

Writing Styles & Purpose

It is interesting to compare the different writing styles used by a scientist and a novelist.

Below are two extracts:

- Extract 1 is from 'Badgerlands', an on-line guide on badgers.
- Extract 2 is from Kenneth Grahame's 'The Wind in the Willows'.

Extract 1

Introduction to Badgers

Latin Name: Meles meles

Size

The Badger grows up to 30 inches (750 mm) from head to tail - with a six-inch (150 mm) tail, and weighs up to about 10 to 12 kg.

The female badger is slightly smaller than the male, and the male has a slightly broader head and looks a little more muscular. The females tend to have a shorter bushy tail; whereas the males tend to have a longer, thinner pointed tail which has a little more white on it.

Pelage/fur

Their coarse coat of hair is black and white - leading to a grey appearance from a distance. The hair from their back is up to 75mm long and has a black pointed tip. The badger has a black chest and forepaws; with a prominent black and white striped head with white ear-tips. Hair from the head, face, legs and underside is shorter.

They do shed their hair, and it is often possible to find badger hair on or in the soil at or near a badger sett. Badgers also undergo a seasonal moult - where they tend to shed more hair in the summer (when there is more daylight and higher temperatures), before growing more hair again at the start of the winter (when the amount of daylight has reduced and the temperature is lower).



Extract 2

The Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame

THEY waited patiently for what seemed a very long time, stamping in the snow to keep their feet warm. At last they heard the sound of slow shuffling footsteps approaching the door from the inside. It seemed, as the Mole remarked to the Rat, like some one walking in carpet slippers that were too large for him and down at heel; which was intelligent of Mole, because that was exactly what it was.

There was the noise of a bolt shot back, and the door opened a few inches, enough to show a long snout and a pair of sleepy blinking eyes.

"Now, the very next time this happens," said a gruff and suspicious voice, "I shall be exceedingly angry. Who is it this time, disturbing people on such a night? Speak up!"

"Oh, Badger," cried the Rat, "let us in, please. It's me, Rat, and my friend Mole, and we've lost our way in the snow."

"What, Ratty, my dear little man!" exclaimed the Badger, in quite a different voice. "Come along in, both of you, at once. Why, you must be perished. Well, I never! Lost in the snow! And in the Wild Wood, too, and at this time of night! But come in with you."

The two animals tumbled over each other in their eagerness to get inside, and heard the door shut behind them with great joy and relief.

The Badger, who wore a long dressing-gown, and whose slippers were indeed very down at heel, carried a flat candlestick in his paw and had probably been on his way to bed when their summons sounded. He looked kindly down on them and patted both their heads. "This is not the sort of night for small animals to be out," he said paternally. "I'm afraid you've been up to some of your pranks again, Ratty. But come along; come into the kitchen. There's a first-rate fire there, and supper and everything."

He shuffled on in front of them, carrying the light, and they followed him, nudging each other in an anticipating sort of way, down a long, gloomy, and, to tell the truth, decidedly shabby passage, into a sort of a central hall, out of which they could dimly see other long tunnel-like passages branching, passages mysterious and without apparent end. But there were doors in the hall as well—stout oaken, comfortable-looking doors. One of these the Badger flung open, and at once they found themselves in all the glow and warmth of a large fire-lit kitchen.



School of Professor Brock

KEY STAGE
3

Pupils'
worksheet

Discussion points

- 1 In what ways are the scientist's and the novelist's styles similar, and in what ways are they different?
- 2 Why are they different?
- 3 How does each describe the badger?
- 4 Which is more effective? Why?

Activity

- 5 Watch video clips on the Binfield Badger Group website:
<https://www.binfieldbadgers.org.uk/video-clips>

Now write your own description of a badger.

