

Listen to a story Monday

- Listen to or watch **Eric** by Shaun Tan using the video of Ruth Merttens reading the book <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H71F0-QrpE> or the **PowerPoint** provided.
- What do you like about the story? Is there anything that you dislike about it? Does it remind you of anything that has happened to you? Does it remind you of any books that you have read?

Remind yourself about modal verbs

- Use the **Revision Card - modal verbs** to remind yourself about these.
- Complete **Modal Verb Activity**. You could challenge yourself to write 5 or even 10 of your own sentences about Eric.

Modal Verbs – Revision Card**Modal Verbs**

Modal verbs express **certainty**, **ability** or **obligation**.

can	must	may
might	ought to	shall
would	will	could

Modal Verbs

Modal verbs are placed before the **verb** they are **modifying**.



I thought I **could** hear someone in the pantry.
 You **might** see him there if you open the door.
 He **should** sleep in the room that we gave him.

Using Modal Verbs

Modal verbs are useful for **expressing shades of meaning**.

I **could** worry about our visitor but I **will** let him just get on.

It is worrying but I intend not to interfere.

I **should** tell someone now but I **might** wait a few more days.

I feel obliged to tell someone but it's possible that I will wait a bit.

You **can** ask him to leave the pantry but **must** you risk upsetting him?

You are able to ask him but is it necessary?

Modal Verbs Activity

Modal verbs can express **certainty**, **ability** or **obligation**.

Add a modal verb to each sentence so that it makes sense.

You might need to change or add some words.

1. *We decided that we _____ host a foreign exchange student.*
2. *We thought that we _____ make the house welcoming for him.*
3. *We thought they _____ appreciate what we had done for him*
4. *When he went in the pantry, we agreed that we _____ not disturb him.*
5. *We worried that he _____ not tell us if anything was wrong.*
6. *He _____ be described as very curious.*
7. *I thought that he _____ to see the city and its surrounds.*
8. *I thought that perhaps he _____ be interested in something other than the ground.*
9. *I do not know whether we _____ see him again.*

Write at least 3 sentences of your own about Eric.

Each sentence must contain a modal verb.

Practise reading the story yourself

- Read through Eric. Highlight the modal verbs that you can find in this writing. You can check your answers at the end of the pack.
- Practise reading the story, until you are really fluent.

Eric

Some years ago we had a foreign exchange student come to live with us. We found it very difficult to pronounce his name correctly, but he didn't mind. He told us to just call him 'Eric'.

We had repainted the spare room, bought new rugs and furniture and generally made sure everything would be comfortable for him. So I can't say why it was that Eric chose to sleep and study most of the time in our kitchen pantry.

'It must be a cultural thing,' said Mum. 'As long as he's happy.' We started storing food and kitchen things in other cupboards so we wouldn't disturb him.

But sometimes I wondered if Eric *was* happy; he was so polite that I'm not sure he would have told us if something bothered him. A few times I saw him through the pantry door gap, studying with silent intensity, and imagined what it must be like for him here in our country.

Secretly I had been looking forward to having a foreign visitor – I had so many things to show him. For once I could be a local expert, a fountain of interesting facts and opinions. Fortunately, Eric was very curious and had plenty of questions.

However, they weren't the kind of questions I had been expecting. Most of the time I could only say, 'I'm not really sure,' or 'That's just how it is.' I didn't feel very helpful at all.

I had planned for us to go on a number of weekly excursions together, as I was determined to show our visitor the best places in the city and its surrounds. I think Eric enjoyed these trips, but once again, it was hard to really know.

Most of the time Eric seemed more interested in small things he discovered on the ground. I might have found this a little exasperating, but I kept thinking about what Mum had said, about the cultural thing. Then I didn't mind so much.

Nevertheless, none of us could help but be bewildered by the way Eric left our home: a sudden departure early one morning, with little more than a wave and a polite goodbye. It actually took us a while to realise he wasn't coming back.

There was much speculation over dinner later that evening. Did Eric seem upset? Did he enjoy his stay? Would we ever hear from him again? An uncomfortable feeling hung in the air, like something unfinished, unresolved. It bothered us for hours, at least until one of us discovered what was in the pantry.

Go and see for yourself: it's still there after all these years, thriving in the darkness. It's the first thing we show any new visitors to our house. 'Look what our foreign exchange student left for us,' we tell them. 'It must be a cultural thing,' says Mum.

Tuesday

Watch a version of Eric

- Watch this video version of Eric. You can follow the words as you do.
<https://www.vimeo.com/111187541>
- What do you think about this version? Does it work to have an actor playing the character of Eric? Is the narration well read?

