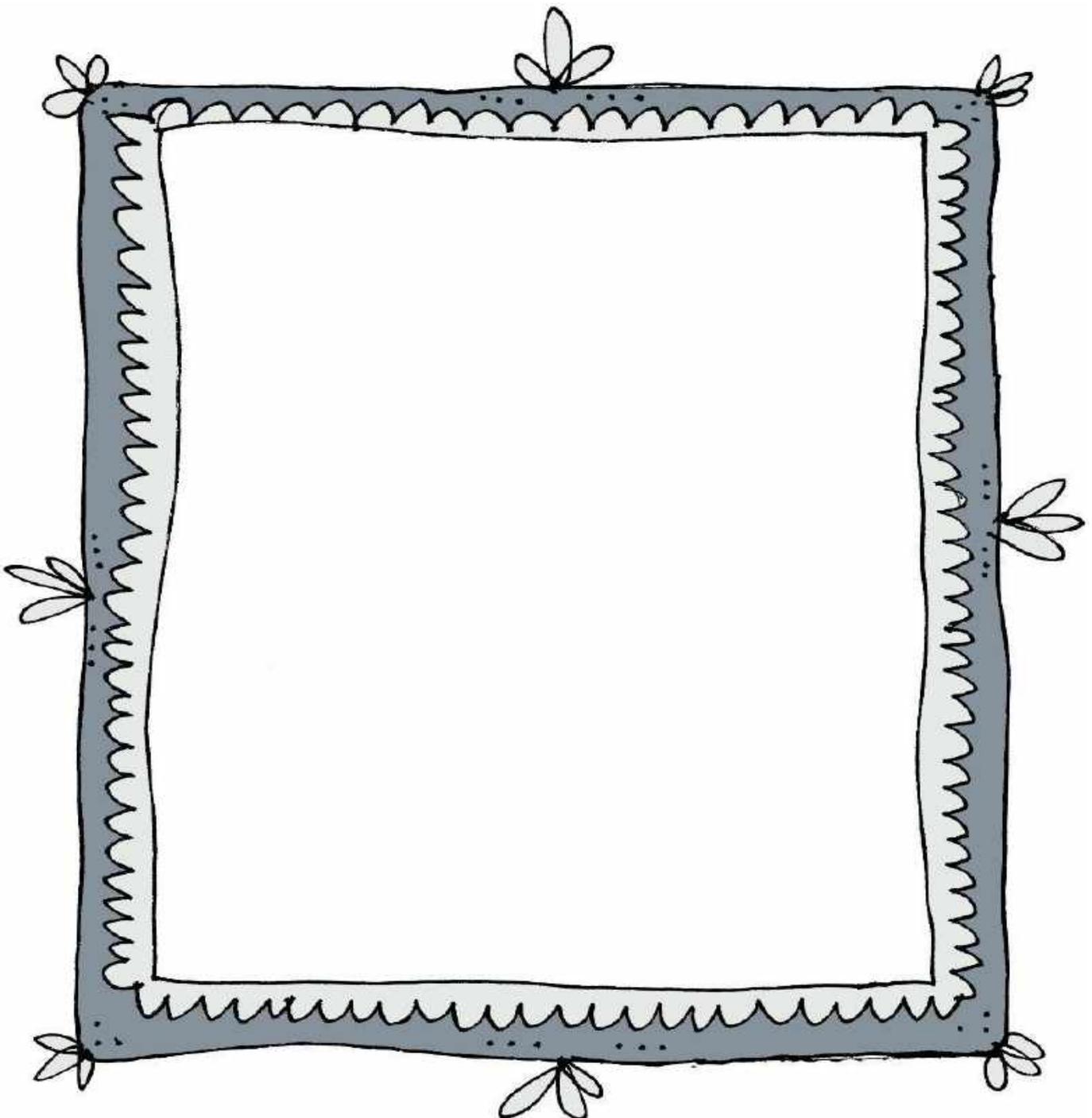
If you don't know how to play Top Trumps you can find out here:
<http://www.toptrumps.com/how-to-play-top-trumps/>





A monster of your own! How about having a monster of your own? What fun you'd have! If you could have a monster, what would it be like?

