

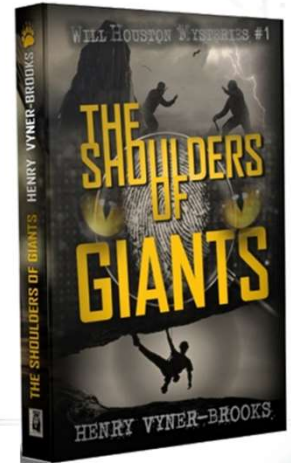
Great Northern Tour

— SOLO CREATIVE WRITING MINI UNIT TEACHER'S NOTES

Based on the novel by Henry Vyner-Brooks

Age range: 12–14

Tone: Playful, accessible, craft-focused



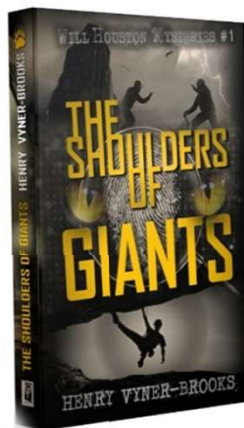
Overview for Teachers

This short unit uses *The Shoulders of Giants* as a shared story-world to teach **core writing skills** without requiring students to have read the novel. Each lesson focuses on one aspect of **writerly power** such as showing not telling, voice, tension, subtext, or endings.

Students are invited into the book's world through brief setups rather than extracts, allowing curiosity to build naturally. Activities are designed to work for mixed-ability classes, reluctant writers, and confident writers alike.

Learning Objectives (Student-Friendly)

By the end of this unit, students will be able to: - Show emotions through actions and detail rather than explanation - Use dialogue to reveal character - Create mood using setting and sensory detail - Write from different perspectives - Craft strong endings that hook a reader

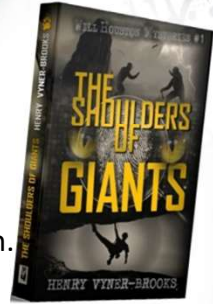


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NO. 1 — SUSPENSE

FOCUS: 'WHAT PEOPLE SAY'

Context: In the book, villagers whisper about a dangerous creature on the moors. Rumours and mystery are a great way to draw a reader in. I bet you can remember when a rumour grew at school and how it changes when stories are retold?



MISSION : CREATE YOUR OWN MYSTERY BOX

Student Prompt: Write a short piece made entirely of **rumours** about a wild beast in your neighbourhood.

Rules for an 'unreliable narrator': - No confirmed facts - Use phrases like *they say*, *some people believe*, *no one agrees*.

Challenge: End with one line that makes the mystery worse, not clearer.

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Case study: The 'unreliable narrator' was subtly/brilliantly done by Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky in *Demons*.



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NO. 2 – TENSION

FOCUS: THE SLOW REVEAL

Suspense is wanting to know the answer to a question. **Tension is worrying about how things will work out** – but they do overlap. You can want to know the answer to a question and also worry about how it will turn out. Can you remember a 'slow reveal' in a book, film or real life? How did the waiting feel?



MISSION: STRETCH THE MOMENT

Context: In the novel, danger often approaches slowly before it explodes.

Student Prompt: Write about a moment where something bad might happen, but does not happen yet.

Rules: The moment must last at least **8 sentences** and cover at least **8 seconds** – You cannot be sure which way it will go until the last sentence. Focus on waiting, noticing, listening. Make the reader wait for information - Create questions in the reader's mind - Use detail to suggest danger or importance - Blend fact with imagination respectfully - End scenes with impact.

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NO.3 – REVELATION

FOCUS: OBJECTS FROM THE PAST

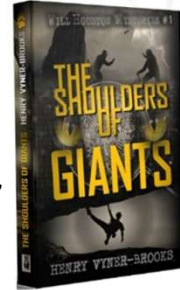
Imagine some old objects you have seen and touched – e.g. a gun, knife, coin, ring, jewel, a letter etc. What stories could it hold?

MISSION: A STORY BEHIND THE MEDAL

Context: Will learns about a great uncle who earned a Victoria Cross (medal) during the war. Through it we learn so much about the family. A skillful writer can use a particular object to anchor a reader's attention and draw out his or her imagination. (From the particular to the universal)

Student Prompt: Write a short (fictional) historical scene explaining **how** another object became important to someone close to you.

Rules: Set it in the past and include real historical details. Focus on a single moment. Aim for detail, accuracy and imagination.



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'To see a world in a grain of sand, And a heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, And eternity in an hour.' *Auguries of Innocence* by WILLIAM BLAKE



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NO.4 – INVITATION

FOCUS: WRITE TO INVITE

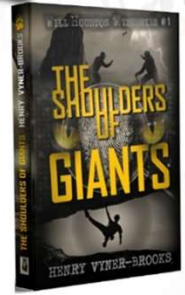
Ask: What type story or movie hooks you, i.e. makes you lean forward?

MISSION: WRITE A TRAILER

OPTION 1 - Think of a book or film you love and then write a movie-style trailer. This needs to be more punchy & inviting than your traditional book review.

The challenge is to have enough information to get someone else to want to read the book, but doesn't give away the ending. Do it in 5 sentences. Fine tuning: Cut one unnecessary sentence - Add one sensory detail - Improve the final line.

OPTION 2 – You might prefer to adapt this exercise to an 'Elevator Pitch,' especially if you have an amazing business idea. Imagine you are in a lift for 30 seconds with business guru/financial backer. Use the format above to draw the listener into your idea enough to buy into it.



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NO.5 — PRESENTATION

NINJA MODE: SHOW, DON'T TELL —

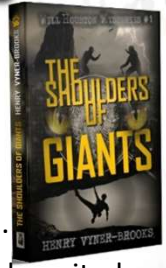
Use precise, punchy and palpable word pictures that perform but don't preach.

FOCUS: 'BODY CLUES' What happens to the body when someone is scared, excited, or angry. Let's ban 'feeling' words – just describe what a film camera would see.

MISSION: SHOW FEAR WITHOUT THE WORD

Context for students: At the start of the book, a teenage boy called Will is alone at a bus stop surrounded by dangerous bikers.

- 1. Student Prompt:** Write 6–8 sentences showing that Will is scared without using any of these words: scared, afraid, frightened, nervous, worried.
- 2. Focus on:** - Body reactions - Small movements - What he notices around him.
- 3. Challenge:** Delete one sentence that explains a feeling and replace it with an action.



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