

An Interview with Nixie Labs

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 2-3

Author / Source:

<http://antenna.sciencemuseum.org.uk>

Genre:

Non-fiction — interview

Cross-curricular links:

- History (famous inventors)
- Science (technological innovation)
- D&T (testing prototypes)

Introduction

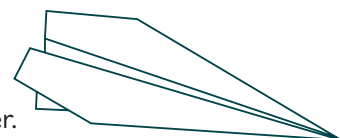
In this interview, computer scientist Floris Ernst describes his work on Nixie, the world's first simple, wearable drone. The interview provides pupils with a first-hand insight into the design and development process behind this cutting-edge technology. Ensure pupils are aware that, in this context, a drone is a small, unmanned aircraft. As they read, pupils should consider what the interview tells them about the process by which scientists and engineers develop new technologies.

Answers

1. E.g. To automatically take photographs of its owner.
2. E.g. Because it is difficult for them to use a camera while they are climbing, so Nixie will allow them to take photos of themselves safely while climbing.
3. E.g. Because they could be used to spy on people and take photos or videos of places that are supposed to be private, for example by flying over people's gardens or looking through windows.
4. E.g. To get a better view of dangerous situations, and to help locate people who need to be rescued.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He is very positive about Nixie, and it seems like he is very passionate about the project — the use of exclamation marks shows this enthusiasm.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because it would be fun to have a flying camera that could take photos from any angle, especially one like Nixie that would be light and easy to use. OR E.g. No, because it might be used to spy on people. Also, it could be dangerous because it might hurt someone if it crashed.

Extra Activities

- Get pupils to use the information in the interview to design a poster persuading people to buy Nixie. Encourage them to think about how they can use language to make their poster as persuasive as possible.
- Ask pupils to research other inventors and their inventions, such as James Dyson, Trevor Baylis, Mary Anderson, John Logie Baird and Stephanie Kwolek. Pupils should present their findings in the form of an imagined interview with the inventor, using similar questions to those asked in the Nixie interview.
- Using the interview as a starting point, explore the process of technological innovation. Key points to cover include the value of teamwork in developing new technologies; the importance of experimentation in the development process; and the use of prototypes to test and improve design features.
- Working in small groups, challenge pupils to design an aeroplane, made only from A4 sheets of paper, that will fly as far as possible. Once they have designed and built their first prototype, they should test it and use the outcome of the tests to build an improved version of their design. Get pupils to draw a diagram of their final design, annotating the features they added to make it fly further.



Holes

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 4-5

Author / Source:

Louis Sachar

Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- Drama (role-play)
- PSHE (juvenile prison)
- Geography (deserts)

Introduction

Louis Sachar's *Holes* tells the unfortunate tale of Stanley Yelnats and his time at Camp Green Lake, a juvenile correctional facility in Texas. Before reading the extract, ask pupils about the novel's title. What might the novel be about? What do they think will happen? As pupils read the text, encourage them to pay special attention to the deliberate use of short sentences, and the impact this has on the reader.

Answers

1. E.g. The lake has dried up, the town has disappeared, and the people who lived in the town have gone.
2. E.g. The narrator is very negative about it. He describes the location as a "wasteland" and makes it sound like an uncomfortable place by emphasising the high temperatures and lack of shade.
3. E.g. A selfish person because she has the only hammock on the site, which is shaded by the only trees, and she won't let the campers use it. She also seems cruel because she makes the campers dig holes all day.
4. E.g. No, because the hot conditions they work in are unbearable, and many are even prepared to risk being bitten by a scorpion or a rattlesnake in order to get a break from digging holes on the lake.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He doesn't really explain why the campers are at Camp Green Lake, so the reader wants to read more to find out how they ended up there.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, because the conditions the boys have to work in are dangerous and unfair, even if they have done something wrong. OR E.g. Yes, because it might make them change their behaviour in the future so that they wouldn't have to receive the same punishment again.

Extra Activities

- Question 5 asks pupils to consider the techniques Sachar uses to make the reader keep reading. As a class, discuss pupils' answers to this question and explore in more detail the way Sachar engages the reader.
- Ask pupils to write a postcard home as if they were Stanley, writing from Camp Green Lake.
- Divide pupils into pairs and ask them to imagine the first meeting between Stanley and the Warden. They should write a short role-play, which they can then perform for the class.
- The children in *Holes* have been sent away to a correctional facility, or a juvenile prison. With the whole class, discuss various opinions about sending children to prison. How old should a child be before he or she is considered old enough to go to prison? Where should they go if they don't go to prison?
- Camp Green Lake is set in desert-like conditions. Get pupils to look up the word 'desert' in a dictionary, and then assign groups different deserts to investigate (e.g. Antarctica, the Gobi Desert, the Sahara Desert and the Kalahari Desert). Ask pupils to present their findings to the class so that everyone can see the diversity between the different types of desert.

