

How is language used to create an interesting opening in *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*?

We were coming down our road. Kevin stopped at a gate and bashed it with his stick. It was Missis Quigley's gate; she was always looking out the window but she never did anything.

–Quigley!

–Quigley!

–Quigley Quigley Quigley!

Liam and Aidan turned down their culdesac. We said nothing; they said nothing. Liam and Aidan had a dead mother. Missis O'Connell was her name.

–It'd be brilliant, wouldn't it? I said.

–Yeah, said Kevin. –Cool.

We were talking about having a dead ma. Sinbad, my little brother, started crying. Liam was in my class in school. He dirtied his trousers one day—the smell of it rushed at us like the blast of heat when an oven door was opened—and the master did nothing. He didn't shout or slam his desk with his leather or anything. He told us to fold our arms and go asleep and when we did he carried Liam out of the class. He didn't come back for ages and Liam didn't come back at all.

James O'Keefe whispered, –If I did a gick in me pants he'd kill me!

–Yeah.

–It's not fair, said James O'Keefe. –So it's not.

Questions to consider:

1. What is the effect of the opening exclamation marks?
2. What is distinctive about how Paddy speaks?
3. What feelings does the story about Liam evoke?
4. What images from the story are particularly vivid?
5. What is distinctive about how James O'Keefe speaks?
6. What is the effect of the dashes?



Feedback

Quality of written expression

- At the very least, your writing needs to be **legible** – take your time
- Take care with the **technical accuracy** of your writing – proof-read
- As a class, we need to think really hard about how we can ‘upgrade’ our **vocabulary** choices

Quality of analysis

- You don’t need to write about every line in the extract – the key is to be **selective**, so zoom-in on what you know best
- Writing about carefully **selected** bits is better than writing superficially about lots
- **Planning** what you want to write first usually results in clearer writing
- There’s no need to copy out long quotations, so don’t waste your time – it’s much better to **embed** shorter ones

Takeaways

Key points on how language is used to create an interesting opening in *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*

- The **exclamation marks** create a sense of urgency and childish excitement
- The use of **colloquial** (informal) language helps to create realistic narrative voices (e.g. ‘ma’ and ‘gick’)
- Liam’s story evokes **humour**, but also **sympathy**
- The oven door **simile** emphasises the strength and ferocity of the smell
- The dashes help to create a **stream of consciousness** effect and they reflect the spontaneous nature of the dialogue
- Paddy is a **likeable** character who appears to be funny and adventurous

Vocabulary

Implies	Foreshadows	Informs	Highlights	Differs
Suggests	Conveys	Demonstrates	Emphasises	Contrasts