The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 1 Day 1

RECALL

- What time of day was it when Jamie was going to the observatory on Beacon Hill?
- How was Jamie feeling?
- Why did he go to the observatory?
- Why is the observatory important to the story?



READING FLUENCY: Read the text through once

Read the text in your assignment.

Answer the queries...

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From up here on Beacon Hill you can see everything. The whole village is spread out below me like a Google Map. There's Granddad's house, the long back garden with the barn at the bottom backing on to the wild meadows. Luckily, I can't hear his guitar playing from here. Then over there is my school, Austen Park Primary, its green playing fields surrounded by the new housing estate. The houses look like little boxes and with my finger and thumb I pinch and drag out the empty air, trying to zoom in to imagine what kind of family I'd find inside each one. I bet they wouldn't have an annoying granddad like mine.

The sun is starting to dip on the horizon, turning the sky a golden orange. I've got the revision worksheet spread out on my lap, the page of equations still looking impossible to me. Then I hear the roar of the fighter jet before I see it, the plane keeping low as it hugs the hills, heading back to the RAF base where the US fighter jets are stationed.

I jump as my mobile suddenly rings. Fishing my phone out from my pocket, I look down at the caller display.

"Hi, Dad."

There's a two-second delay and then I hear my dad's voice on the other end of the line.

"Hi, Jamie. I just phoned your mum and Charlie at home, but I couldn't get hold of you, so I just wanted to check you were OK."

Dad's kind of amazing. He's not even on this planet, but he's still making sure I'm all right.

"Where are you, son?"

"Up on Beacon Hill," I say. "I just wanted a bit of peace and quiet for a while. Granddad's practising his guitar again."

Dad laughs.

"Beacon Hill's probably the only place in Bramsfield where you can't hear Neil's guitar. I used to take your mum up there when we first started going out."

Mum and Dad both grew up in this village. They started going out when they were still at school and have been together ever since. All the newspapers say it's so romantic.

"There used to be an observatory up there at the top of the hill," Dad continues. "Your mum and me would go in on their open evenings and look up at the stars. When I looked through the telescope, it seemed as though the moon was close enough to touch. I could even see the spot where Neil Armstrong took his first step. I think that's what made me want to fly a spaceship, but I'm stuck here whizzing round in low Earth orbit instead. In fact, I'm heading over you right now, Jamie. Give us a wave."

I look up, my eyes scanning the horizon until I see the familiar glint of the ISS – a silver streak in the darkening sky. Dad showed me to how to spot this before he went up into space. It looks just like a fast-moving plane, but without any flashing lights and, because the ISS is so high up, it doesn't make a sound. Dad promised me that whenever he was flying straight overhead, he'd always keep an eye out for me.

"I can see you, Dad," I say, lifting my hand to wave at this shooting star.

"Me too, son," he replies, his voice as clear in my ear as if he were sitting next to me and not four hundred kilometres above my head.

There's a moment of silence as I try to work out what to say next. When Dad's at home I can talk to him about anything – all the funny things that happen at school, any problems I've got with my homework, what we're going to do together at the weekend. Everything I'm thinking about and all my worries too.

There's so much I want to tell him now. How I wish he was home for my birthday, how living with Granddad is driving me mad and how I can't stop worrying about his spacewalk on Friday. But when you've only got a few minutes to talk, it's hard to fit everything in.

Then I hear a long beeping tone in the background, like a phone that's been left off the hook.

"Are you still there, Dad?" I ask.

I hear the echo of my own voice on the line and then Dad's voice cuts back in.

"I'm going to have to go, Jamie. This is something I need to check out."

"Is everything OK?" I ask, panicking at the thought of anything going wrong up there. From meteor strikes to toxic leaks, Dad has explained to me all the different dangers he could face on the ISS. In an extreme emergency the astronauts have to take shelter in the Soyuz capsule that's connected to the space station in case they need to make a quick escape.

"No need to worry, son," he replies. "It's just a caution alert. Probably some computer system's gone offline." As he speaks, the beeping tone suddenly stops.