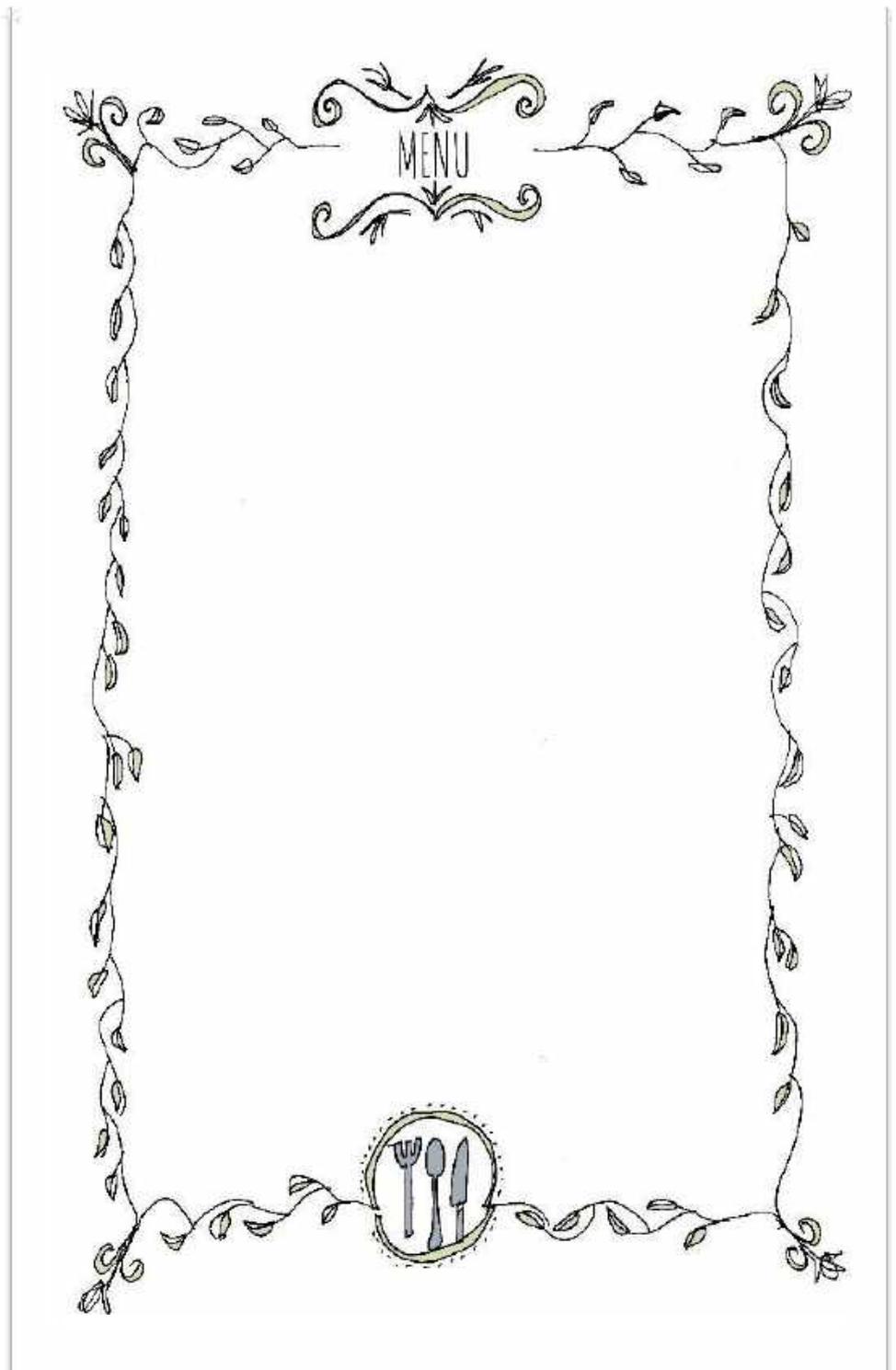
Design your own pet monster. How many eyes will it have? How many legs? What colour will its skin or fur be? What other features will it have?



Your monster's favourite dinner!

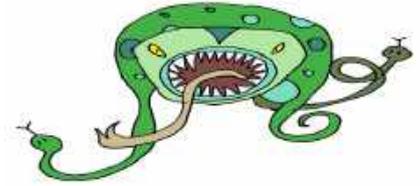
What would your monster order if it was taken out for a birthday dinner? Use the ingredients below to create your monster's birthday treat! You can add in some of your ingredients too.

peas
ice cream
turnips
potatoes
Battenburg cake
tomatoes
lettuce
cheeseburgers
ham
melon
chocolate biscuits
butter
grass
sausages
baked beans
oranges
spaghetti and meatballs
crisps
rice
fish fingers
leaves
onions
mars bar
chicken nuggets
nettles
dandelion leaves
carrots
watercress
spinach
tomato soup
trifle
bacon
French fries

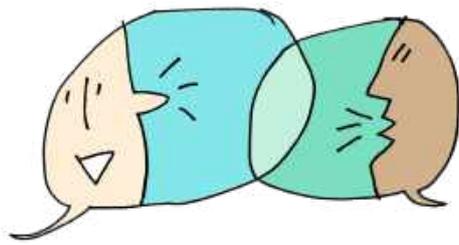


Let's innovate!