Practise using modal verbs

- Use the *Revision Card* to remind yourself about modal verbs.
- Read *Eric Thoughts 1 and 2*. What are some of the differences between the two sets of answers? Highlight the modal verbs that have been used.
- Sort the modal verbs that you have found into *Certainty/Ability/Obligation*.

3. Now for some writing

- Think about your own answers to the three questions about Eric.
- Write your answers in clear sentences. Use modal verbs as you do this.

Modal Verbs – Revision Card

Indicating Degrees of **Certainty** using Modal Verbs



He **might** have come from Outer Space.

He **will** have come from Outer Space. ✓

He **may** have come from Outer Space.

*The ticked sentence expresses most **certainty**.*

Indicating Degrees of **Obligation** using Modal Verbs



They **should** report him to the government.

They **ought to** report him to the government.

They **must** report him to the government. ✓

*The ticked sentence expresses the strongest degree of **obligation***

Indicating **Ability** using Modal Verbs



I **might** understand his mission.

I **would** understand his mission.

I **can** understand his mission. ✓

I **must** understand his mission.

*The ticked sentence indicates **ability**.*

Eric Thoughts 1

Why do you think the family decided to have a foreign exchange student?

I think that they might have wanted to be kind and hospitable. They repainted the spare room and bought new rugs and furniture which may show how much care they were taking. When Eric went in the pantry, they decide they ought not to disturb him. This seems generous. They could have told him to stay in his room. They seem flexible.

Where do you think Eric has come from?

I think he may have come newly arrived from another planet. He might not actually be the exchange student. He may have turned up at the same time coincidentally. I think he feels he should learn about his new planet, so it could be that he is an explorer. Perhaps he will return home with news of what he has discovered.

How do you think the narrator feels about Eric?

I think he might feel quite fond of Eric because of the way that he tells the story. He speaks of him quite gently. He should be looking after him. He must be quite confused though. Eric can behave very strangely! His appearance could really frighten someone.

Eric Thoughts 2

Why do you think the family decided to have a foreign exchange student?

I think that they may just want the money. They might have wanted to do up the house anyway and they would get paid for doing that. The narrator may be quite caring with Eric, but his Mum doesn't really say or do much. She should be more involved. She must have noticed that a strange creature is in her house. She could have told someone about it. Now no-one will ever know what sort of creature this was.

Where do you think Eric has come from?

I think he might have been visiting other people. He knows some of what he ought to do, for example he knows he should wave at people. He does that when he arrives. He must have learnt that from other visits. He could just go from house to house like this, one after another. Perhaps he will visit me one day!

How do you think the narrator feels about Eric?

I think he might feel quite confused about Eric. He has planned lots of things that they could do, but Eric doesn't seem to join in with them as he ought to do. He should have asked Eric where he comes from. Maybe he is a bit scared about what Eric will say. He could feel quite proud to have been visited by Eric. It will be a story that he will enjoy telling for the rest of his life.

Certainty/Ability/Obligation

Sort the modal verbs that you have found into this table.

Certainty	Ability	Obligation

Tuesday

Eric – Your Thoughts

Use modal verbs in
your answers

1. Why do you think the family decided to have a foreign exchange student?
2. Where do you think Eric has come from?
3. How do you think the narrator feels about Eric?



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The paper is framed by a decorative border consisting of a repeating orange zigzag pattern with small black dots at the peaks and valleys. There are 20 horizontal lines in total, creating 19 equal-sized rows for writing. The paper is oriented vertically.

Wednesday

Think about illustrations

- Look carefully at the *Illustrations*. These are from Eric by Shaun Tan.
- Read and think about the *Reflection Questions*.

Remind yourself about modal verbs

- Use the *Revision Card* to remind yourself about modal verbs.
- Now write some of the answers to the *Reflection Questions* as sentences that use modal verbs. Write at least 3 sentences. Challenge yourself to write 5 or more.

Reflection Questions

What is powering Eric's leaf?

