DESIGNING LESSON SEQUENCES FOCUSING ON A SELECTED LANGUAGE/VISUAL FEATURE

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(and drawing on the work of
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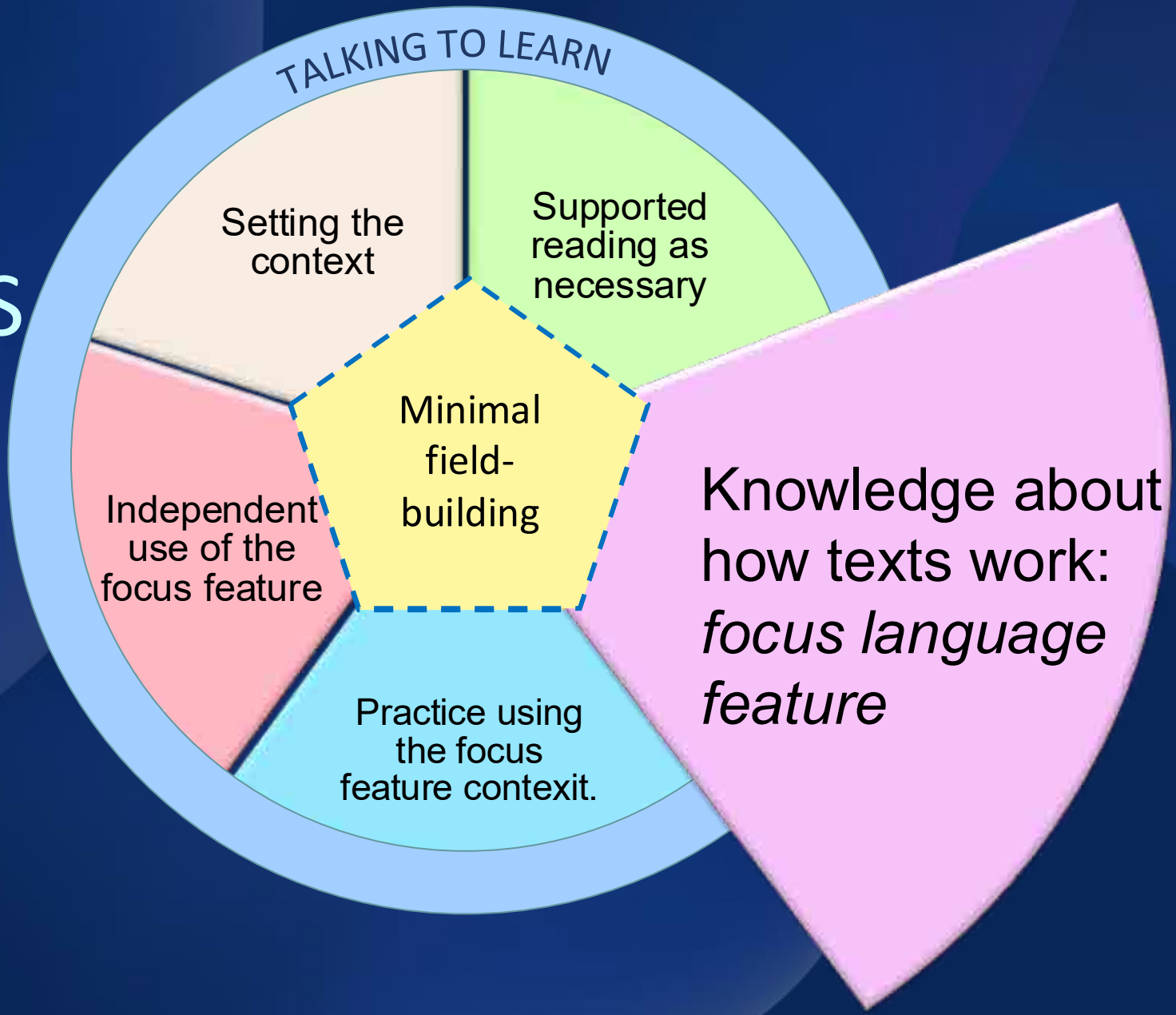
LLEN
Language & Literacy in Education Network

- The aim is to provide teachers with practical, engaging models of how to introduce a particular grammar/visual feature from a functional perspective in a structured progression.
- In the process, supporting teachers' knowledge of the focus feature.
- And allowing for teachers' expertise (e.g. subject knowledge, pedagogy, knowledge of students) and agency so that they might adapt/differentiate the materials for their contexts.

IN-DEPTH FOCUS ON A SELECTED LANGUAGE FEATURE



‘WHERE’ CIRCUMSTANCES

Teaching intention

To extend students' language resources for talking and writing about 'where something happens' (Circumstances of place, e.g. 'towards the shops', 'between the bushes').

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students will be able to:

- *identify Circumstances of place;*
- *explain their function (e.g. to answer the question 'where?');*
- *recognise prepositional phrases that express place.*
- *create a brief text using Circumstances of place;*
- *discuss why knowing about this language feature is useful (e.g. 'so that we can think and talk about the choices made by authors and in our own texts').*

Selecting a relevant genre

Selecting a model text that exemplifies the focus language feature:
e.g.

