

### Text selected by student for assessment: Short Story

#### Learning outcomes in focus

##### Students should be able to:

**R6.** Read their texts for understanding and appreciation of character, setting, story and action: to explore how and why characters develop, and to recognise the importance of setting and plot structure

**R7.** Select key moments from their texts and give thoughtful value judgements on the main character, a key scene, a favourite image from a film, a poem, a drama, a chapter, a media or web based event

**R8.** Read their texts to understand and appreciate language enrichment by examining an author's choice of words, the use and effect of simple figurative language, vocabulary and language patterns, and images, as appropriate to the text

**O2.** Engage actively and responsively within class groups in order to listen to or recount experiences and to express feelings and ideas

**O3.** Engage in extended and constructive discussion of their own and other students' work

**W1.** Demonstrate their understanding that there is a clear purpose for all writing activities and be able to plan, draft, re-draft, and edit their own writing as appropriate

**W2.** Discuss their own and other students' written work constructively and with clear purpose

**W6.** Use editing skills continuously during the writing process to enhance meaning and impact: select vocabulary, reorder words,

phrases and clauses, correct punctuation and spelling, reorder paragraphs, remodel, manage content

#### Teaching and learning context

Linking in with Anti-Bullying Week in our school, students read the novel *Lord of the Flies* and the poem 'Back in the Playground Blues' by Adrian Mitchell. We focused on a key moment where the mountain is on fire and explored the author's use of language to evoke disaster. We also discussed the evolution of the plotline and the way the author created tension.

Students created a proposal, individually, for a piece of writing they would create from a list of pre-taught genres; discussed their ideas with their peers in small groups; created a first draft; gave and received scaffolded feedback from their peers and from the teacher. They then created a second typed draft which they shared digitally with each other and with their teacher.

#### Task

Write a piece of fiction.

#### Features of Quality

Genre awareness and control/creativity

Writing competence and word choices

Awareness of and shaping for receiver/audience

\* Students choose two texts from their collection to submit for assessment.

## Playground Blues

inspired by Adrian Mitchell's poem "Back in the Playground Blues"

I lift the cuff of my plain white shirt. Eight twenty seven. I've still got some time to loiter around which will hopefully ensure me a safe passage to school. If my plan goes well the school assembly should start in three minutes then I'll embark on the short ten minute walk to school in about five minutes. If all goes well i'll be able to join the end of the line as they march back to class. The sole purpose of the plan is to avoid him. Benny Mason, he is probably the most hate filled juvenile there is. He hates everyone, he hates the school but most of all he hates me. I don't know why but he has had it out for me since I met him. I check my watch again. Thirty-one past eight. Better get going if i don't want to be in trouble. The teachers don't mind you missing assembly every now and again but if you miss any class time you better have a good excuse. I set out for school. I lock the door behind me as i leave because I'm always the last out in the morning, my mum and dad leave for work even before daybreak sometimes. I step outside and start to walk in a relaxed fashion along the sidewalk. At ease knowing there's no way that he'd wait for so long just to heckle me. I'm inspecting my school shoes as I walk. They really have gotten scruffy since the start of term, probably from being thrown about by him. I sense how I'm approaching his usual hangout spot, I look up but the pestering boy isn't sitting there. The rusted decrepit bench that he likes to sprawl out on is unoccupied. I'm relieved that he went to school and didn't wait around for me. He couldn't afford to be late again. He was always late for everything because as far as he is concerned the whole world can wait for him. Now that he actually faced trouble if he was late again I could avoid him. I make it to school in no time and I join my class just as their filing back into the classroom. we're being corralled into the school yard for break time before I even know it. I check my watch. Quarter to eleven, I need to survive for fifteen minutes. I start walking out into the yard. I feel a force equivalent to a battering ram charge into my shoulder. I do my best to break my fall with my arms. I hear the unmistakable voice of Benny Mason jeer "hah, you're on ". I get back up and brush myself off. I reply as calmly as possible " but I wasn't playing". I hear the exact words I expected from him "Well you are now". I don't even get to respond before he has ran off again, probably to pull the same trick on all the others. I go back into class when the bells rung and wait for the time to pass. Now that it's lunch I line up and get today's lunch. It shepherd's pie, a dish that was edible for a change. I guess that's why it doesn't bother me much if he ruins it like the other day. I remembered how I hadn't even sat down before he knocked down my tray. I cleared my mind and gaze across