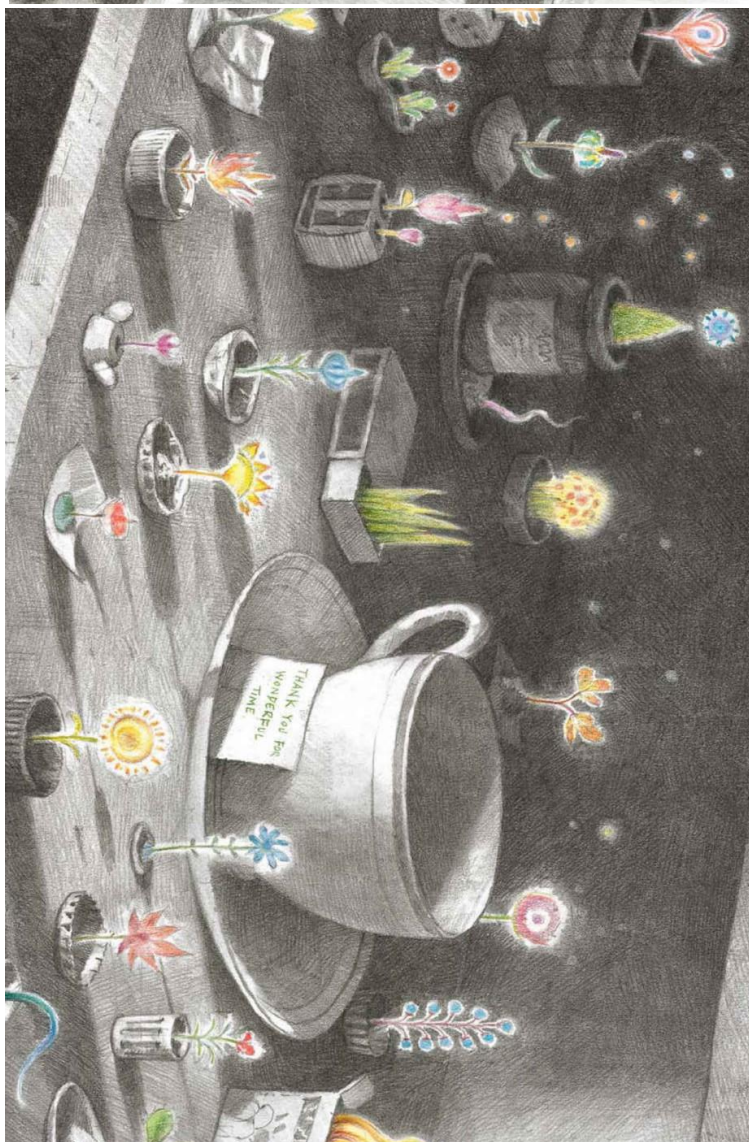
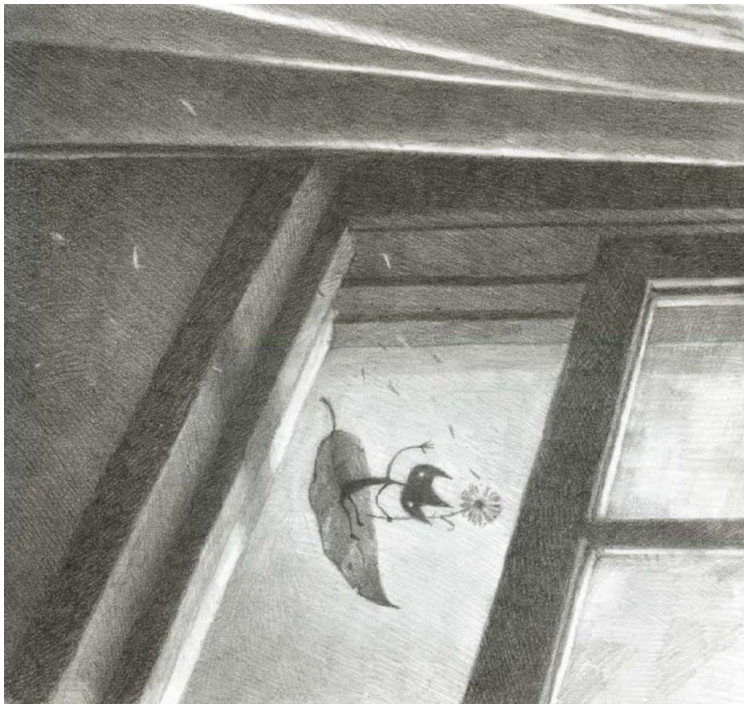
Was Eric upset?

Would they hear from him again?

How are the pantry plants powered?

Will they stay there for ever?

Wednesday look carefully at the Illustrations.



Modal Verb – Revision Card

Modal verbs show how possible or certain something might be.

They can express **certainty**, **ability** or **obligation**.

Certainty	Obligation	Ability
might	ought	can
would	should	could
will	must	
shall		
may		

Modal verbs are placed before the verb they are modifying.

I thought I **might** **ask** him where he had come from.

I knew he **would** **feel** scared.

He **will** **come** back one day, I hope.

I **shall** **remember** him forever.