Born on a Blue Day

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 6-7

Author / Source:

Daniel Tammet

Genre:

Non-fiction — memoir

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (autism spectrum)
- Art (numerical representation)
- Maths (prime numbers)

Introduction

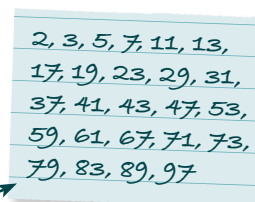
As well as suffering from Asperger's syndrome, Daniel Tammet has savant syndrome, a rare condition in which individuals with serious mental disorders show remarkable abilities in a specific field, often either art, music, calendar calculation, mathematics or spatial skills. Like Daniel, around fifty per cent of people with savant syndrome suffer from an autism spectrum disorder, although savant syndrome also occurs in individuals with other developmental or neurological disorders. Before you start reading the extract with the class, use the introduction in the Question Book to ensure that pupils have a basic understanding of the nature of Daniel's condition.

Answers

1. E.g. A number that's only divisible by itself and one. Daniel recognises them by their "pebble-like" quality.
2. E.g. He eats exactly 45 grams of porridge for breakfast each morning, weighing the bowl with an electronic scale. Then he counts the number of items of clothing he's wearing before leaving the house. He gets anxious if he can't follow his normal routine.
3. E.g. "Eleven is friendly" and "five is loud".
4. E.g. Because "Times" and "Square" are both words that you might use in maths.
5. E.g. He means that he felt surrounded by enormous things. He links the number nine to "feelings of immensity", so the huge buildings in Times Square made him feel like there were nines all around him.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think that it would be difficult if you needed to follow the same routine every day, because sometimes things might get in the way of your routine, and that would be very stressful.

Extra Activities

- *Born on a Blue Day* is a memoir. Memoirs follow similar conventions to autobiographies. With the whole class, discuss the conventions of autobiographical writing. Ask pupils to write a short autobiographical passage, or a memoir, describing how they celebrated their most recent birthday.
- With the whole class, look at the way Daniel describes the different numbers mentioned in the extract. Ask pupils to suggest how Daniel might see other numbers, and to explain their answers. You could then ask pupils to draw or paint a picture showing the way that Daniel sees some of the numbers he describes in the extract.
- Ask pupils to write a poem describing how Daniel views his world.
- With the whole class, discuss the challenges that people living with savant syndrome and other autism spectrum disorders face on a daily basis.
- Challenge pupils to find all the prime numbers under 100.



Hostages to Handheld Devices

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 8-9

Author / Source:

www.independent.co.uk

Genre:

Non-fiction — news article

Cross-curricular links:

- Science (benefits of exercise)
- PE (sport and technology)
- Maths (statistics)

Introduction

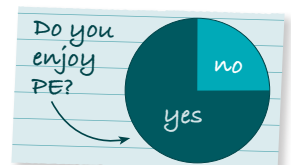
Children are spending an increasing amount of time using devices such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops, and this has led to concerns about the health consequences of their increasingly sedentary lifestyles. This article presents recent research into children's attitudes towards technology and sport, raising the possibility of integrating technology into PE lessons in order to increase children's participation in physical activity. Before reading the article with the class, ask pupils whether they prefer playing sports or video games.

Answers

1. E.g. Negative. It says that there are "fears" about the way these devices are affecting children, and the phrase "hostages to handheld devices" makes it sound like children are being taken captive by these devices.
2. "critical crossroads" E.g. Because the alliteration makes the phrase stand out. The phrase also sounds very dramatic because it suggests that major decisions need to be taken about the future of sport in schools.
3. b. enjoy PE lessons
4. E.g. Just because young people enjoy using technology doesn't mean that they aren't interested in other kinds of activities too.
5. a. personification
6. "integrates"
7. E.g. Optimistic. She thinks that primary schools are starting to change the way they look at PE, and she thinks that the number of children doing PE is probably going to go up in the next few years.

