

Author & Illustrator ACADEMY

SOPHIE MCKENZIE WRITING AN ADVENTURE STORY:

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS



SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY!

Before watching the video or reading the extract...

In *Boy, Missing* Sophie explores what happens when seemingly 'ordinary' people find themselves in EXTRAORDINARY situations. Think of a time when you or someone you know experienced an extraordinary situation. What happened to make it so incredible? Share these experiences and discuss what made them out of the ordinary!

DISCUSS THE EXTRACT!

TAKEN FROM CHAPTER ONE OF 'BOY, MISSING'

Before you get into the detail of the discussion get the group's initial responses to the extract – how did they feel about it? Are they keen to read more? Do they have any questions?

1. How does the book's title create mystery and intrigue? What about the book's opening paragraph?
2. What is Ellen's relationship with Charlie? How can you tell from what they are doing and saying? (pages 1–2)
3. How does Sophie create suspense at the chapter's close?

FIND INSPIRATION

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO, DEVELOP SOPHIE'S IDEAS

INSPIRATION 1: CONNECTING CHARACTERS

In the video, Sophie explains how imagining characters with shared worlds can be a great source of creativity in story writing! For example, in 'Boy, Missing', the character Ellen is the daughter of Lauren – a previous character from the 'Missing' series.

- In pairs, discuss some of your favourite characters from books and stories. If your favourite character had a child in the future, what might he/she/they be like? How might they be similar or different?
- Then, create a profile for your new character. Include their name, a physical description, how they are alike or unlike their parent, their interests and hobbies. Sketch your new character!

INSPIRATION 2: WHAT IF?

In the video, Sophie shares some tips about how to inject excitement and adventure into your writing in order to grip the reader from the first page!

- Start by placing your character from the previous activity into an 'ordinary' situation e.g. going to school. What is happening? What's the weather like? List what makes this day so ordinary.
- Next, inject some excitement into it by noting down six questions all starting with 'WHAT IF'. Let your imagination go wild by thinking of the most incredible and unexpected things that could happen to your character. Share your ideas with the class and discuss which would make the most interesting stories – consider whether you want your stories to head into fantasy or stay with events that could happen in a realist setting.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE FROM SOPHIE MCKENZIE

Write a story about an ordinary person who goes on to experience something EXTRAORDINARY! Use your character profile and 'WHAT IF' list to create an imaginative and gripping adventure story that your reader won't be able to put down!