- personal recount
- recount of an excursion
- science experiment
- historical account
- narrative

ACTIVITY 1

Activity 1A: Setting the context

- *Tell the class that they will be writing a story about an animal that has hidden itself in the house and they have to find it before they leave for holidays.*
- *Let them know that they will be needing to use language to answer the question 'where?' (e.g. 'in the cupboard').*
- *In pairs, let them choose their animal.*

Activity 1B: Building knowledge of the field

- *Start building/consolidating students' knowledge of the field (e.g. the names of places in the house) sufficient to undertake the task. In this case, the field is being developed primarily through viewing and annotating diagrams. Further field-building and revision could be built up as the activity progresses (e.g. through dialogic oral interactions; reading practices such as read-alouds, shared, guided and independent reading; videos and other visual resources).*

- *Ask students to label as many parts of the house as they can on their handout. Project the PowerPoint image of the house and ask students to come up and insert their labels. Discuss any missing labels for places or any different names (e.g. sitting room/family room/lounge room).*
- *Ask student pairs to label their copy of the house diagram and to think about a place where their animal is hiding.*

ACTIVITY 2

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE FOCUS LANGUAGE FEATURE:

'TELLING WHERE'

Activity 2A: Introducing the language feature

An aim of this activity is to extend students' range of 'where-words' such as 'between', 'towards', 'in front of'.

- *Remind the students that, in order to write their story, they will be learning about how to answer the question 'where?'.*
- *Place a poster of 'where-words' (prepositions of place) on the wall and provide students with a hard copy of the chart (without explicitly teaching about prepositions and prepositional phrases at this stage). Draw students' attention to how they are found at the beginning of a 'where phrase' (e.g. **on** the table, **under** the chair).*

