

HOME LEARNING

Year 8 – English - Pack 11

Activity 1 – Spoken Language

Television programmes nowadays provide us with lots of entertainment. There are also other media sources, internet, radio or magazines that do the same. What's your favourite type of entertainment? Discuss this with a trusted adult. Explain why you prefer this type of entertainment.

On Britain's Got Talent, they have a range of acts that are presented before the audience. If you have watched this programme, tell a trusted adult about the different types of acts that perform on the stage. Singers and dancers are just two examples. Can you think of anymore?



This image might provide you with some ideas to help your discussion.

Activity 2 – Reading

Many years ago, entertainment came in a range of forms. Most people were thrilled to watch live entertainment.

Read the following extract about Harry Houdini – the man who defied death and answer the questions to check your understanding.

Harry Houdini

The Man who Defied Death



Who was Harry Houdini?

Harry Houdini was a world famous magician. He could escape from handcuffs, locked boxes and ropes tied about him, in such a short space of time that his audience were left both astonished and amazed. Houdini was born in 1874 in Budapest in Hungary, but moved to the United States when he was four years old.

His real name was Ehrich Weiss, but he used the name, Harry Houdini, when he became an escapologist and a magician in 1891. He claimed that all his tricks were easily explained, and often told people how many of them were done. He was extremely fit and strong, and could untie knots through a thick bag that he had been tied inside. He could also use his teeth to untie knots, and his feet were nearly as useful as his hands in helping him to escape.

Harry had spent a long time as he grew up, learning how to undo any lock without a key, (this is called picking a lock). This meant that he could escape from any handcuffs or locked chains, very easily. He even asked his audience to bring along their own locks for him to use in his show, just to prove that he wasn't using trick locks.



Escapes from Water

One of Houdini's favourite tricks, was to get into a large iron can (like an old fashioned milk churn) which was just about big enough for him to crouch down inside. The can could be seen by the audience, and they watched as Houdini was handcuffed. Next, the can was filled with water and a lid fastened on the top with several locks. A curtain was pulled in front of the can and music played. After three and a half minutes, Houdini came from behind the curtain, in his bathing costume, dripping with water. The people in the audience were staggered. A similar trick to this was one where he had his feet locked into a wooden block and was lowered head first into a tank full of water. Even to this day, not many people know how he escaped from this trick.

Another time, Houdini was tied and locked into a packing case, that had heavy weights inside it. The case was then wrapped with steel tape, and dropped into the harbour near New York city. The watching crowd were amazed to see him reappear on the surface of the water in less than one minute.



Leaping from Bridges

In 1906, Harry hit on the idea of drawing attention to his show by jumping off bridges, into a river below. Sometimes he was weighed down with an iron ball, but he was always handcuffed or tied with chains. Houdini could escape so quickly, that he was often free from his handcuffs before he touched the water. A huge crowd would always gather to see his amazing performances. His wife, Bess, who he had married at the age of twenty, would often be there to see her husband defy death.

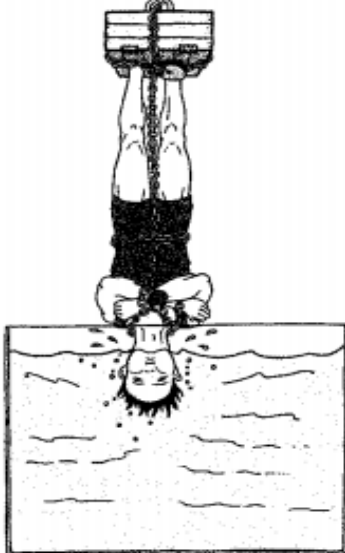
Films

In 1921, he set up his own film company, to make films that had exciting escapes as a part of the story. Houdini himself did all the escapes and tricks, but found that he did not enjoy the rest of the acting. His company did well at first, but it was a failure in the end and lost him a lot of money.

Death

All his life, Houdini had faced danger, but in the end, he did not die directly from one of his tricks. He had always said that he could be punched in the stomach without feeling any pain. He did this by preparing his stomach muscles, and holding them tight in a special way. Houdini needed time to prepare his body in this way, but one day a student punched him, very hard, before he had time to do this. Houdini did not think that he had been badly hurt, but he collapsed two days later and died on October 31st 1926.

