Giving the opening of stories for groups/individuals to write the next sentence can stretch vocabulary and style. In ability groups these openers were taken (in black) and added to (in blue) by the learners. The published opening was then read out in full for discussion.

(G Mortenson and DO Relin, Three Cups of Tea)

Greg Mortenson was lost.

He didn’t know it yet.

Smashed wood covered the beach as the tide ebbed away, rocks scattered all around.

(ALN)

(C McCarthy, The Orchard Keeper)

The tree was down and cut to lengths, the sections spread and jumbled over the grass.

Darkness fell as time faded away. Winter came and the logs were still there. No one had found them yet.

(Basic skills)

(D Almond, Kit’s Wildreness)

They thought we had disappeared, and they were wrong.

We were still here, just hidden well. Nobody could find us and that’s our skill. The Government would never find them. A rock fell off the shattered roof and just hit the compound.

(competant)

(HG Wells, War of the Worlds)

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man’s and yet as mortal as their own. Twenty eyes gazed on us. A paranormal disruption annoyed the Earth’s crust. Shake, shake, shake went the world. Books fell from their shelves, glass smashed and volcanoes erupted as the world began to end.

(more able)