under the bed

behind the door

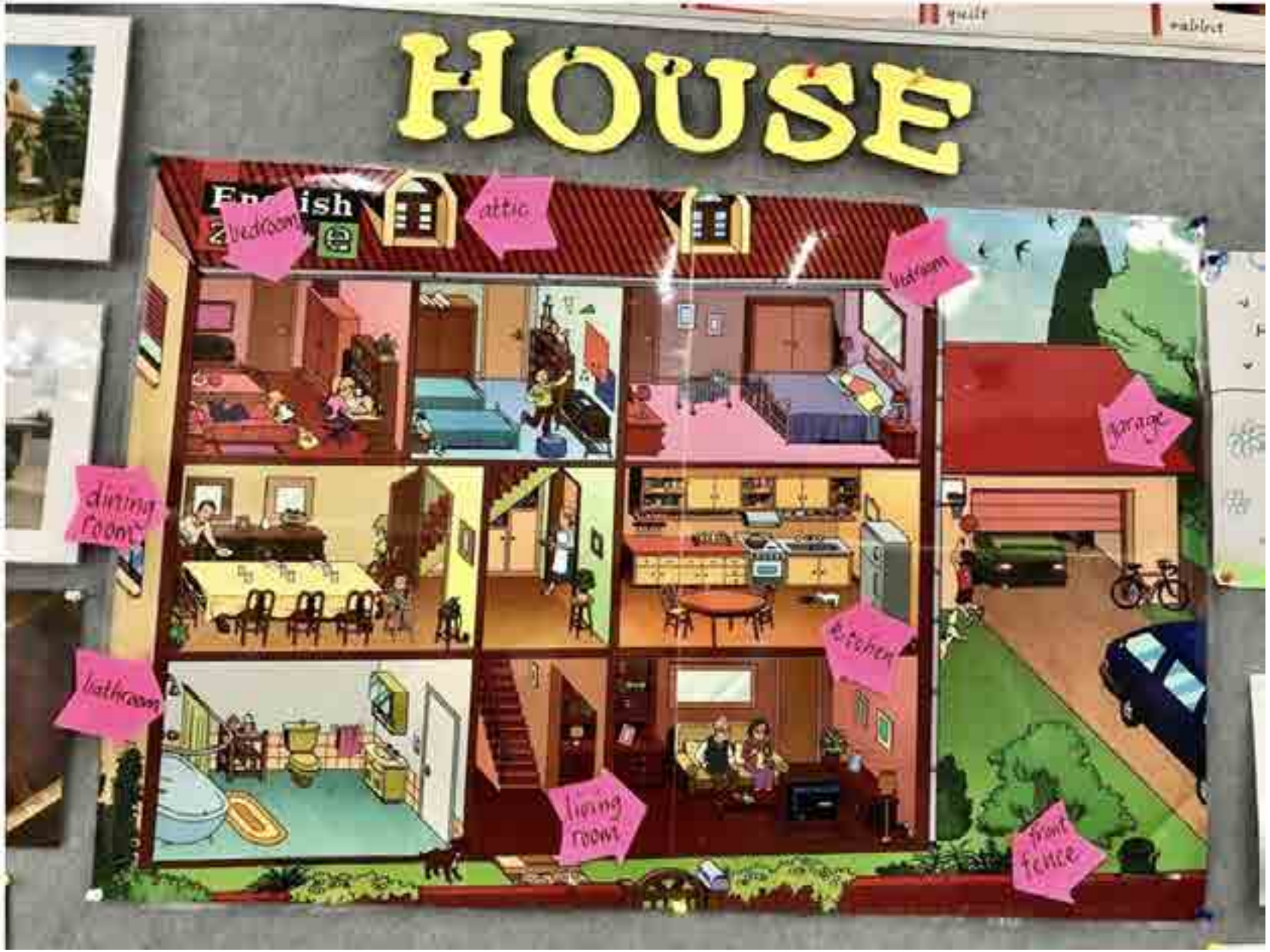
inside the fridge

in the laundry

across the room

between the chairs

in front of the garage



- *Play some games involving 'where' (encouraging the use of prepositional phrases, though again without explicitly teaching them at this point). e.g.*
  - *Hide something in the classroom and ask individual students to try to find it. Draw their attention to the chart of 'where-words' (prepositions of place) and encourage them to choose varied ones. Ask questions such as 'Where did you look?' and invite the student to repeat the 'where answer' (e.g. 'in the cupboard').*
  - *In the playground, students could take turns in telling classmates where to go (possibly referring to written prompts, e.g. hide behind the tree, crawl under the bench, run around the goal post, walk slowly to the gate). After they do the action, students have to say where they are (e.g. He's under the bench; behind the tree).*
  - *Play Simon Says (Put your hands behind your back; raise your left foot in the air; put your head on the side; stand behind your chair). After each action, ask the students to repeat the 'where answer'.*
  - *Read Where's Wally with a group of students.*
- *Start developing a word wall section of examples of 'where answers' as they are encountered during the activities above and elsewhere (e.g. in the cupboard, behind your chair).*

Prepositional Phrases

Where? (Places in a House)

Word Wall

under the bed

The cat is under the bed.

behind the chair

The cat is behind the chair.

in front of the table

The ball is in front of the table.

on top of the bookshelf

The plant is on top of the bookshelf.

inside the cupboard

The mug is inside the cupboard.

next to the stairs

The dog is next to the stairs.

between the curtains

The window is between the curtains.

beside the washing machine

The laundry basket is beside the washing machine.

through the door

She walked through the door.

on the rug

The book is on the rug.

near the fridge

The notes are near the fridge.

away from the table

The chair is away from the table.