1. Now let's think a little bit more about your monster. What does it look like? What does it eat? Use the planner below to plan your ideas.



| Underlying structure | Jot down your ideas in note form |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Type of Monster <i>Name the monster after yourself e.g. The Maria Monster</i> | |
| What is it? <i>Tell the reader what type of monster it is</i> | |
| Appearance <i>Information about what your monster looks like</i> | |
| Habitat <i>Information about where your monster lives</i> | |
| Diet <i>Information about what your monster likes to eat</i> | |
| What they do <i>Information about what your monster likes to do</i> | |
| Fast Facts <i>Some fascinating facts about your monster</i> | |
| Monster Advice <i>Any useful tips to give to your reader</i> | |



Talk your plan through

It is really important to have a good read through your plan to make sure that it makes sense. Try reading it aloud to someone at school or at home. Are there any ways to improve it?



Now you're ready to write about your monster. The original 'Monsters' text can help you and you can reuse the sentence starters to get your paragraphs going if you like. See how I've reused them below for the 'Maria monster'.

Use your plan to help you write a draft on a separate piece of paper and don't forget to check that the text flows, makes sense and is properly punctuated.

What is a Maria monster?

A Maria monster is ...

Appearance:

Most Maria monsters are ...

However, some ...

All Maria monsters ...

Many are ...

Additionally, ...

Amazingly, some Maria monsters have ...

Habitat:

Maria monsters are found ...

However, some Maria monsters prefer ...

What do they eat?

All Maria monsters are ...

Furthermore, ...

A small minority of Maria monsters ...

Surprisingly, Maria monsters love ...

What do they do?

Maria monsters are best known for ...

However, ...

They are also ...

In addition to this, ...

Finally, Maria monsters are ...

Fast Facts

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Monster advice

If you happen to meet a Maria monster ...



What's under a monster's bed?

Many people believe that monsters like to hide under children's beds. Well, that's just not true! However, we do have interesting things under our beds. Ever wondered what you'd find? Take a look below or listen to the poem being read here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/monsters-bed/s-wXMblg7PxG0>

What's Under a Monster's Bed?

Under a monster's bed, you'll find ...

Rugged rocks from an ancient volcano,
The sound of a thousand beating blackbird wings,
The smell of freshly baked cinnamon pie,
The fastest cowboy,
The slowest rain,
A coat made of handshakes and a hat made of
smiles,
500 runaway meerkats,
Two frozen, crystal teardrops,
A bag full of crazy ideas,
A broken sunrise,
A forgotten story.

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Write your poem

Use this planner to help you sort your ideas for your poem. And remember, poems don't have to rhyme – mine didn't.

| Underlying structure | New poem ideas |
|--|----------------|
| An unusual item that you would find somewhere interesting Use the pattern: ... <i>from a</i> ... e.g., <i>Feathers from a flamingo</i> | |
| The sound of something | |
| The smell of something | |
| The fastest something | |
| The slowest something | |
| Two pieces of unusual clothing | |
| A large number of something e.g., <i>1000 frog eyes</i> | |
| A small number of something e.g., <i>Three dust mites</i> | |
| A measurement of something e.g., <i>A spoonful of words</i> | |
| Something broken | |
| Something forgotten | |
| Any other ideas you want to add: | |