the hall. My hopes of not being bothered faded. He's right there, Smirking. I can clearly hear his monotonous voice " Hey,there is a free seat right here". I pretend to not notice the offer. Just the way he said it stiffly made it more like a demand. I was one of the first to lunch but he still managed to sneak in before me as always. I choose the empty table closed to me.I take a glance up. He catches my eye and returns a over exaggerated smile. I haven't even started my meal before he's beside me. He slams down his tray and leans close to my ear. He whispers "you must've found it real lonely this morning". I continue to ignore his presence. I lift my hand to reach for the jug of water in the center of the table. His hands already clasped on it. "let me get that for you" he chimes and reaches for my cup. Before I can even stop him he has the jug raised. I feel a jolt and incredibly cold sensation. I didn't even have the chance to evade the incandescent fluid. I sit there rigid. Feeling the water soaking through my jumper and shirt, beyond uncomfortable. I grasp my tray. I stand up but my foot slips, having lost all traction due to the water. I fall back. My tray goes flying, straight up. It's soaring through the air. Everything going everywhere. The shepherd's pie had now separated from the mothership that was the tray. It makes a full revolution before landing right atop benny masons head. It was as if everything slowed down right before me, allowing me to appreciate the glorious moment unfolding, second by second. What was once identifiable as a Shepherd's pie was now a mess splattered across my enemies noggin. The lunch that he tried to ruin so gallantly was now all over his face. Before I could shout karma I'm suddenly pulled out of the moment by a grip of steel on the back of my collar. I'm pulled to my feet. Next thing I knew me and my adversary are being dragged across the lunchroom, past the reception and through a maze of hallways and are standing before the principle, also in charge of disciplinary duties. Silence hung in the air. I'd only ever heard fragments of stories, legends, of the principal's office. Of the torturous punishments that even the ones who survived never told of what happened. I turn my stiffly trying to get a good view of Ben. He's nervous too. He's standing straight up shoulders are rigid, his hands are stuck to his sides. All he needed was a soldier's uniform instead of this bland constricting school uniform and he'd be standing to attention. I could see him wet his dry lips out of the corner of my eye, He piped up " I barely did anything, I swear" in the most culpable voice. The principal who in his suit tailored to perfection sat behind his massive desk let out a sort of grumble. In the neat, tidy expensive office we two were the people you'd least expect to find. The principal looked over at me inquisitively. In a gruff voice he questioned " how exactly did your lunch end up on his head?" gesturing to ben. "and why exactly are you drenched?". A few seconds pass and somehow i feel

courageous enough to respond “ well you see sir...” I pause my speech. A fine glob of what was my lunch is precariously dangling from ben’s forehead. Its shifting. Ben was desperately attempting to control the situation, his face all red. In vain it slides down and off his cranium. It makes a soft thud on the fine carpet of the office. The principal has a grimaced expression of sheer horror and disgust. I couldn’t stop the outburst of laughter. I hadn’t seen someone so unfortunate and the fact that it’s my enemy was too entertaining. I struggled in vain to control myself. I hadn’t even regained my composure before me and the boy now laughing alongside me were evicted from the office. The principal was now shouting “you two will be scraping up this mess and’ll be scrubbing the food hall spotless everyday for the rest of eternity you hear me!”. He turned and after muttering few more complaints and calling us delinquents and troublemakers disappeared into his office slamming the door behind him. We both stood there laughing our heads off, in the hallway. There was just something so hilarious about how hard ben had tried to save the situation from plummeting into disaster. We were both there laughing uncontrollably at the preposterous situation that had just passed. It was ludicrous. The boy I hated not so long ago was the same one standing next to me chuckling away. Ben had finally stopped his fits of laughter and now spoke. “ I haven’t had that much fun in a long time”. He gave me a beaming grin then turned and started off down the corridor. “see ya round”.

### Features of quality - teacher annotations and level of achievement

#### Teacher annotations:

##### **FQ1.** Genre awareness and control/creativity

The text showed very good control of the genre – the narrative voice and narrative structure were both strong and the writer effectively builds up tension and suspense.

##### **FQ2.** Writing competence and word choices

The writing is highly competent and there are some imaginative word choices that are suited to the purpose of the text. The student used detailed descriptions, imagery and realistic dialogue to successfully create tension. In places, there is scope to work on phrasing and word choices.

##### **FQ3.** Awareness of and shaping for receiver/ audience

The story has a clear conclusion and resolution of tension. However, the lack of paragraphs affected the coherence of the piece and shows a lack of awareness of the impact a lack of paragraphs has on the audience/ receiver's experience of reading it.

#### Level of achievement:

##### **Best fit on balance judgement =**



Above expectations

This example represents one text from the student's Collection of Texts. The student selected this and one other text to submit for assessment. Looking at a number of examples, teachers will see a variety of different text types, in a variety of genres.

More examples will be added over time at [curriculumonline.ie](http://curriculumonline.ie)

#### Features of Quality:

##### **Exceptional**

The student's text shows creativity and command of the chosen genre.

The writing is highly competent, marked by original ideas, and imaginative word choices are perfectly suited to the purpose of the text.

The work is fully shaped for its intended receiver/ audience.

##### **Above expectations**

The student's text shows very good control of the chosen genre.

The writing is consistently competent, and effective word choices are very well matched to the purpose of the text. The work is clearly shaped with the receiver/audience in mind.

##### **In line with expectations**

The student's text shows good awareness of the chosen genre.

The writing is generally competent, and word choices match the purpose of the text well.

Content and development of ideas reveal consistent awareness of the receiver/audience.

##### **Yet to meet expectations**

The student's text shows little awareness of the chosen genre.

The writing lacks competence, and word choices may be inappropriate to the intended purpose of the text.

Content and development of ideas reveal little awareness of a receiver/audience.

The annotations capture observations by the student's teacher, using the features of quality, with a view to establishing the level of achievement this text reflects.

The annotations and judgement were confirmed by the Quality Assurance group, consisting of practicing English teachers and representatives of the Inspectorate, the SEC and JCT.