IN

THE BASKET

UNDER

THE BED

ON TOP OF

THE SHELF

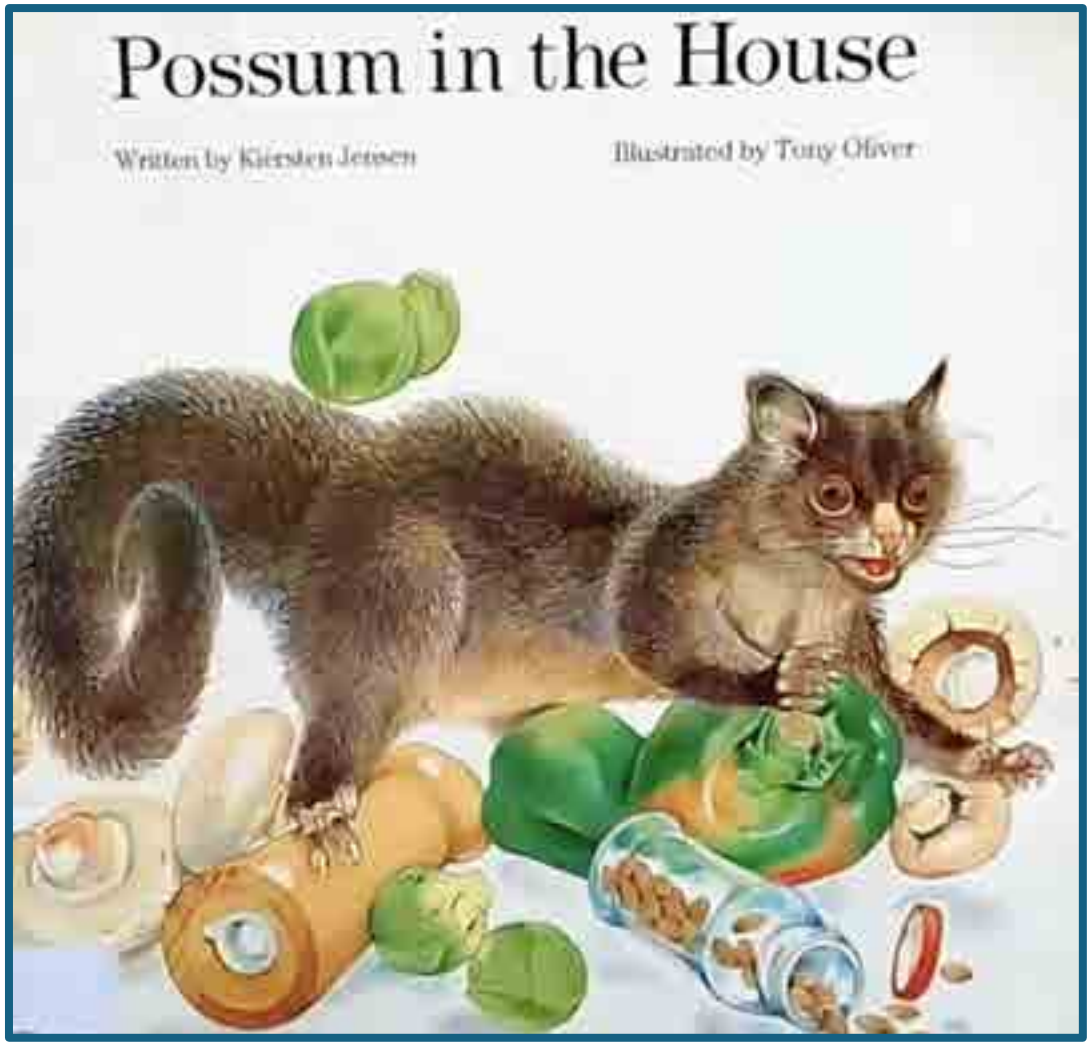
INSIDE

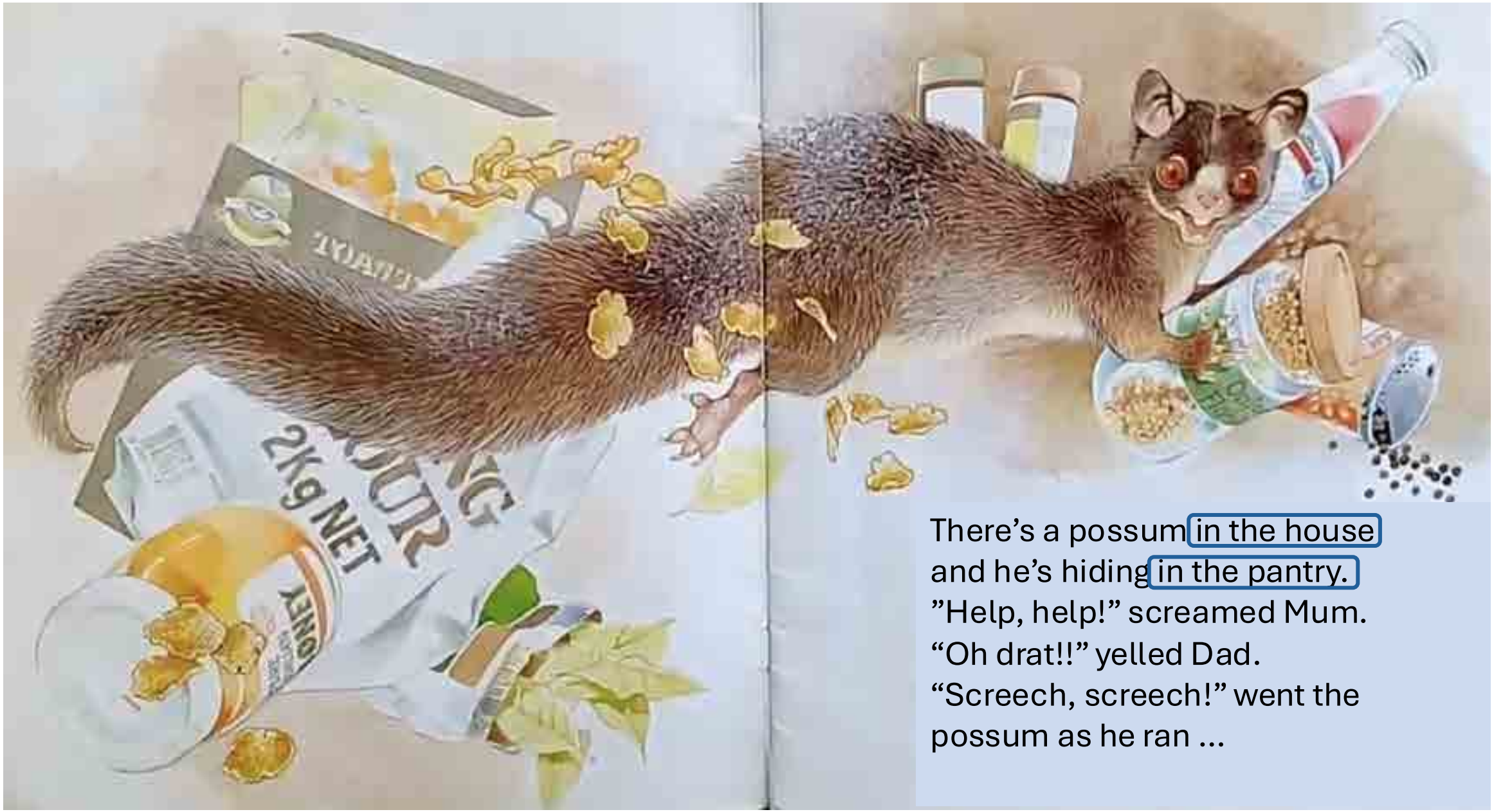
THE FRIDGE

Activity 2B: Familiarisation with Circumstances of place in context

e.g. Read aloud a text containing several instances of Circumstances of place.
Ask students to raise their hands when they hear each Circumstance and notice how it begins with a preposition of place.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