Extra Activities

- Get pupils to identify the language and layout features which show that this text is a news article. Can they think of any other features of news articles?
- Get pupils to research the physical and psychological benefits of regular exercise. They should design a leaflet that will persuade primary school children to do more exercise. Encourage them to think about how they can use language and layout to make their leaflet appeal to their target audience.
- With the whole class, discuss the way PE is taught in school. Ask pupils to suggest how modern technology might be incorporated into PE lessons. Do pupils think that integrating PE and technology is a good idea? Would it make them enjoy their PE lessons more?
- Get pupils to carry out a survey of their classmates' participation in sport and other hobbies, asking questions inspired by the text (e.g. "Do you enjoy PE lessons?"), and questions about activities that pupils do in their spare time. Pupils should use bar graphs, pie charts and pictograms to present their results.



Cider With Rosie

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 10-11

Author / Source:

Laurie Lee

Genre:

Autobiographical novel

Cross-curricular links:

- History (change over time)
- Geography (the British landscape)

Introduction

Laurie Lee is best known for his autobiographical novel *Cider With Rosie*, first published in 1959. The novel begins just before the end of World War I and follows Lee's experiences growing up in the small Gloucestershire village of Slad. In some respects the novel presents country life as idyllic, but it also explores the hardships of life at that time. By the end of the novel, Slad is beginning to be affected by the changes brought by the post-war years, such as the introduction of the motor car, and people leaving to work in larger towns and cities. This results in the decline of the traditional village life the narrator knew as a child. Make sure pupils read the introduction so that they understand when and where the text is set.

Answers

1. E.g. Because the grass is unfamiliar and tall, so it seems threatening, and because he is on his own for the first time in his life.
2. "Snow-clouds of elder-blossom" E.g. It helps you to imagine what the elder-blossom looks like, because it creates a picture of the blossom being white and fluffy, like clouds of snow.
3. a. c. a simile b. E.g. Comparing the sun to a bully makes it sound cruel and violent. This helps the reader to understand why the narrator feels so frightened and upset.
4. E.g. Because a shield protects you, and his sisters' faces form a shield that protects him from the sun.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because writers often make the natural world sound beautiful, but the narrator makes it sound frightening and horrible. For example, he says that the air smelled "rank".



Extra Activities

- With the whole class, explore the feelings that Lee conveys in this extract. Ask pupils to suggest one or two adjectives to describe how the narrator feels in each paragraph, and to explain their choices.
- As a class, identify the language that Lee uses to describe the natural world and explain how it affects the reader. Drawing on their answers to question 5 in the Question Book, get pupils to explain whether they share Lee's view of nature. Ask pupils to rewrite the extract in a way that reflects their own attitude towards the natural world.
- In small groups, ask pupils to investigate different aspects of life (e.g. education, leisure activities, communication, transport) for children in the early twentieth century. Pupils should share their findings with the class so that they can build up a detailed picture of the similarities and differences between children's lives then and now.
- The village of Slad is located in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Give pupils a list of all the AONBs and National Parks in the UK and a map showing their location. Challenge pupils to name the parks on their map and to look for pictures on the Internet of the landscape in some of them.

Olympic Torch Relay, Day 52

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 12-13

Author / Source:

Matt King, www.theguardian.com

Genre:

Non-fiction — news article

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (disability and accessibility)
- Geography (world cities)
- History (Ancient Greece)

Introduction

In this article, Matt King, one of the torchbearers for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, describes how he rebuilt his life after a devastating rugby accident left him paralysed from the neck down. Before reading the article with the class, explain that torchbearers like Matt are selected because of their outstanding contribution to their communities and because they are role models to others. As they read, ask pupils to think about why Matt may have been nominated to act as a torchbearer.

Answers

1. E.g. He went back to school to finish his A-levels, went to university, and then got a job at a City law firm.
2. E.g. Because he has suffered a similar injury to them, so he understands what they are going through.
3. E.g. Because some very unusual things have happened, such as receiving an OBE and carrying the Olympic Torch.
4. The day his accident happened. E.g. He calls it a “fateful” day because it was a day that completely changed the course of his life.
5. E.g. He found coaching rugby difficult because it reminded him that he could no longer play rugby himself.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No. Even though he can no longer do some things, such as play rugby, he no longer feels devastated because he has managed to move on and build a successful life for himself.

Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to explain why they think Matt was nominated by his community to act as a torchbearer. Get them to suggest role models in their communities who they would nominate to carry the Olympic torch.
- With the whole class, discuss the physical and social challenges that Matt may have faced when he went back to school after his accident. Ask pupils to identify anything their school has done to make it accessible for pupils with disabilities. What else could the school do to improve accessibility?
- Highlight the use of the first person in this article, and discuss, with the class, its effect on the reader. Discuss other uses of language that add to the impact of the article too.
- Assign groups of pupils different cities around the world, and ask them to prepare a bid for that city to host the next Olympic Games. Their bids might cover the city’s size and location, its climate, its existing sports facilities, and how they think the Games would benefit the city and vice versa. Each group should present their bid to the class, and pupils can vote to decide which city should be awarded the Games.
- Get pupils to research the ancient Olympic Games. They should find out when and where the ancient Games began, who took part, and what events were involved. Pupils could use their findings to create a class display showing similarities and differences between the ancient and modern-day Olympic Games.

Poems about Seasons

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 14-15

Author / Source:

Adrian Henri

John Updike

Genre:

Poetry

Cross-curricular links:

- Geography (comparing climates)

Introduction

Adrian Henri was a British poet and painter. One of the influential Liverpool Poets of the 1960s, he is credited with helping to increase the popularity of poetry among young people by writing poems about popular culture. Henri's contemporary, the American writer John Updike, is best known for his novels, but he also published several poetry collections. Like Henri, Updike is known for depicting familiar topics in his poems. This contrasting pair of poems gives pupils the opportunity to compare different forms of poetry, and to explore the use of vivid imagery to describe the world around them.

Answers

1. "The nights come in / early"
2. "there'll be tangerines in the shops, / in shiny paper like Christmas lights"
3. E.g. He means bare trees that are covered in white frost so they look like they're made of lace.
4. E.g. Maybe because the verb "purrs" sounds like the noise that the radiator makes. Also, cats purr when they're happy, so the word "purrs" makes the radiator sound happy.
5. *Autumn*
6. E.g. *Autumn*. It mentions things like fireworks, which are exciting, and it describes enjoyable autumn activities like kicking leaves. *January* describes the cold and dark, which are things most people don't enjoy.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I prefer *January* because I think it describes winter really effectively. For example, the phrase "The sun a spark" helps you imagine how small and distant the sun seems in winter. OR E.g. I prefer *Autumn*, because it mentions lots of my favourite things, like conkers and blackberries. I also like the way it uses different senses, such as smell, to bring the season to life.

Extra Activities

- As a class, compare the form of the two poems. Ask pupils to identify the rhyme scheme and number of syllables per line in *January* and discuss how these features affect the rhythm and tone of the poem. What is different about the form of *Autumn*? How does this affect the poem's rhythm and tone?
- Ask pupils to identify examples of figurative language from the two poems and explain their meaning and effect. Why do they think the poets chose these phrases? Do pupils find them effective?
- Get pupils to write and illustrate their own 16-line poem about their favourite season or month. Their poem should either start "Season of..." and be written in free verse, or follow the same rhyme scheme as *January*.
- *January* was first published while John Updike was living in Massachusetts. Challenge pupils to find Massachusetts on a map and then ask them to research its climate. They should use their findings to write a short text describing what winters are like in Massachusetts and comparing them to winters in the UK. As a class, discuss how Updike's poem might have been different if he had lived in Britain.

A Letter from C.S. Lewis

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 16-17

Author / Source:

C.S. Lewis

Genre:

Non-fiction — letter

Cross-curricular links:

- Art (illustrating a text)

Introduction

Pupils may know C.S. Lewis as the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which are still widely read, and have been adapted for television, radio, stage and film. In this letter, Lewis draws on his many years of experience as an author to offer one of his young fans some helpful advice on how to write well. Before reading the letter with the class, ask pupils to suggest guidelines that they think are important for good writing.

Answers

1. “the setting but not the jewel”
2. E.g. Because he thinks Joan’s too young to enjoy it at the moment, and if she reads it now, it will stop her enjoying it when she’s older.
3. E.g. He finds it difficult. He says that, as a writer, you very rarely manage to describe “the *thing* itself”, even if you write lots of books.
4. d. ambiguity
5. E.g. It tells you that you should use adjectives to make the reader feel a certain way, rather than to tell the reader how they ought to feel.
6. E.g. When writing, writers should avoid ambiguity; use simple language; use concrete nouns rather than abstract ones where possible; and they shouldn’t exaggerate or tell the reader how they ought to feel.



