

poisoned sweets. Some years later, there were reports of children in the town finding candy on their window sills in the morning, and legend suggests that the children started disappearing. People blamed these disappearances on The Candy Lady.

In groups, prepare and present a short play about this urban legend. You could take on the roles of the adults and children of the Texan town and enact the disappearance of a child.

ACTIVITY 3

A04

A05

SKILLS

CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYSIS,
INTERPRETATION, ADAPTIVE
LEARNING, CREATIVITY

▼ INFLUENCE OF CHILDHOOD

- 1 Read the extract below, in which Susan Hill describes the influence that her birthplace and childhood have had on her writing.

I was born beside the North Sea, in Scarborough, Yorkshire one bitterly cold winter during WWII, when the snow was deep and the waves were crashing onto the cliffs not far away.

How much do we carry with us of our birth – the when and the where? I certainly carry with me all the stories I was told about that day, that winter. But Scarborough, where I lived and rarely left until I was 16, is not the mere background but the whole setting of all my childhood memories. So many of my novels and short stories feature it, though always in disguise – feature the sea, and seaside places. Growing up in an unusual place gives a writer a big advantage because the imagination is stimulated and intrigued by everything in and about it from the beginning.

Write a blog entry about a childhood experience or place that is very memorable or which has had a strong influence on you.

- 2 Write a short story entitled 'The Deepest Shadow'.

Ann Radcliffe's novel, *The Italian*, is the story of a nobleman called Vivaldi and his attempt to marry Elena, a beautiful orphan. With many obstacles to the proposed marriage, Vivaldi has to contend with mysterious monks, ghostly figures and the **Holy Inquisition**. The following extract shows the way in which Radcliffe creates the eerie atmosphere of a chamber in a ruined fortress where Vivaldi and his servant Paulo are trapped for the night.

▼ FROM *THE ITALIAN* (1797) BY ANN RADCLIFFE

Vivaldi again examined the walls, and as unsuccessfully as before; but in one corner of the vault lay an object, which seemed to tell the fate of one who had been confined here, and to hint his own: it was a garment covered with blood. Vivaldi and his servant discovered it at the same instant; and a dreadful foreboding of their own destiny fixed them, for some moments, to the spot. Vivaldi first recovered himself, when instead of yielding to despondency, all his faculties were aroused to devise some means for escaping; but Paulo's hopes seemed buried beneath the dreadful vestments upon which he still gazed. 'Ah, my Signor!' said he, at length, in a faltering accent, 'who shall dare to raise that garment? What if it should conceal the mangled body whose blood has stained it!'

KEY POINT

Your early childhood experiences inevitably have an influence on your outlook on life and so will influence your writing.

GENERAL VOCABULARY

Holy Inquisition a part of the Roman Catholic Church who sought to combat heresy from the 12th century onwards