"There you go," he says. "Panic over. I just need to find out what this alert was about and then I can inform Mission Control. I'll speak to you tomorrow on our family video call."

The ISS is dipping low on the horizon now, giving me one last glimpse before it disappears.

"Bye, Jamie."

"Bye, Dad."

And then he's gone, travelling around the world in a tin can at over 27,000 kilometres per hour.

* * *

I'm nearly out of breath by the time I reach the very top of Beacon Hill, my shadow lengthening as the last rays of the sun leach out of the sky. I can't stop myself from shivering. I should've brought a jacket. Mum is probably expecting me back about now, but I don't want to go home yet. I want to see the observatory that Dad mentioned first.

If it was here when my dad was a teenager, then it must be well out of date by now. They put telescopes up into space nowadays so that astronomers can look further and further out into the universe. I glance up at the darkening sky, clouds now starting to appear on the horizon as daylight fades away. You wouldn't be able to see much from here.

Then I see it, half hidden behind a bank of trees, a squat red-brick building topped with a white, dome-shaped roof. The walls of the building are half covered in ivy and shrubs, making it blend in with the woodland that surrounds it, and as I get closer I can see coils of barbed wire sitting below the lip of the dome, its white paint peeling in

places and mottled with a greenish tint. The observatory looks abandoned, the only clue to its former life the rectangular slit in the side of the dome, left open to the sky.

I reach a rusting chain-link fence, the battered red-and-white sign that's fixed to this warning:

PRIVATE PROPERTY TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED

But less than a metre to the left I spot a gap between the fence post and a padlocked gate, the chain hanging so loose that it's easy enough for me to squeeze through.

Up close, the observatory looks even more derelict, its curved red-brick walls crumbling in places, the chunks of rubble almost lost among the weeds. It doesn't look like anyone has been here for years. There are no windows and as I skirt round the edge of the building in search of a door, I wonder what might be left inside. Maybe the telescope is still working and I'll be able to catch a close-up of Dad on his next orbit round in ninety minutes time. If I could just find a way in...

Then I see something that stops me in my tracks. Silhouetted against the setting sun, it looks like a robot riding on top of a giant techno-spider. It's nearly twice my height, its four metal legs extended and planted in the ground, while the satellite dish head is pointing to the stars. On its sleek white body I can see a bright blue logo:

* L.O.G.S.

Unlike the crumbling observatory, this looks like it's just fallen off the back of a spaceship. I step closer, peering at the strange machine to try and work out exactly what it is.

That's when I feel the shotgun press between my shoulder blades.

"Don't move," a woman's voice growls. "Or I'll let you have it."

Query 1 Why does the author choose to set this part of the story at this time of day?

I'm nearly out of breath by the time I reach the very top of Beacon Hill, my shadow lengthening as the last rays of the sun leach out of the sky. I can't stop myself from shivering. I should've brought a jacket. Mum is probably expecting me back about now, but I don't want to go home yet. I want to see the observatory that Dad mentioned first. If it was here when my dad was a teenager, then it must be well out of date by now. They put telescopes up into space nowadays so that astronomers can look further and further out into the universe. I glance up at the darkening sky, clouds now starting to appear on the horizon as daylight fades away. You wouldn't be able to see much from here.

Query 2 How does the author make the observatory seem mysterious?

Then I see it, half hidden behind a bank of trees, a squat red-brick building topped with a white, dome-shaped roof. The walls of the building are half covered in ivy and shrubs, making it blend in with the woodland that surrounds it, and as I get closer I can see coils of barbed wire sitting below the lip of the dome, its white paint peeling in places and mottled with a greenish tint. The observatory looks abandoned, the only clue to its former life the rectangular slit in the side of the dome, left open to the sky. I reach a rusting chain-link fence, the battered red-and-white sign that's fixed to this warning:

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How does the author extend the description in this section?

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Query 4 How does the author build up the suspense in the final chunk?

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The Jamie Drake
Equation
- Phase 1
Day 2: Blueprinting

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Chunking

Take the text and break it up into 4 sections.

How can you describe the sections to somebody who hasn't read the scene (be <u>specific</u> to this scene)?