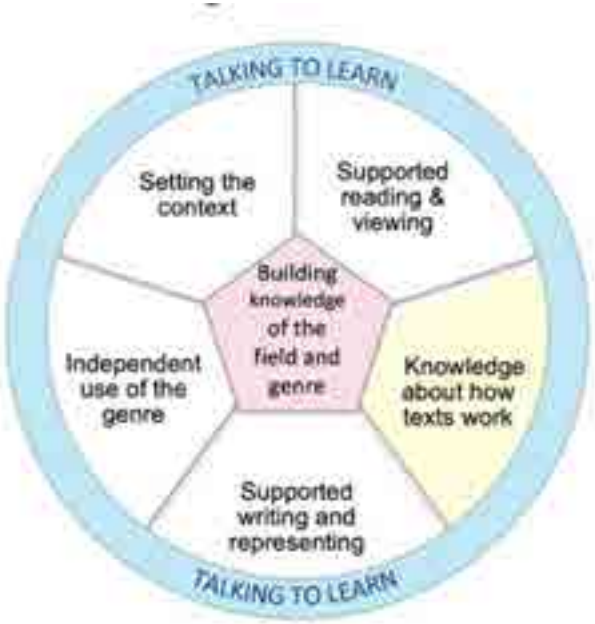




There's a possum in the house
and he's hiding in the pantry.
"Help, help!" screamed Mum.
"Oh drat!!" yelled Dad.
"Screech, screech!" went the
possum as he ran ...

... INTO THE KITCHEN!

Barbara Dahlsen, Blackburn English Language School



Activity 2C: Analysing a model text

At this stage, students will revise how Circumstances of place function in a clause to provide details about where an action or event is happening.

'This time we're going to learn more about Circumstances of Place – the 'where phrases' we've been using in the previous activities. This will help you when you come to write your story.'

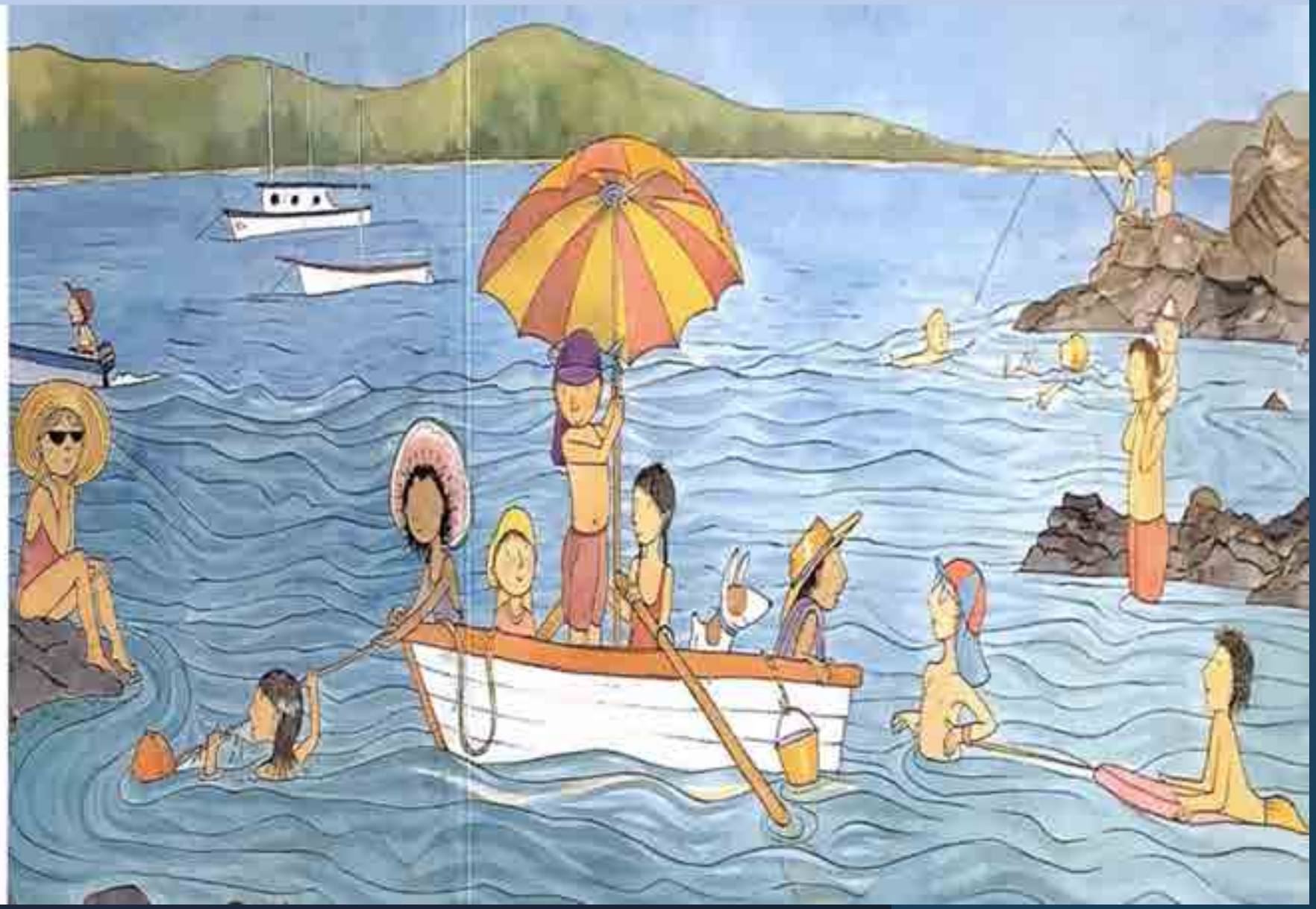
In this case, the model text is Magic Beach by Alison Lester as it traces the various places where the children play on the beach.