I **may** **write** a book about him.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper itself is a clean, off-white color.

Wednesday

Illustration Brief

Make an illustration to show where Eric goes next, who he meets and what he does.

Include detail in your illustration so that it matches the style of Shaun Tan. Write some sentences to accompany your illustration. They must include modal verbs.

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a blue border, intended for student work. The rectangle has rounded corners and a consistent blue outline, occupying the majority of the page below the header.

Thursday

Read a poem

- Look at the *Caged Bird* picture. Why do you think someone might keep a bird in a cage like that? What does it make you think?
- Read *Caged Bird – First Verses*. Read them twice: once in your head, once out loud. Each verse is just one sentence, so read so that it flows to the end.
- Decide some Secret Strings
- **Look at Example Secret Strings.** Secret Strings are a way of showing how a word or phrase in a poem links with another word or phrase. You just spot a link and then use colours and highlights to show it.
- **Read Caged Birds – Other Verses.** Try adding secret strings. Any link that you can spot between words or phrases is OK.
- ***Well done! Show your Secret Strings to a grown-up and explain the links that you have spotted.***
- (They can read Secret Strings Adult Reference to understand them or watch Michael Rosen explain them (he invented the idea).

Answer some questions

- Read *Reflection Questions*. Think about your answers and then write them as sentences.

Caged Bird



Thursday

Caged Bird – First Verses

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

*Maya Angelou,
The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou
Virago, 1995*

Secret Strings: Adult Reference

Secret Strings is a way of thinking about poems explained by Michael Rosen in his book: What is Poetry? (2016 Walker Books).

He explains them as the way that poems bring words together.

They can include:

- Words sounding like one another (for example rhyme, alliteration or assonance)
- One line's rhythm echoing that of another
- Words or groups of words repeating
- Word pictures made by the similar or the same words being used (The picture or imagery of the poem)
- Opposites

Importantly, Michael Rosen says this:

“Remember, these strings belong to you. They may be strings that the poet had in mind – but maybe not.”

In Caged Bird example, these Secret Strings have been marked:

- Free bird leaps – contrasting assonance
- Wind and wing – echoing words (they sound similar)
- Floats downstream – contrasting assonance
- sun rays dares sky – alliteration
- leaps/dares – strong verbs

wind, stream, sun, sky – nouns to do with the natural world.

SECRET STRINGS EXAMPLE
Caged Bird – First Stanza

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

- Wind and wing – echoing words (they sound similar)
- Free bird leaps – contrasting assonance
- sun rays dares sky – alliteration (letter 's' at start and end)
- leaps/dares – strong verbs
- wind, stream, sun, sky – nouns to do with the natural world
- Floats downstream – contrasting assonance

Caged Bird – Further Verses

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
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Maya Angelou,
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Thursday

Reflection Questions

Does this poem remind you of anything?

What can a free bird do that a caged bird can't?

What does a caged bird do that a free bird doesn't?

Which would you rather be?

Which do you most feel like?

What emotions do you think the poet felt as she wrote about the caged bird?

What emotions might she have felt as she wrote about the free bird?

Do you know someone who would love this poem? Why would they?

Do you know someone who would hate this poem? Why would they?

How can something be unknown yet longed for? Is there anything like that in your life?

What is your favourite phrase in this poem?

Friday

Read a profile

- Read *Maya Angelou – Author Profile*
- Which three facts about Maya Angelou do you think are most important? Write these in one sentence each. Why do you think this?

Watch three video performances of the poem

- Watch these three video performances of the poem:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxGbTwFm4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAXde0>

- Make some *Notes* about these performances. What did you notice and like? Was there anything that you disliked?

Friday***Maya Angelou – Author Profile***

Maya Angelou was born in Missouri in the southern USA in 1928. She was the descendant of generations of people who had been imprisoned as slaves.

She experienced many difficulties in her family when she was growing up and was very often treated unfairly.

She worked at all sorts of jobs once she had left school, including as a cook, as a dancer and singer, as a journalist and as a campaigner for civil rights. She also directed films and acted in the theatre!

From very early on she had loved reading, memorising poetry and writing, and published her first book in the 1960s. She was famous for her memoirs and autobiographical pieces, the first of which was called *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*.

Practise performing the poem

- Practise reading the poem out loud.
- Work on the first verse. Decide which words to emphasise and what expression you will use.
- Practise until you can speak really confidently.
- Challenge yourself to read the other verses just as well.

Caged Bird

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
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so he opens his throat to sing.

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Notes

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1.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pAxBbTwFm4		
2.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Adg9rS4rVjl		
3.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZzOxWAxde0		