RECALL BLUEPRINT FOR THE STORY:

PART OF THE TEXT	CONTENT	FEATURES
PART 1		
PART 2		
PART 3		
PART 4		

The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 2 Day 1: Identify, Examine, Practise, Apply

Identify

How has the author used the weather?

Look for weather vocabulary...

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Examine

Vocabulary	Meaning	Why is this a good choice of word?
shadows lengthening		
leach		
shivering		
darkening sky		
clouds appear on the horizon		
daylight fades		
wouldn't be able to see much from here		

Practise

How could we write sentences to create a feeling?

Noun	Verbs			
sun				
wind				
clouds				
light				
dark				

Noun	Sentence
sun	
wind	
clouds	
light	
dark	

Apply

Describe Jamie climbing the hill at dusk (sunset):

The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 2 Day 2: Identify, Examine, Practise, Apply

Identify

Can you spot the words/phrases in the text?

Then I see it, half hidden behind a bank of trees, a squat red-brick building topped with a white, dome-shaped roof. The walls of the building are half covered in ivy and shrubs, making it blend in with the woodland that surrounds it, and as I get closer I can see coils of barbed wire sitting below the lip of the dome, its white paint peeling in places and mottled with a greenish tint. The observatory looks abandoned, the only clue to its former life the rectangular slit in the side of the dome, left open to the sky. I reach a rusting chain-link fence, the battered red-and-white sign that's fixed to this warning:

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Examine

Vocabulary	Meaning	What feeling does the phrase generate?
Half hidden		
Squat red-brick building		
Blend in		
Coils of barbed wire		
Paint peeling		
Rusting chain-link fence		
Battered red-and-white sign		



Apply

Can you now describe the observatory as Jamie gets closer to it?

The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 2 Day 3: Identify, Examine, Practise, Apply



What punctuation has been used in this sentence?

 The fog reached the ground like a blanket; all sounds were smothered with a ghost-like quality to them.



Identify

Can you spot the punctuation in the following sentences?

A river of cars snaked along the mountain pass; vehicle after vehicle, for as far as the eye could see, desperate to escape.

Lights glittered in the distance, beckoning him home; ahead of him lay a corridor of darkness that he would have to cross before he reached safety.

Hanging from the trees like icicles, drops of water glimmered in the early morning sun; they hung there for what seemed like an eternity until they fell and landed lazily on the pillow-like ground below.

Examine

Can you see where the author has used semi-colons?

Why do you think that he has used them?

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Practise

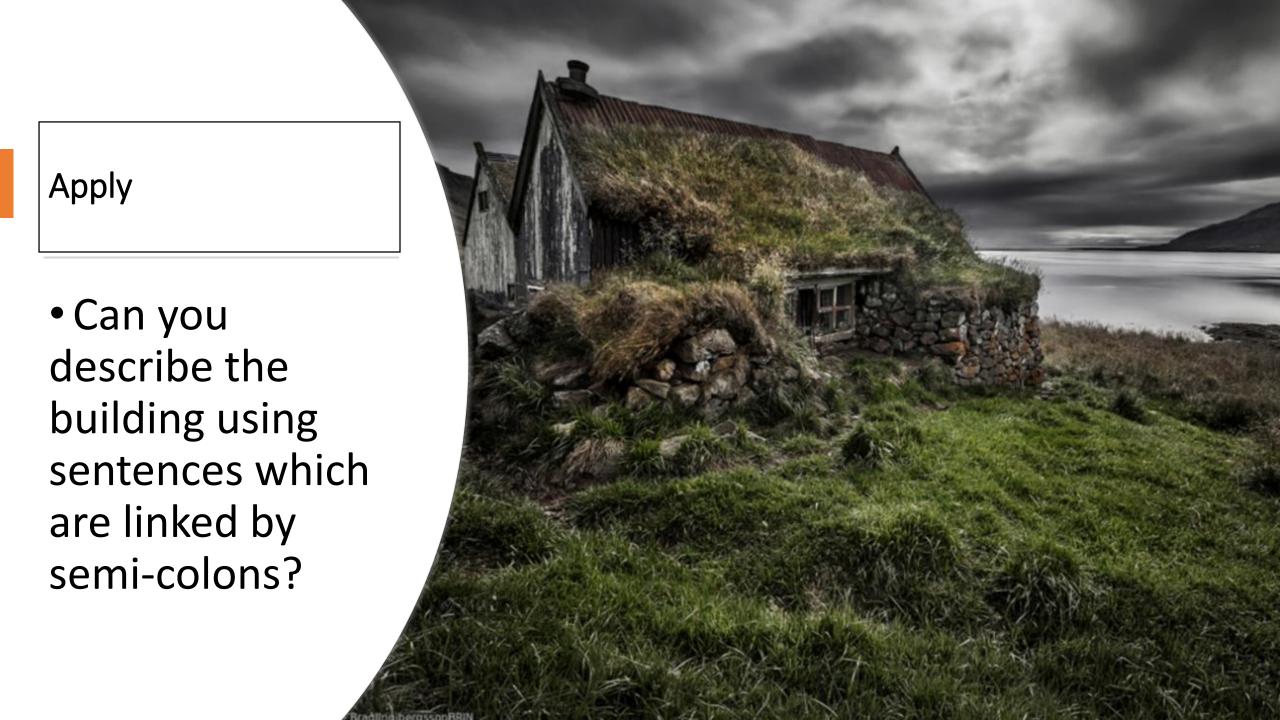
Write two sentences about the same subject.