Extra Activities

- With the whole class, discuss the advice offered in C.S. Lewis’s letter. How does Lewis’s advice compare with the guidelines that the pupils suggested before reading the letter? Are pupils surprised by any of Lewis’s suggestions? Do they agree or disagree with his advice?
- To highlight the value of simple, direct language, challenge pupils to think of as many ways as possible to describe everyday objects, without using “the plain direct word”. For example, a spade might be ‘a long-handled excavation device’ or ‘a manual earth-removal tool’.
- Lewis gives one example where an abstract noun can be replaced with a concrete one (“Mortality rose” / “More people died”). Ask pupils to write sentences containing other abstract nouns, then challenge them to rewrite their sentences, replacing the abstract nouns with concrete ones.
- Ask pupils to write a passage describing a terrifying monster. Following Lewis’s advice, they should avoid adjectives like “horrifying”, and instead use language to create an image that will terrify the reader.
- Read one of the pupils’ passages to the class and ask everyone to draw a picture of the monster it describes. As a class, discuss the similarities and differences between the pupils’ drawings. Did the passage create the same image in everyone’s mind, or did different pupils imagine it differently?
- Get pupils to write a letter to Lewis, following his advice, to vividly describe their own “Wonderful Night”.

The Lord of the Rings

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 18-19

Author / Source:

J.R.R. Tolkien

Genre:

Classic fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- Art (fantasy characters)

Introduction

J.R.R. Tolkien's novel, *The Lord of the Rings*, is extraordinarily popular, and has been a major influence on modern fantasy writing for both children and adults. Tolkien's books are so popular because of the remarkably detailed fantasy world he created, and his use of language to vividly bring this world to life. In this extract, Gandalf (a wizard) and Pippin (a hobbit) are travelling to the great stone city of Minas Tirith. As they read, encourage pupils to think about how Tolkien uses language to create the atmosphere in this extract.

Answers

1. "the wind sang" or "the mountains of the South marched past"
2. E.g. He uses verbs that describe quick movement, such as "was rushing", which show that Gandalf and Pippin are travelling quickly. He also describes the sound of the wind, which emphasises how fast they are moving.
3. E.g. It means that the men were so scared of the "winged shadow" that they shrank away from it.
4. E.g. Because this repetition emphasises how much travelling Gandalf and Pippin have done.
5. E.g. threatening; frightening; sinister
6. E.g. He feels afraid. The verbs "cried" and "clutching" suggest that he is frightened, and the exclamation marks make it seem as if he is shouting in fear.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. When Pippin is scared, for example, when the "winged shadow" flies past, Gandalf manages to comfort him. This shows that Pippin trusts Gandalf. However, Pippin is worried about where Gandalf is taking him, so he doesn't trust Gandalf completely.

Extra Activities

- With the whole class, discuss the techniques that Tolkien uses to create the extract's atmosphere.
- In this extract, Tolkien uses figurative language to convey the speed of Gandalf and Pippin's journey. Ask pupils to think of their own similes and metaphors that convey a sense of travelling at speed. Pupils should then write a short passage that uses figurative language to describe an imagined journey.
- Ask pupils to identify features of this extract which show that *The Lord of the Rings* is a work of fantasy. Can they think of any other features that might suggest a book belongs to the fantasy genre? With the whole class, discuss the similarities and differences between fantasy novels and other types of fictional writing.
- Tolkien's books are filled with a vast array of fantasy characters. Get pupils to imagine their own fantasy character and produce an annotated illustration showing how it looks and behaves. Pupils could share their ideas with the class and write a short story featuring some or all of their classmates' characters.

Queen Victoria's Diary

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 20-21

Author / Source:

Queen Victoria

Genre:

Non-fiction — diary

Cross-curricular links:

- History (sources)

Introduction

Queen Victoria (1819-1901) was the only child of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, the fourth son of King George III. As her three uncles had no legitimate children, Victoria was heir to the British throne. When the last of her uncles, King William IV, died on 20th June 1837, Victoria became Queen. Throughout her life, Victoria kept a detailed diary, and this extract offers a first-hand account of the day when, aged just 18, she inherited the throne. Before pupils read the diary extract, ensure that they are aware of its historical context. It may be helpful to explain that Victoria knew that King William was seriously ill, and that she would inherit the throne on his death.