Note the importance of the images depicting 'place' in a multimodal text, where the image reinforces and makes visible the Circumstance in the written text.

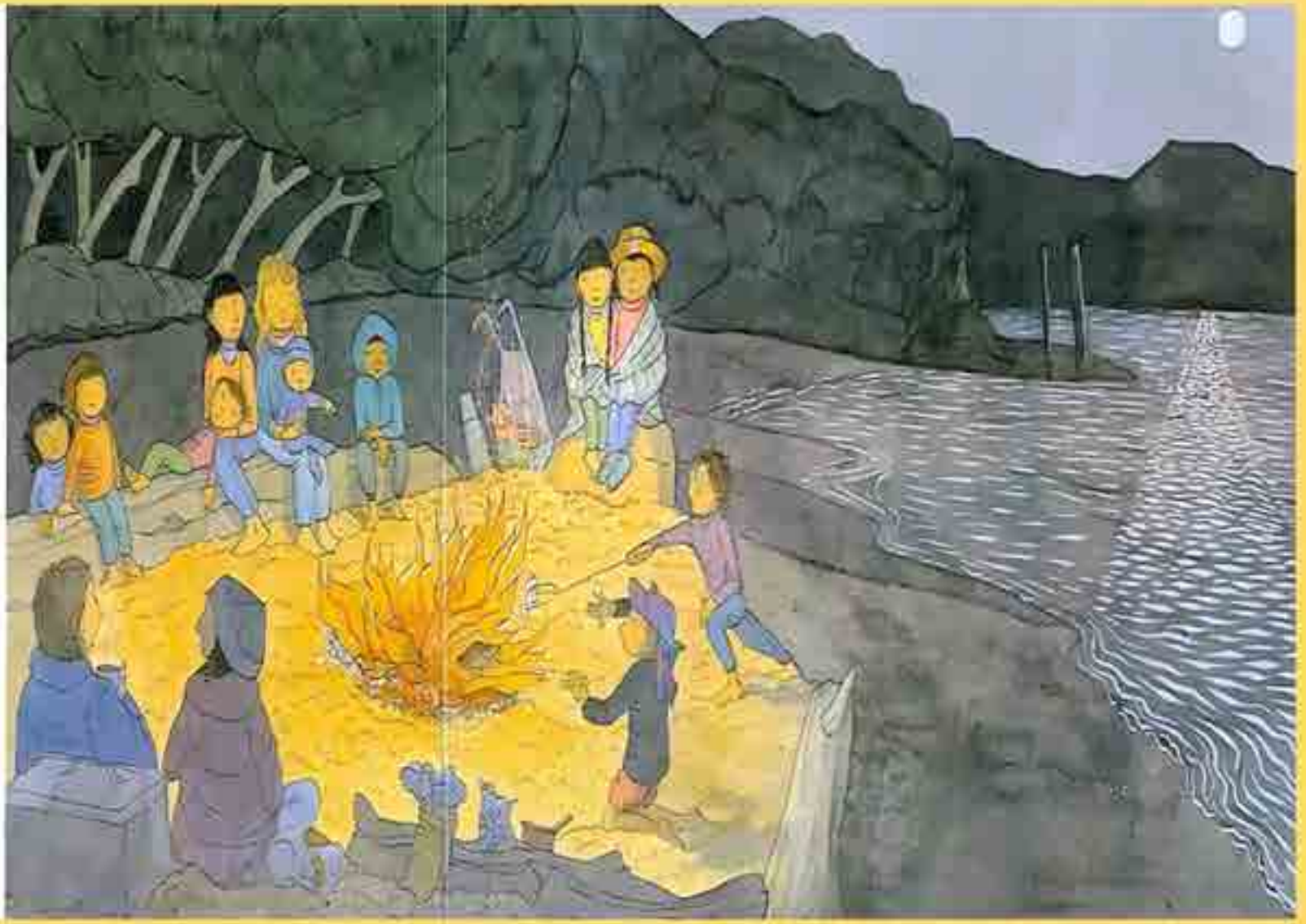
Magic Beach

Alison Lester

At our beach,
at our magic beach,
we rock in the tangerine boat,
paddling out to the end of the line,
then drifting back to the float.



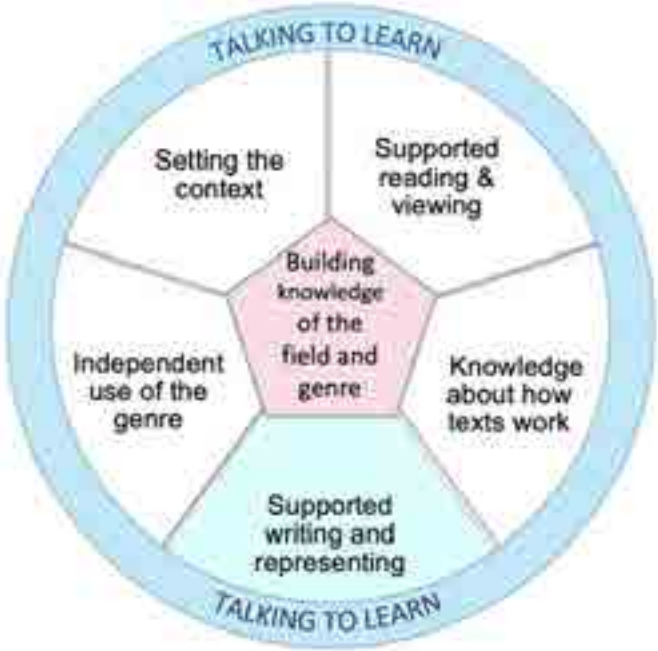
At our beach,
at our magic beach,
we bask in the glow of the fire.
The moon makes a silvery path
on the sea,
and the waves come to shore
with a sigh.



