



Ali Sparkes

Teacher Resources



WHIRLY-WHIRL back through time...

Like many authors, Ali Sparkes believes her childhood experiences made her the writer she is today. She also admits she uses her past to make stories today.

If you could take yourself back through *whirly-whirly* time and revisit a particular event in your life, how would you write it?

It might be the time when you won a medal on sports day, or the day you got a new puppy... or it might be when you broke your leg or had a nosebleed all over the infant school classroom floor.

These things can stay in our minds for a lifetime.

Imagine you're watching your younger self on this particular occasion and write about what happened from the point of view of an observer (i.e. *third person*). Remember to describe yourself fully as a character, along with the people around you. Think about what you were wearing, what the weather was like, what mood you or other people were in, what was said...

RESEARCH – ask other people (members of your family or your friends or even teachers) who were there at the time of your memory, what *they* remember about it. You may be surprised by the way *they* saw your memory at the time. You could even rewrite your memory from *their* point of view.



Ali Sparkes, aged 5

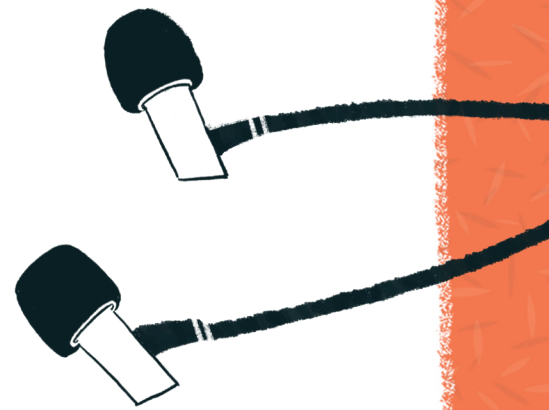
RHYME CRIME

In *Dark Summer*, which Ali read aloud from, the character of Eddie had a way of coping with stress. He loved to mess around with words – making up silly poems or changing the words to songs to make them funny and/or a bit rude.

Choose a really well known song (it helps if most people know it) and play around with the words to create your own version of it.

For example... Eddie's version of *I Will Survive* by Gloria Gaynor (look it up and listen to it!) goes like this:

*First I was afraid
I was mummified
Kept feeling like I was all bandaged
Down my right hand side
But then I spent so many nights
Remembering you look like King Kong... and I grew strong...
'Cause girls with that much hair are wrong...*



Notice how the words rhyme and are very similar to the original lyrics (you can look these up too!) – but, importantly, how the rhythm of the different words still fits exactly.

If you can pull off both rhyme and rhythm it makes your alternative song work much better – and sound much funnier!

CLASS CHALLENGE – choose three really well known songs for everyone to work on in teams (it helps to play them at the start and to have the lyrics printed out).

Then set a theme for the rewrite... it might be FRUIT AND VEG or DOGS or FAVOURITE SNACKS... and see what everyone comes up with. Points are scored for:

1. Rhyming
2. Rhythm
3. Comedy

Good luck!

