

Percy Jackson And the Lightning Thief

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief is written in the first person and is narrated by Percy Jackson, a twelve-year-old boy diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD. While on a school trip to a museum, strange things begin to happen, and Percy learns that he is a demigod – the son of a human and a Greek god.

Practice

Thinking Point 1: Watch actor and TV presenter Stephen Fry read an extract from Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zj74kmn>

Think about the following:

1. What do you notice about this style of writing?
2. What impression do you have of Percy so far?
3. What do you think about this as an opening for a book?

Activity 1:

Read the first extract.

Look, I didn't want to be a half-blood. If you're reading this now because you think you might be one, my advice is: stop listening right now.

Believe whatever lie your mom or dad told you about your birth, and try to lead a normal life.

Being a half-blood is dangerous. It's scary. Most of the time, it gets you killed in painful, nasty ways.

If you're a normal kid, reading this because you think it's fiction, great. Read on. I envy you for being able to believe that none of this ever happened.

But if you recognize yourself in these pages – if you feel something stirring inside – stop reading immediately. You might be one of us. And once you know that, it's only a matter of time before they sense it too, and they'll come for you.

Don't say I didn't warn you.

My name is Percy Jackson. I'm twelve years old. Until a few months ago, I was a boarding student at Yancy Academy, a private school for troubled kids in upstate New York.

Am I a troubled kid? Yeah. You could say that.

How would you explain the writer's style of writing? Do you think that this style is an engaging opening for a book? Find an example of the following techniques that the writer uses to engage his readers.

Technique	Example
Directly talking to the reader	
Advice for the reader	
Example of humour	
Rhetorical question	

Thinking Point 2: Now watch Stephen read another extract from Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief and think about the following:

1. What do you notice about the language in this extract?
2. What happens to Percy's pen?
3. Do you think Percy feels confident?
4. Do you think Percy was responsible for what happens?

Activity 2:

Read the second extract.

Mrs Dodds lunged at me.

With a yelp, I dodged and felt talons slash the air next to my ear. I snatched the ballpoint pen out of the air, but when it hit my hand, it wasn't a pen any more. It was a sword – Mr Brunner's bronze sword, which he always used on tournament day.

Mrs Dodds spun towards me with a murderous look in her eyes.

My knees were jelly. My hands were shaking so bad I almost dropped the sword.

She snarled, 'Die, honey!'

And she flew straight at me. Absolute terror ran through my body. I did the only thing that came naturally: I swung the sword. The metal blade hit her shoulder and passed clean through her body as if she were made of water.

Hisss! Mrs Dodds was a sand castle in a power fan. She exploded into yellow powder, vaporized on the spot, leaving nothing but the smell of sulphur and a dying screech and a chill of evil in the air, as if those two glowing red eyes were still watching me.

I was alone.

There was a ballpoint pen in my hand. Mr Brunner wasn't there. Nobody was there but me.

1. Return to the beginning of the extract and summarise what is happening in the text.
2. Try to write eight different phrases or clauses to summarise the plot.
3. Challenge yourself by using a maximum of six words for each phrase or clause.
4. You can choose where in the extract to pause and write a summary.

Here are a few examples to start you off:

- Dodds lunges
- watch the talons
- is my ear ok?

Activity 3:

1. Read both extracts again and think about whether you now have a different opinion or impression of Percy in the second extract.
2. Write a paragraph reflecting on some of these questions:
 - As a reader, are you satisfied?
 - Are you happy these events happened?
 - Did Mrs Dodds deserve this?