

A brilliant performer with a particular eye for timing, Eva takes the biggest risks and builds the wildest inventions, encouraging the rest of us to be ever more playful with our actions. We're partnered up for an exercise where we have to mirror each other while crossing the room to meet in the middle as if greeting a long lost friend, only to meet, realise it's the wrong person, and waddle away. When it's our turn, Eva happily leads with no holding back. We fling our arms and legs around and jump like deer; at this point, she makes me laugh so hard I have to catch my breath before I can copy her, rasping like a wildcat and wobbling like jelly. When we cross in the centre she makes me walk like a crab across the whole length of the space back to the

4 Look at the fifth paragraph (lines 29–39).

(a) Which word in the text could be replaced with the word 'actor'?

..... [1]

(b) Give a word or phrase in the text which means 'without restraint'.

..... [1]

(c) The writer uses similes in the text to describe action and movement. What else does the writer describe using a simile?

..... [1]

Mime doesn't have to mean a showy individual in a black-and-white stripy top with a whitened, sorrowful face, stuck in an imaginary box (though I can now very effectively push away a heavy invisible box, should the need arise). Instead, mime makes us focus on the little things: eye contact, touch, individual movements. While it can come across as a highly pretentious art form – particularly, Rae says, 'if you take yourself too seriously' – mime celebrates the skill of playfulness. 'To be silly is quite an art,' she adds. To mime is to play a game and stick to the imaginary, wondrously childish rules as well as you can. It is someone falling over for comic effect for the pleasure of making others laugh. It is the skill of telling a good story, eyes wide open and lips sealed.

5 Look at the sixth paragraph (lines 40–48). Give **three** words from the paragraph that the writer uses to connect contrasting ideas.

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[3]

Mime, I have learned, is the art of paying close attention to the minor details. At least, that's what I think it's all about, sweaty and aching as I leap over a brick wall, pick up a heavy suitcase, slip on a puddle of water and wallop into a tree on my way out.

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- 7 Look at the seventh paragraph (lines 49–51).
Tick (✓) **one** box to complete this sentence.

In the final sentence the writer ...

has an accident as she leaves.

☐

has difficulty finding the exit.

☐

is about to go on a holiday.

☐

is practising what she has learnt.

☐

There are 24 of us on the course, which is booked up a year in advance. The group includes a clown, a comedy double-act and drama-school students. They all carry themselves with such confidence. Their exaggerated movements seem to flow effortlessly through their joints and fingertips, while I'm trapped inside my head panicking about how awkward I feel. 'Don't worry about feeling stupid or making mistakes,' Rae advises. 'That's how you learn.' And yet, the worry lingers.

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For comfort, I cling to the few others who have little experience in performing on stage. There's a young woman who has never acted but wanted to give mime a go, and a retired office worker who has been going to the mime festival for years and thought it would be fun. Then I'm paired up with 10-year-old Eva. An all-round fan of stories (her cat is named Crookshanks after the one in the Harry Potter books), Eva didn't realise the class would be full of adults when she signed up but doesn't seem the slightest bit intimidated.

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starting line. I can't stop grinning. Finally, rid of my stifling embarrassment, I start to get to grips with the task. Look through the bright eyes of an eager, intelligent child, and mime is all about play.

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- 8 Look at the third, fourth, fifth and sixth paragraphs (lines 17–48).
The structure of the text reflects the writer's feelings at different stages during the workshop.
Complete the flow chart by choosing a word from the box which describes the writer's feelings in each paragraph.
There are **two** extra words in the box you do **not** need to use.

rejection	reassurance	acceptance	release	dread	defeat
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Third paragraph feeling:	
↓	
Fourth paragraph feeling:	
↓	
Fifth paragraph feeling:	
↓	
Sixth paragraph feeling:	

[4]