Answers

1. E.g. died; passed away
2. E.g. told; informed; notified
3. E.g. Because the Queen wanted him to describe the King's last moments to Victoria.
4. the role of queen
5. E.g. Her "good will" and her desire to do the right thing.
6. E.g. Victoria likes and trusts Lord Melbourne because she thinks that he is "a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man".
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. She felt sad because her uncle had died. She also felt very calm — her description is very matter-of-fact, and it doesn't suggest strong emotions like surprise or excitement.

Extra Activities

- With the whole class, discuss Victoria's response to the news that she had become queen. Ask pupils to identify the feelings that Victoria puts across in her diary, and to explain whether they find any aspects of her response surprising.
- Ask pupils to imagine how they would feel if, like Victoria, they were woken early in the morning and told that they had become king or queen. Pupils should write a diary entry describing their feelings.
- Some of the language in Queen Victoria's diary seems old-fashioned to the modern reader. Get pupils to work through the extract, updating old-fashioned language with appropriate modern-day equivalents.
- The extract ends "I then wrote a letter to the Queen". With the whole class, discuss what Victoria may have included in this letter, and then ask pupils to write Victoria's letter to the Queen.
- This diary extract is an important primary source for Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Ask pupils to suggest other sources, both historical and modern, that they could use to find out more about Victoria's accession and coronation. Explain the concept of primary and secondary sources, and ask pupils to categorise the sources they have suggested as either primary or secondary.



If—

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 22-23

Author / Source:

Rudyard Kipling

Genre:

Classic poetry

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (personal development)

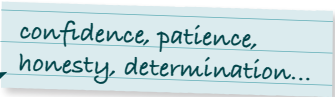
Introduction

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) is an extremely well-known author, and pupils may previously have come across this poem, or his other works for children, such as *The Jungle Book* or the *Just So Stories*. *If—*, written in 1895 but first published in 1910, remains highly popular, and has repeatedly been voted the nation's favourite poem, even though some of the ideals it presents may seem outdated to a modern audience. Pupils should read the poem closely in order to gain a clear understanding of the ideas that Kipling puts across. Encourage them to form their own opinions about the model of behaviour presented in the poem.

Answers

1. the second person
2. "If you can wait and not be tired by waiting"
3. d. not tell lies
4. b. perseverance
5. E.g. moral behaviour; dignity; honour
6. c. personification
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Difficult, because normally you react to them in different ways — you're usually happy about a triumph, and very upset about a disaster.
8. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think some parts of the poem give good advice, such as the line that says "trust yourself when all men doubt you". However, I don't agree with some of the advice. For example, if things go wrong, I don't think you should keep it a secret like the poem suggests in lines 19-20.

Extra Activities

- Work through the poem with the whole class, asking pupils to explain the meaning of each statement beginning with "If" in their own words. Encourage pupils to discuss whether they agree or disagree with each point, and to explain the reasons for their opinions.
- Give pupils a list of abstract nouns and ask them to match each noun to the appropriate part(s) of the poem. 
- Kipling wrote *If—* for his son, John. Once pupils have a good understanding of the ideas in the poem, get them to rewrite it in their own words, in the form of a letter from Kipling to his son.
- With the whole class, discuss the poetic techniques used in the poem, including the ABAB CDCD rhyme scheme and the alternation between lines of 11 and 10 syllables.
- Ask pupils to identify the qualities they think children should develop while growing up. Get them to write statements beginning with the word 'If' to describe these qualities (e.g. 'If you can keep working at something, even when it's really difficult'), and use their statements to write a poem in the style of *If—*.

Theseus's Adventures

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 24-25

Author / Source:

H.A. Guerber

Genre:

Myth

Cross-curricular links:

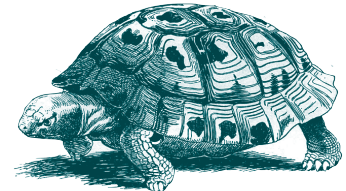
- History (Ancient Greece)
- PSHE (democracy)

Introduction

In Greek mythology, Theseus is a great hero, credited with unifying the communities of Attica into the Athenian city-state. It is said that Theseus's father was King Aegeus of Athens. Theseus spent his childhood with his mother, Aethra, in the Peloponnese city of Troezen. When he came of age, Theseus set out for Athens to take his place as heir to his father's kingdom. During his journey, he experienced many adventures, two of which are described in this extract. Before reading the extract with the class, show pupils a map of Greece, highlighting the location of Troezen and Athens. Point out the Isthmus of Corinth, and explain that it is a narrow land bridge linking the Peloponnese peninsula to mainland Greece.