Link the two sentences and then join them with a semi-colon instead of using a full-stop.

Waves

Darkness

Night time



The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 2 Day 4: Identify, Examine, Practise, Apply

Identify

ACTIVE SENTENCE = the subject is carrying out the action

PASSIVE SENTENCE = an action is being done to the subject Can you spot the passive sentences?

	Active	Passive
The boy dressed as an alien asked a question.		
A question was asked by a boy dressed as an alien.		
The door was closed by Jamie.		
Jamie closed the door.		
Dan Drake fired the space probes.		
The space probes were fired by Dan Drake.		
Grandad fell into the TV screen.		
The TV screen was fallen into by Grandad.		

Examine

Can you spot the passive sentence?

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That's when a shotgun is pressed between my shoulder blades.

"Don't move," a woman's voice growls. "Or I'll let you have it."

Examine

- A shotgun is pressed into my back.
- Who is pressing the shotgun into Jamie's back?
- As an author, do we know who is pressing the shotgun into Jamie's back?
- So, how <u>could</u> we have re-written this sentence (active)?
- Why has the author written the sentence as a passive one?

Practise

Change the following sentences into passive ones.

Can you create a 'secret agent'?

Active/Passive	Sentence
ACTIVE	Charlie opened Jamie's bedroom door.
PASSIVE	
ACTIVE	Jamie plugged the phone into the laptop.
PASSIVE	
ACTIVE	Jamie broke part of the fence.
PASSIVE	

Apply

Can you write a paragraph which ends with a passive sentence?

Imagine someone (do we want the reader to know who yet?) creeps up behind Jamie when he is outside the observatory.

Now write the paragraph...

The Jamie Drake Equation - Phase 2 Day 5: Alternative Writing Plan

Chunking

Take the text and break it up into 4 sections.

How can you describe the sections to somebody who hasn't read the scene (be <u>specific</u> to this scene)?

How can you generalise these?

- instead of naming a character, describe the type of character
 e.g. instead of 'Jamie Drake' write 'the main character'
- instead of saying a specific action, generalise it
 - e.g. instead of 'sneaking around the observatory' write 'sneaking around somewhere the character shouldn't be'

Key features

Think back over the Queries we have done:

- How did the author introduce the setting?
- How did the author describe what the main character is doing?
- How does the author make sure the character doesn't notice someone coming towards them?
- How did he build suspense?

RECALL BLUEPRINT FOR THE STORY:

PART OF THE TEXT	Specific	General
PART 1		
PART 2		
PART 3		
PART 4		

YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR THE STORY:

PART OF THE TEXT	What is going to happen	Key Features
PART 1		
PART 2		
PART 3		
PART 4		