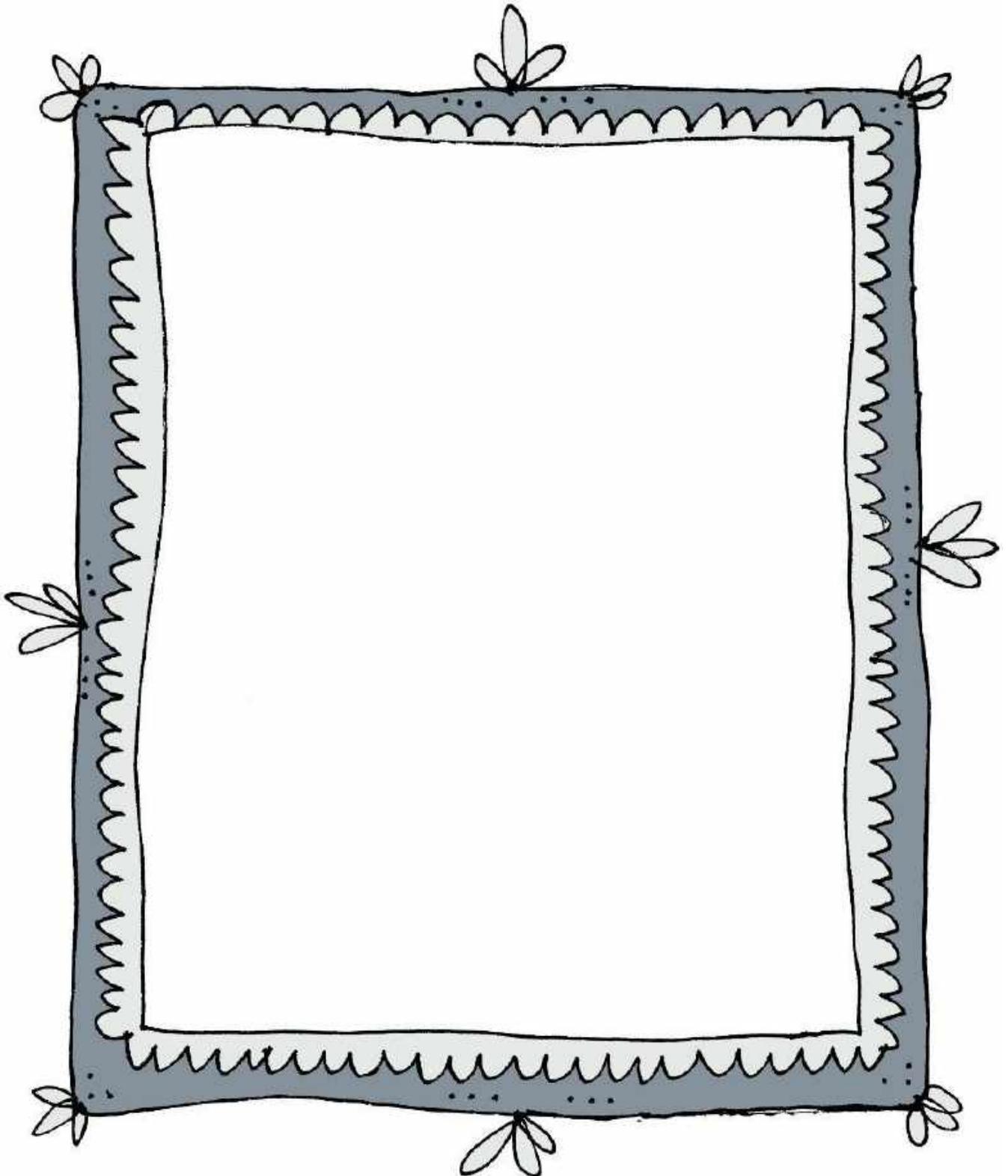
Now have a go at writing a first draft of your poem using your plan to help you. What strange things would you find under your monster's bed?

Follow my pattern above and think about the language you can use. Be as inventive as you can. Here are a few suggestions:

- ★ Try to make your items sound exciting by using alliteration – where words start with the same sound e.g., *rugged rocks*
- ★ Use precise, powerful verbs e.g., *beating wings*
- ★ Choose unusual things to describe. Be as inventive as you can e.g., *a coat made of handshakes*
- ★ Use opposites or pairs to create interest: *500* and then *two*, 'the sound of ...' and then 'the smell of ...' the *fastest* and then the *slowest*
- ★ Use a measure of something e.g. *a handful of, a bag full of, a spoonful of, a list of ...*

Let's publish!

Once you have checked your poem, publish it below:



Why not try some Monster science?

- ★ I asked our monster friend Dr Jo, who is a brilliant scientist, if there were any science experiments that you could try out, that were good for monsters. She has come up with four great ones for you.

Make sure you take care and always do these with an adult.