Answers

1. E.g. escaped; avoided; evaded
2. E.g. He used a huge pine tree to throw Sinis into the air so that he would smash into the mountain side.
3. E.g. Because the Isthmus was very narrow, and Sciron guarded the only possible path.
4. to devour
5. E.g. He felt afraid. He had killed all the people who had washed his feet, so he was afraid that Theseus was going to kill him in the same way.
6. E.g. It includes a giant. OR E.g. It includes a huge, man-eating tortoise.
OR E.g. It includes a hero who must complete some difficult tasks.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because he easily managed to defeat Sinis and Sciron, so I think he would also have been able to survive any other dangers that he might have faced on the way to Athens.



Extra Activities

- Get pupils to identify all the adjectives in this extract. Working in small groups, they should try to think of as many synonyms as possible for each adjective.
- Ask pupils to write a news article reporting the adventures described in this extract. Encourage them to use appropriate language and presentational features.
- Ask pupils to imagine what adventure Theseus might have experienced next on his journey to Athens. They should write a continuation of this extract, describing what they think happened next.
- Question 6 in the Question Book asks about the conventions of myths. As a class, discuss pupils' answers to this question. Can pupils think of any other conventions that might mark a text out as a myth?
- Athens is widely regarded as the birth-place of democracy. Ask pupils to research Athenian democracy, focusing on who was and was not allowed to participate, the make-up and role of the assembly and the courts, and the methods by which officeholders were selected. Pupils should use their findings to create a poster explaining the key features of Athenian democracy.

I Can Jump Puddles

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 26-27

Author / Source:

Alan Marshall

Genre:

Non-fiction — autobiography

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (disability)
- Geography (Australia; tourism)

Introduction

Polio (Infantile Paralysis) is an infectious disease which became widespread in Europe, north America and Australasia in the first half of the twentieth century. Although it has now been largely eradicated in these regions, polio remains endemic in parts of Africa and south Asia. While most of those who contract polio experience no symptoms, in some cases, the disease can result in muscle weakness, paralysis or even death. In this extract, the Australian writer Alan Marshall (1902-1984), who contracted polio at the age of six, describes how his small, rural hometown reacted to his illness. Make sure pupils read the introduction so they understand that the illness Alan describes had a lasting physical impact upon him.

Answers

1. E.g. question
2. a. d. curiosity b. E.g. They ask questions about him, and they look at his house “with a new interest”. This shows that they are curious about his illness.
3. E.g. Because they were worried their children would catch polio too, and they thought that they might be able to prevent them from getting ill by wrapping them up warmly.
4. “It hits you like a blow from God”
5. E.g. I think he felt pessimistic. He says “that was the end of him”, which suggests that he didn’t think Alan was going to recover.
6. E.g. It suggests that he didn’t let his disability stop him doing the things he wanted to do. Even though the illness meant that it was difficult for him to walk, he still found a way to jump puddles.

Extra Activities

- Drawing on their answers to question 6 in the Question Book, ask pupils to write a letter from the young Alan to a friend, describing how having polio has affected him and how he feels about the disease.
- With the whole class, identify the features of the extract that show it’s an example of autobiographical writing. How would the extract be different if it were a biography? As a class, make a list of similarities and differences between biographies and autobiographies.
- Get pupils to write an autobiographical passage describing a vivid memory from when they were younger.
- Ask pupils to research their favourite author and write a brief biography about them.
- Explain to pupils that, despite his disability, Alan Marshall went on to have a very successful writing career. Ask pupils to create posters celebrating the achievements of other individuals who have overcome adversity, such as Franklin D. Roosevelt, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller and Tanni Grey-Thompson.
- Alan Marshall grew up in the Australian state of Victoria. Ask pupils to find out where Victoria is and to research its climate, geographical features, major cities and tourist attractions. They should use their findings to create a page for a tourism website that will persuade people to visit Victoria.

White Fang

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 28-29

Author / Source:

Jack London

Genre:

Classic fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- Geography (Yukon Territory)
- Science (adaptation and evolution)

Introduction

Jack London is a popular author, and many pupils may have previously come across this novel, or some of his others, such as *Call of the Wild*. Ensure pupils read the introduction to the extract so that they understand who White Fang is, and then focus their attention on London's vivid use of language.