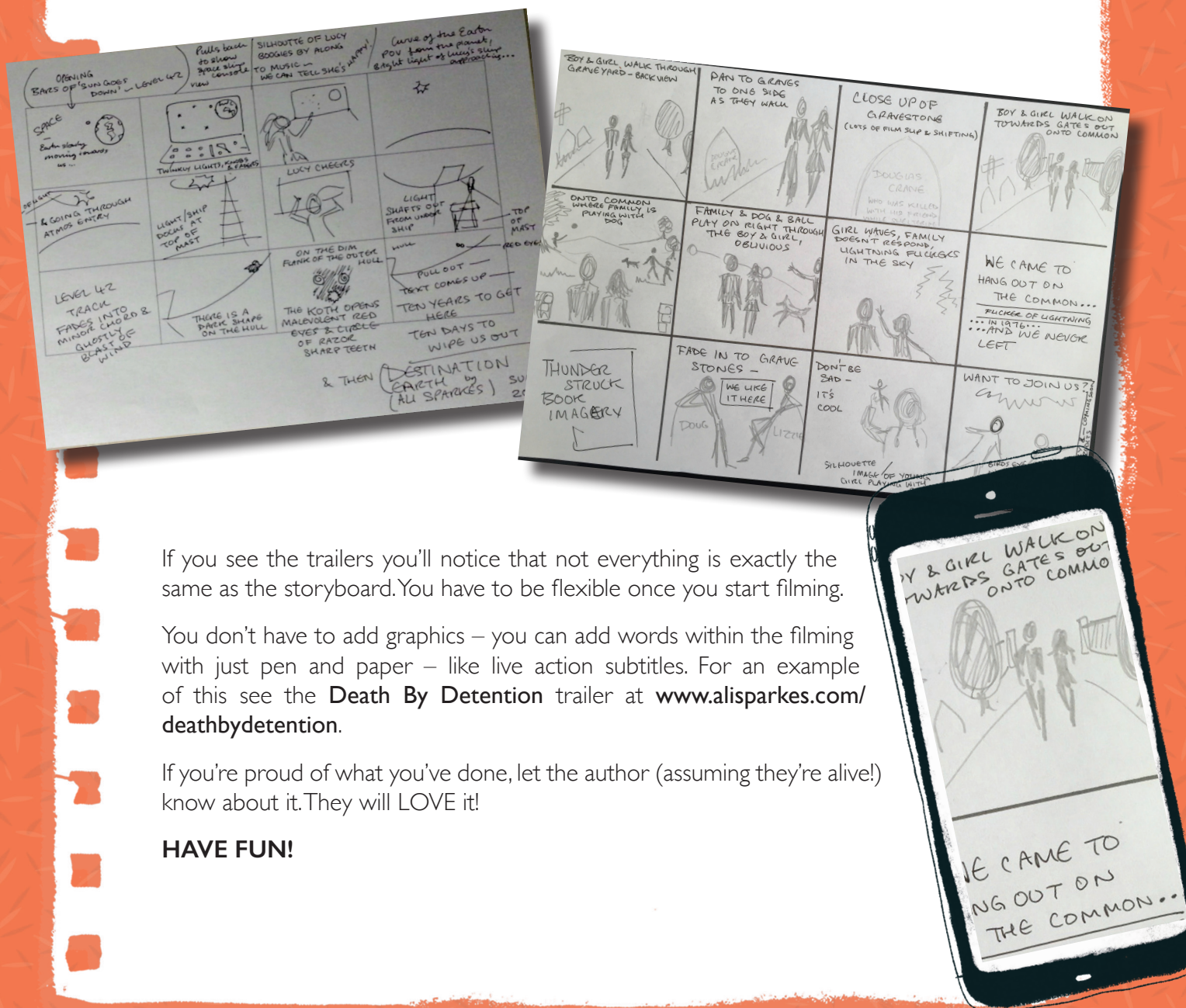


MAKE A TRAILER

Ali Sparkes' *Dark Summer* book was one of the first to be featured in a trailer on her website (check them all out on www.alisparkes.com/trailers.asp). Lots of authors are getting trailers made for their books these days.

MAKE YOUR OWN TRAILER for a book you love. You can use live action or stop motion animation – or even puppets. You don't need too much to make it work – a smart phone is fine for the filming. It can be just thirty seconds long – or maybe a minute.

STORYBOARD your trailer first... lay it all out, scene by scene, like a comic strip. Here are the storyboards Ali made for *Destination Earth* and *Thunderstruck*:



If you see the trailers you'll notice that not everything is exactly the same as the storyboard. You have to be flexible once you start filming.

You don't have to add graphics – you can add words within the filming with just pen and paper – like live action subtitles. For an example of this see the *Death By Detention* trailer at www.alisparkes.com/deathbydetention.

If you're proud of what you've done, let the author (assuming they're alive!) know about it. They will LOVE it!

HAVE FUN!

THE TIME, THE PLACE, THE STORY...

Ali was inspired by the caves at Wookey Hole in Somerset – and *Dark Summer*, where all the main action takes place deep underground, was the result.

'I went there when I was a kid and really loved those caves!' Ali remembers. 'Then I went back when I was a teenager... and a few years after that I took my children back. I love caves – I really want to visit some of the Welsh ones, like Dan Yr Ogof caves.'

'By reading the Wookey Hole cave guide I learned that there are many which humans will just never find. I got to thinking about what might be down there, just out of our reach, and that's what inspired *Dark Summer*.'

What place have you been to which really took your breath away? Could this be the setting for your story? Actual locations can really add realism to your story, but you have to be sure you're getting your facts right. Research the facts about your chosen location... and then make up the rest.

It can be a current day story, or set in the future – or back in time, using the history of the location as a jumping off point. Find out what used to be there a hundred or more years ago...

Enjoy!

POSTCARD



#LOREM IPSUM

#PLOT YOUR STORY