If you try some, you can write about what you did using this planner to help you:

| Underlying structure | Sentence starters to help with writing |
|---|---|
| State what the experiment was about. | <i>The experiment I tried was ...</i> |
| Items used. | <i>For the experiment I needed ...</i> |
| What was done. (Use <i>first, next, after that, finally</i> to structure this bit) | <i>To do the experiment, first I ... Next I ...</i> |
| What happened? What was seen? | <i>When I did the experiment, I ...</i> |



Monster Science



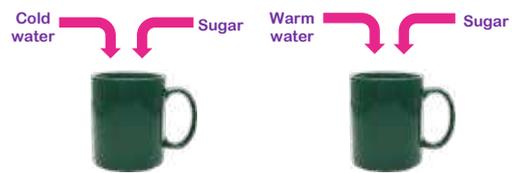
Monster Shadow Sizes



Design your own monster

- Cut out a monster shaped outline shadow puppet
- Use a torch to cast a shadow of your monster on the wall
- What happens when you hold the shape near the torch? And far away?
- Can you make the shadow 1.67m tall?

Monster Tea



Monsters love a cup of tea

- Did you know, monsters love lots of sugar in their tea?
- How much sugar can you stir into a cup of tea before no more will dissolve?
- Does it make a difference in hot or cold water?
- Count how many spoons you can add

Clean Monsters



Monsters like to be really clean

This leads to very dirty bath water!
Can you help clean the dirty water?

- Add some soil to some water
- Make a filter using an empty plastic bottle with the top cut off and turned upside down
- Line with an old cloth or kitchen roll
- Pour the dirty water through
- What else could you add to improve your filter?

Monster Exercise



Find the best exercise for Monsters!



- Design an exercise programme for monsters – you could try running on the spot, star jumps and bunny hops
- Measure your heart rate before and after
- Which activities are best for increasing heart rate?

Adult supervision required. Please take care. You are responsible for your own safety.
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Invention

Well done! We've reached the end of our non-fiction journey.



If you want to do more writing, you could try **INVENTING** some great stories or other text about monsters. Here are a few ideas:

1. Write a set of instructions showing how to look after your pet monster.
2. Write a story that has a monster as the main character. Use a story pattern that you know or use this basic structure:

Once upon a time, ...

One day, ...

Unfortunately, ...

Luckily, ...

In the end, ...

3. Write a sorry letter, in the role of a monster, apologising for scaring people and explaining that, really, you are a nice monster.
4. Design and write an invitation, inviting monsters to an amazing monster party.

Answers

Page 5: Recall the definition

Underline the correct definition of the words below.

Does **thrive** mean 'to run around wildly' or 'to develop really well'?

Is a **misconception** something that's correct or something that's incorrect?

Does **clumsy** mean you are not careful or careful?

Is a **crevice** a small crack or a buttery cake?

Does **approximate** mean 'nearly correct' or 'exactly correct'?

Is **hostile** when you are really kind or really nasty?

Page 9: Monster comprehension!

Here's a quick-fire reading quiz about monsters. How many can you answer?

1. How old was the oldest monster?
1003 years old
2. What colour are monsters?
They can be many colours from brown to multicoloured.
3. What do monsters like to eat?
They are omnivores and will eat anything. They do love fast food. A small minority are super healthy and eat their 5-a-day.
4. Which word in the text means the same as *enormous*?
Colossal
5. What is the name of the monster who likes to sleep in extremely cold places?
The North Pole Monster
6. Monsters love to drink milk. True or false?
False. They love tea.
7. What type of food might be on a monster's shopping list?
Any acceptable answer showing they like fast food or the fact they will eat anything!
8. Why do humans assume monsters are scary?
Because they look and sound scary. They are really big and their language sounds like growls, howls and roars.
9. What should you do if you meet a monster?
Smile, wave and offer them tea.
10. Where do monsters prefer to live?
Under beds, in cupboards and in cosy attics.

Page 10: The describe it game:

Some possible suggestions below.

The monster I saw had:

matted, brown fur like witch's hair.

dirty, broken teeth like ancient tombstones.

razer, curved claws like crescent moons.

twisted, scarlet horns like deadly daggers.

Time for me to leave you. I hope you've had fun and enjoyed your writing! Why not rate your journey with me. Put a star along the scale to show how much you enjoyed it:



This workbook has helped me learn ...



Teachers & parents: I hope you have enjoyed using this workbook. If you use Twitter, please share any work produced by tweeting me @Infeducation. I'd love to see it.

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Maria Richards, former teacher and National Strategy Literacy Consultant, now works with Talk for Writing to help schools develop the approach.

**Edited by Julia Strong
Prepared for online distribution by Nick Batty**

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Thanks to Jon Ralphs for cartoon designs and to Jo Montgomery for her science experiments.