Answers

1. E.g. That the tribe was leaving, and he would have to go with them.
2. E.g. He feels afraid. Maybe he is frightened that Grey Beaver will punish him if he finds him.
3. E.g. sinister; menacing; forbidding; threatening
4. E.g. White Fang feels frightened of being alone in the woods. The author shows this by using adjectives like "looming" and "perilous" to make the setting seem frightening. He also describes White Fang with words like "perturbed" and "suspicious", which show that he feels anxious and frightened.
5. E.g. It suggests that the cold is so intense that it has got inside White Fang's body. This shows the reader how cold it is, and helps them to imagine how it felt.
6. E.g. The fact that he had run away suggests that he may not have liked living in the camp very much, so he didn't want to return, even when he was cold and hungry. He may also have stayed away because he wanted to be independent or because he didn't know where the camp had moved to.

Extra Activities

- With the whole class, discuss how Jack London uses language to convey a sense of place within this extract (e.g. the use of language to convey the cold of a Canadian autumn; the use of adjectives to make the woods seem frightening). Suggest some alternative settings (e.g. a busy city street; a beach during a storm) and ask pupils to think of similarly evocative words and phrases to describe them.
- Ask pupils to imagine finding themselves alone in an unfamiliar environment. Get them to write a short passage describing the atmosphere and their feelings about being alone.
- In this passage, Jack London describes White Fang's "memory-pictures" of the camp. Ask pupils to write and illustrate a paragraph describing their "memory-pictures" of a place that is familiar to them.
- This extract is written from White Fang's perspective. Get pupils to choose their favourite animal and write a short story from that animal's perspective. Encourage them to think about the ways in which their chosen animal might see the world differently than humans do.
- This extract is set in the Yukon Territory in north-western Canada. Ask groups of pupils to research different aspects of the Yukon's climate and geography and present their findings to the class.
- Show pupils pictures of wild animals (e.g. wolves, camels, polar bears) and their habitats. Ask pupils to match each animal to its habitat and discuss the physical features that enable it to survive there. Explain how, over time, variation in offspring can make animals more or less suited to particular environments.

Macbeth

Question Book:

Year 6, pages 30-31

Author / Source:

William Shakespeare

Genre:

Classic fiction — playscript

Cross-curricular links:

- Drama (performance)
- Art (cartoon strip)
- PSHE (ambition)

Introduction

Born in 1564, William Shakespeare is widely regarded as one of the greatest writers in the English language. *Macbeth*, one of his darkest and most powerful tragedies, is about the corrupting power of ambition. In this key scene from the first act, Macbeth and Banquo encounter The Three Witches, who deliver the fateful prophecy that one day Macbeth will be king. This may be pupils' first experience of reading Shakespeare, and they will almost certainly find some of the language challenging. Before pupils read the extract, explain that in Shakespearian English, the word order is sometimes different than in modern English, and that apostrophes are sometimes used to represent missing letters. Encourage pupils to use the punctuation to guide them through the text, rather than stopping at the end of each line.

Answers

1. not like the inhabitants of the earth (1 mark for two correct; 2 marks for all correct)
2. E.g. They are wrinkled and are wearing such strange clothes that they look as if they could have come from a different planet. They have thin lips and beards.
3. E.g. Because they seem like women, but they have beards, which are normally associated with men.
4. E.g. It shows that Macbeth is shocked by the prophecy ("you start"), and that he seems afraid.
5. "Are ye fantastical"
6. c. a metaphor
7. E.g. No, he doesn't seem frightened of The Witches. He thinks that the things they tell Macbeth sound positive, not frightening. He also says that he isn't afraid of The Witches hating him.



Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to summarise the extract. Then work through the extract with the whole class, explaining any unfamiliar vocabulary and discussing the meaning of each sentence. Encourage pupils to explain each line in their own words.
- Divide the class into small groups and ask them to rewrite the extract using modern language, punctuation and grammar. Pupils should then perform their modernised versions for the class.
- Get pupils to transform the extract into a cartoon strip. Encourage them to try to convey the way The Witches look, and the contrasting ways in which Macbeth and Banquo respond to The Witches' prophecy.
- As a class, discuss ambition. Explain that The Witches' prophecy described in the extract leads to Macbeth being corrupted and ultimately destroyed by his ambition for power. Ask pupils to explain their opinions about ambition. What are their ambitions? Do they think ambition is something positive or negative? Are they surprised by the negative image of ambition that Macbeth represents?