ACTIVITY 3

Activity 3A: Jointly constructing a text

With the class, jointly construct a brief text similar to the one they will be writing independently, incorporating examples of the focus language feature. Explain that the aim of the task is to include as many Circumstances of place as possible. Encourage the use of a variety of 'where-words' (prepositions of place), referring to the wall chart.



- *Project the provided template (or an amended version) and looking at the labelled image of the house, elicit answers to the 'WHERE' questions from the class. Colour the Circumstances blue.*

TEXT SCAFFOLD

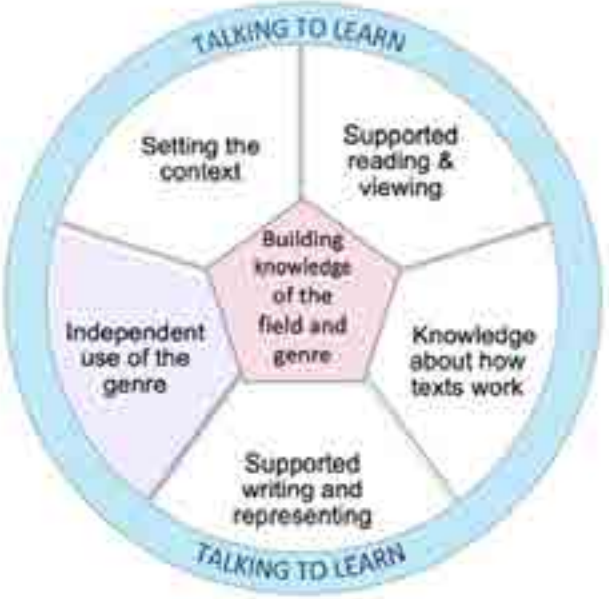
The Nelson family were ready to set off [WHERE?] for their holiday. But Mrs. Nelson noticed [an animal] slip [WHERE?] and [WHERE?]. Where did it go? Kim went [WHERE?] and looked [WHERE?]. Mr. Nelson ran [WHERE?] and searched [WHERE?]. Jodie crept [WHERE?] and peeked [WHERE?]. But Peter had a great idea. He crawled [WHERE?] and there he found [the animal] hiding [WHERE?]. [The animal] jumped up and ran [WHERE?], [WHERE?], and [WHERE?]. Finally the family set off [WHERE?], happy that there were no stray animals [WHERE?].

JOINTLY CONSTRUCTED TEXT

The Nelson family were ready to set off to New Zealand for their holiday. But Mrs. Nelson noticed a rat slip through the window and down the hall. Where did it go? Kim went to the bathroom and looked behind the toilet. Mr. Nelson ran across the kitchen and searched among the plates. Jodie crept into her bedroom and peeked between the sheets. But Peter had a great idea. He crawled under his bed and there he found the rat hiding inside his shoe. The rat jumped out of the shoe and ran across the bedroom, down the stairs, and out the door. Finally the family set off for New Zealand, happy that there were no stray animals in the house.

Activity 3B: Independently constructing a text

Students (in pairs or individually) compose their own text following the template but changing details (e.g. the animal, family names), inserting a different set of Circumstances of place (using a variety of prepositions of place) and colouring them blue. Remind them to check the image of the house and the preposition chart.



They might then go on to compose a less scaffolded text (e.g. a personal recount) using several instances of Circumstances of place.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: EXTENDED

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH
Roald Dahl

The following extract from *James and the Giant Peach* (Roald Dahl) provides a further example of how Circumstances of place have been deliberately chosen by the author to help the reader visualize the chaos of the peach's wild journey.

And now the peach had broken out of the garden and was over the edge of the hill, rolling and bouncing down the steep slope at a terrific pace.

At the bottom of the hill it charged across the road, knocking over a telegraph pole and flattening two parked cars.

Then it rushed madly across about twenty fields, breaking down all the fences and hedges in its path. It went right through the middle of a her of fine Jersey cows, and then through a flock of sheep, and then through a paddock full of horses, and then through a yard full of pigs, and soon the whole countryside was a seething mas of panic-stricken animals stampeding in all directions.

Down the main street of the village it rolled, and at the end of the street it went crashing right through the wall of an enormous building and out the other side …

And now the peach had broken **out of the garden** and was **over the edge of the hill**, rolling and bouncing **down the steep slope** at a terrific pace.

At the bottom of the hill it charged **across the road**, knocking over a telegraph pole and flattening two parked cars.

Then it rushed madly **across about twenty fields**, breaking down all the fences and hedges in its path. It went **right through the middle of a her of fine Jersey cows**, and then **through a flock of sheep**, and then **through a paddock full of horses**, and then **through a yard full of pigs**, and soon the whole countryside was a seething mas of panic-stricken animals stampeding **in all directions**.