Here is the contents page of the book that the information about Harry Houdini came from. It is a book all about different kinds of famous people.



CONTENTS

	page
Artists	4
Scientists	10
Entertainers	13
Inventors	17
Writers	21
Religious Leaders	26
Sports Personalities	28
Musicians	34
Kings and Queens	36
Leaders	41
Explorers	45

Read through the text and underline any words or phrases that tell us something about Harry Houdini's life, that are not to do with his tricks.

Now complete this timeline to show some major dates in his life.

	BORN	MOVED TO USA	MARRIED
Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

	STARTED JUMPING OFF BRIDGES	SET UP FILM COMPANY	DIED
Date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Under each of the 5 sub-headings, copy the words, phrases or sentences that you think are most important in that section.

Who was Harry Houdini?

.....

Escapes from the water

.....

Leaping from bridges

.....

Films

.....

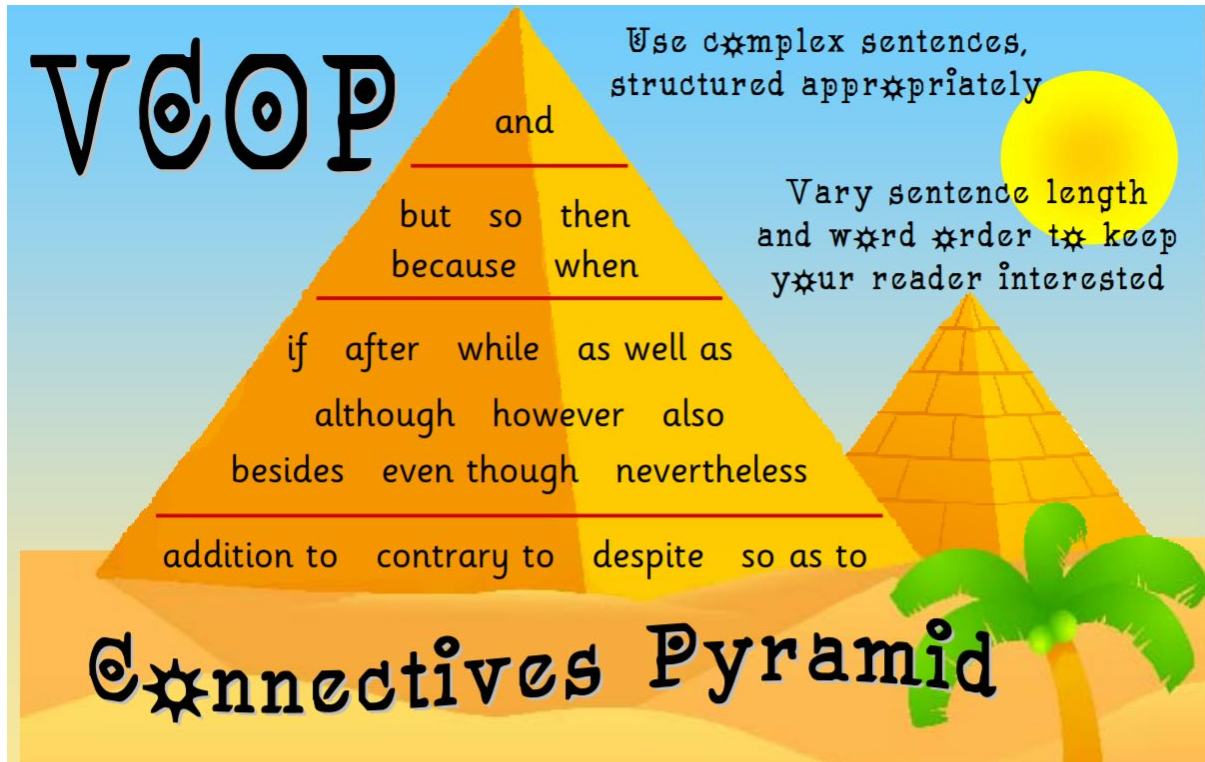
Death

.....

Activity 3 – Writing

Now using the above words, phrases or sentences, write a short paragraph about the life of Harry Houdini. Remember a good way to link your ideas is using connectives.

Look at this vocabulary pyramid. You will see that you can challenge yourself to use a range of connectives from the top to the bottom of the pyramid.



If you have queries about this work, please contact me at

atuppen@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk