The first description of Joe Zabbidou is detailed and evocative:

‘His age was impossible to determine. He was neither stout nor thin, but perhaps narrow. And he was tall ...’ (Chapter Three, page 7)

After the rumour spreads around the village that the old hat shop has a new occupier, the villagers gather to see who the new arrival is and what he intends to do. The unusual window display and frog make people question what kind of shop will be opened ...

Imagine being one of the villagers who have never seen anyone as unusual or as tall as the intriguing Joe Zabbidou. Write your impressions of the first morning that Joe arrived.

- You could start with the person who told you about the new arrival. What did they say? What gossip did they have to tell you?

- A really good start might be to begin with a description of the crowd of people who are gathered together to get a look at the new arrival. As a fellow villager, you would recognise people who were there and be able to describe the mood of anticipation and reactions to Joe and his shop.

- Alternatively, you could begin by describing the shop window and your first sight of Joe that strange and different morning.

- Use what Joe says and how the crowd react to him to help develop your ideas.

- Before you start, skim through Chapter Three to remind yourself of the details of Joe’s appearance and behaviour.

- Think about who you might be and what your role is in the village – are you young or old? Farmer? Worker? Trader? Servant? What should you be doing or where should you be when all the morning events take place?

To improve your writing:

- carefully use paragraphs to organise your ideas and to build up your descriptions
- experiment with the start of sentences to make your writing interesting for your reader
- aim to use a variety of sentences
- look at your descriptions. Where can you add in more adjectives or more interesting choices to add detail and variety to your writing?