Down the main street of the village it rolled, and **at the end of the street** it went crashing **right through the wall of an enormous building** and **out the other side** …

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: CHALLENGING

THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT

BY

BEATRIX POTTER

IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT ‘PLACE MEANINGS’

LOCATION

on a step
in a sand-bank,
underneath the root of a very big fir-tree
at the corner
behind some black-currant bushes
in the wood
among the cabbages
outside the garden

DIRECTION

into a can
down the lane
through the wood
to the baker’s
towards Peter
under the gate
around the corner

… AND EXTENDING STUDENTS' REPERTOIRE OF PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

LOCATION

on a step
in a sand-bank,
underneath the root of a very big fir-tree
at the corner
behind some black-currant bushes
in the wood
among the cabbages
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DIRECTION

into a can
down the lane
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COLOUR-CODING THE CLAUSES

'Now my dears,' said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, **'you may go *into* the fields** or **_down_ the lane**, but **don't go *into* Mr. McGregor's garden**: your Father had an accident there; **he was put *in* a pie** by Mrs. McGregor.'

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; **he rushed *all over* the garden**, for **he had forgotten how to get back *to* the gate.** **He lost one of his shoes *among* the cabbages**, and **he lost the other shoe *amongst* the potatoes**.

Mr. McGregor was quite sure that **Peter was somewhere *in* the tool-shed**, perhaps **he had hidden *underneath* a flower-pot**. He began to turn them over carefully, **looking *under* each one**. Presently Peter sneezed—'Kertyschoo!'

OTHER GRAMMATICAL REALISATIONS (e.g. adverbs and adverb groups)

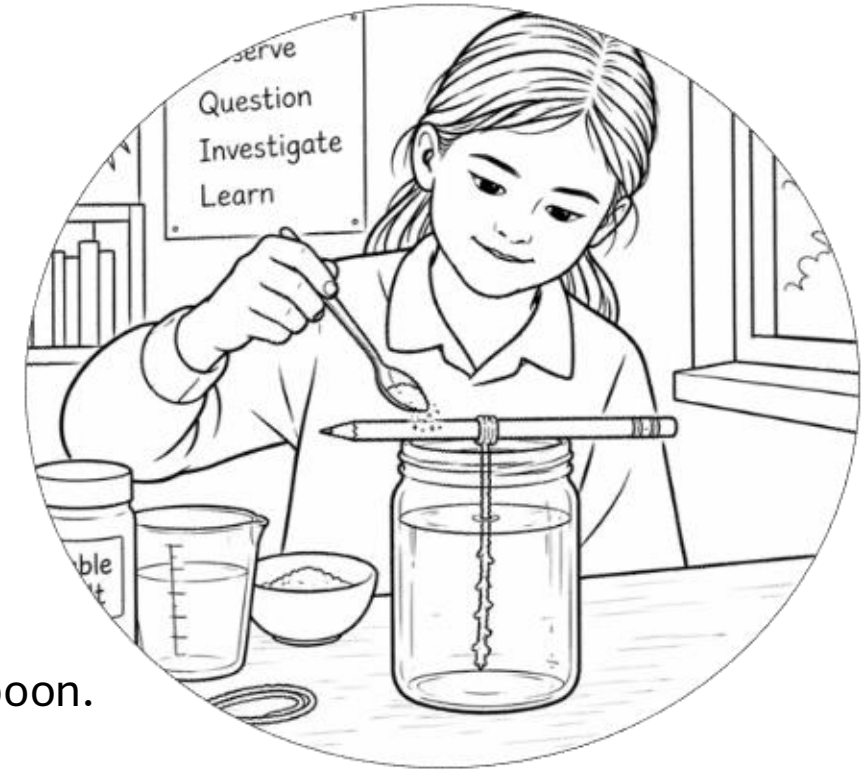
- **Position / Location:** *here, there, everywhere, anywhere, somewhere, nowhere, inside, outside, indoors, outdoors, abroad*
- **Distance:** *very nearby, close by, far away*
- **Direction / Movement:** *up, down, forward, backward, left, right, around, away, north, south*

‘Your father had an accident there.’

TRANSFERRING TO A DIFFERENT GENRE

Science Experiment: Growing Crystals

Aim: To investigate how crystals form as salt water evaporates.



Materials

- A glass jar
- Warm water
- Table salt
- A spoon
- A piece of string
- A pencil

Method

1. Place the glass jar **on a flat surface**.
2. Pour some warm water **into the jar**.
3. Add several spoonfuls of salt **to the water** and stir with a spoon.
4. Tie a piece of string **around the middle of the pencil**.
5. Rest the pencil **across the top of the jar**, with the string hanging **inside the water**.
6. Move the jar to a safe place **near a window**.
7. Leave the jar **on the shelf** for several days.
8. Look carefully **at the string** each day to see whether crystals have formed **on its surface**.

Results

After several days, small crystals may appear **along the string** and **around the inside of the jar**. As the water evaporates **into the air**, the salt remains behind and forms crystals.

Conclusion

The experiment shows how dissolved salt can form crystals as water evaporates. The crystals grow **on the string** and may also appear **at the bottom of the jar**.

For further information go the website of the
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