AQA Anthology Prose

‘Superman and Paula Brown’s New Snowsuit’

**Learning Objectives:**
- Respond to texts critically, sensitively and in detail.
- Use textual evidence as appropriate.
- Explore how language, structure and forms contribute to the meanings of texts.
- Consider different approaches to texts and alternative interpretations.

**Starter: quick discussion**
- How can Superman, Dali, flying and dreams be linked?

**Dali Landscapes**

‘My flying dreams were as believable as a landscape by Dali,’

**Starter: development**
- Read page 63 lines 5-25.
- Find and highlight any quotations that relate to flying, Superman and dreams.
- Do your quotations add anything more to your understanding of how the three things link together? Jot down your thoughts.

**Paula Brown:**
- What impression do we get of her from what the narrator says?
  - ‘... nobody on our block really liked her because she was bossy and stuck up, with pale skin and long red pigtails and watery blue eyes.’

**The war movie:**
- How does this influence the narrator?
- How do games and reality mix here?
- Why can’t she dream of Superman now?
The Saturday game:

• Underline any colour words on page 65. Are the colours significant in any way?
• Why does Paula get caught by Jimmy?
• How does the narrator suggest Paula falling over is so dramatic? What techniques are used here?

The blame:

• Why do you think Paula blames the narrator?
• Why doesn’t anyone stick up for the narrator?
• How does the game take a sinister twist?

Linking: war and the narrator

• ‘...the rest of them faced me with a strange joy flickering in the back of their eyes.’
• ‘...they were all moving in on me, chanting in a chorus...’
• ‘In the well of faces moving toward me I saw no help...’
• ‘I felt the sharp thud of a snowball on my left shoulder...’

Can you find links between the snowsuit incident and the other war references in the story?

Imagery:

• ‘...the blood beat in my ears like a slack drum...’ (line 162)
• ‘...the words came out like hard, dry little seeds, hollow and insincere...’ (line 157)
• ‘A small unripe moon was shafting squares of greenish light along the floor...’ (line 166/7)

• Sketch these images and consider the effects.
• Now look back over the story and try to find some other examples of effective imagery.

The ending:

‘I lay there alone in bed, feeling the black shadow creeping up the underside of the world like a flood tide. Nothing held, nothing was left. The silver airplanes and the blue capes all dissolved and vanished, wiped away like the crude drawings of a child in coloured chalk from the colossal blackboard of the dark. That was the year the war began and the real world, and the difference.’

• How is this made sinister?
• Why have things changed?
• How does the writer use imagery here?
• What does the narrator mean?
• How is there a difference?
• Can we link the ending and the opening?
Uncle Frank:

- What do you think of him now?
- How has he changed to the narrator?
- Is he correct when he says: ‘...and ten years from now no one will ever know the difference.’?

Plenary: which statement best sums up the story?

- It’s about being a child and having exciting dreams.
- It’s about how people let us down.
- It’s about how dreams can be shattered by the actions of others.
- It’s about how cruel people are.
- It’s about the loss of innocence.
- It’s about how events in our life link to global happenings.

Or is it …? If you’re not sure about those above, try to think up your own summarising statement.