

KS3

Comprehension



TEACHING PACK

- 6 text extracts (including 19th century texts)
- Comprehension questions and model answers
- Use in class, for homework or cover lessons



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Introduction

This collection of extracts, questions and answers, aims to provide reading passages and related comprehension questions for younger KS3 students. It can be used for independent work, either individually or in groups. This is not a 'teaching' pack in that teaching notes are not embedded, although it could form the core of a series of lessons and assessments.

The emphasis in this KS3 pack is on developing pupils' inferential reading skills, and making connections and comparisons within and between texts. It is adapted from Teachit Primary's *Reading (upper KS2) Comprehension* teaching pack. Texts 1-4 are the same but the questions and activities have been edited to be more appropriate for KS3 students. Texts 5 and 6, and associated questions, are new and contain a level of challenge which will help prepare students for KS4.

Our thanks go to the original writer of this pack, Gabrielle Chant and to Julie Hopkins for her thoughtful revisions.

KS3 National Curriculum relevance: Reading

'Pupils should be taught to:

understand increasingly challenging texts through:

- learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries
- making inferences and referring to evidence in the text
- knowing the purpose, audience for and context of the writing and drawing on this knowledge to support comprehension
- checking their understanding to make sure that what they have read makes sense.

read critically through:

- knowing how language, including figurative language, vocabulary choice, grammar, text structure and organisational features, presents meaning
- studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these
- making critical comparisons across texts.'

List of text extracts used within the pack

Extract 1 - *Five Children and It* by E. Nesbitt

Extract 2 - *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by Frank L. Baum

Extract 3 - *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

Extract 4 - *Odin's Reward* by Mary H. Foster and Mabel H. Cummings

Extract 5 - *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde

Extract 6 - *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

Extract 1

Five Children and It

Five Children and It - extract

The children have been playing in an old gravel-pit, trying to dig a hole to Australia. Some of the children have grown bored and have drifted off to explore an old cave instead, but Anthea has remained behind, digging the hole.

Anthea suddenly screamed:

“Cyril! Come here! Oh, come quick—it’s alive! It’ll get away! Quick!”

They all hurried back.

“It’s a rat, I shouldn’t wonder,” said Robert. “Father says they infest old places—and this must be pretty old if the sea was here thousands of years ago”—

“Perhaps it is a snake,” said Jane, shuddering.

“Let’s look,” said Cyril, jumping into the hole. “I’m not afraid of snakes. I like them. If it is a snake I’ll tame it, and it will follow me everywhere, and I’ll let it sleep round my neck at night.”

“No, you won’t,” said Robert firmly. He shared Cyril’s bedroom. “But you may if it’s a rat.”

“Oh, don’t be silly!” said Anthea; “it’s not a rat, it’s much bigger. And it’s not a snake. It’s got feet; I saw them; and fur! No—not the spade. You’ll hurt it! Dig with your hands.”

“And let it hurt me instead! That’s so likely, isn’t it?” said Cyril, seizing a spade.

“Oh, don’t!” said Anthea. “Squirrel, don’t.

I—it sounds silly, but it said something. It really and truly did”—

“What?”

“It said, ‘You let me alone.’”

But Cyril merely observed that his sister must have gone off her head, and he and Robert dug with spades while Anthea sat on the edge of the hole, jumping up and down with hotness and anxiety. They dug carefully, and presently everyone could see that there really was something moving in the bottom of the Australian hole.

Then Anthea cried out, “I’m not afraid. Let me dig,” and fell on her knees and began to scratch like a dog does when he has suddenly remembered where it was that he buried his bone.

“Oh, I felt fur,” she cried, half laughing and half crying. “I did indeed! I did!” when suddenly a dry husky voice in the sand made them all jump back, and their hearts jumped nearly as fast as they did.

“Let me alone,” it said. And now everyone heard the voice and looked at the others to see if they had heard it too.

“But we want to see you,” said Robert bravely.

“I wish you’d come out,” said Anthea, also taking courage.

“Oh, well—if that’s your wish,” the voice said, and the sand stirred and spun and scattered, and something brown and furry and fat came rolling out into the hole, and

the sand fell off it, and it sat there yawning and rubbing the ends of its eyes with its hands.

"I believe I must have dropped asleep," it said, stretching itself.

The children stood round the hole in a ring, looking at the creature they had found. It was worth looking at. Its eyes were on long horns like a snail's eyes, and it could move them in and out like telescopes; it had ears like a bat's ears, and its tubby body was shaped like a spider's and covered with thick soft fur; its legs and arms were furry too, and it had hands and feet like a monkey's.

"What on earth is it?" Jane said. "Shall we take it home?"

The thing turned its long eyes to look at her, and said—

"Does she always talk nonsense, or is it only the rubbish on her head that makes her silly?" It looked scornfully at Jane's hat as it spoke.

"She doesn't mean to be silly," Anthea said gently; "we none of us do, whatever you may think! Don't be frightened; we don't want to hurt you, you know."

"Hurt me!" it said. "Me frightened? Upon my word! Why, you talk as if I were nobody in particular." All its fur stood out like a cat's when it is going to fight.

"Well," said Anthea, still kindly, "perhaps if we knew who you are in particular we could think of something to say that wouldn't make you angry. Everything we've said so far seems to have done so. Who are you? And don't get angry! Because really we don't know."

"You don't know?" it said. "Well, I knew the world had changed—but—well, really—Do you mean to tell me seriously you don't know a Psammead when you see one?"

"A Sammyadd? That's Greek to me."

"So it is to everyone," said the creature sharply. "Well, in plain English, then, a Sand-fairy. Don't you know a Sand-fairy when you see one?"

It looked so grieved and hurt that Jane hastened to say, "Of course I see you are, now. It's quite plain now one comes to look at you."

"You came to look at me, several sentences ago," it said crossly, beginning to curl up again in the sand.

"Oh—don't go away again! Do talk some more," Robert cried. "I didn't know you were a Sand-fairy, but I knew directly I saw you that you were much the wonderfulest thing I'd ever seen."

The Sand-fairy seemed a shade less disagreeable after this.



Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. Which word best describes Jane's feelings about snakes?

Afraid/Excited/Curious

Pick a detail out of the extract that gives you this impression.

.....

2. Why does Robert not want Cyril to sleep with a snake around his neck?

.....

.....

3. Why does Anthea try to stop the other children from using the spade to dig?

.....

.....

4. What does this (not wanting to dig with a spade) suggest about the kind of person she is?

.....

.....

5. Anthea 'began to scratch like a dog does when he has suddenly remembered where it was that he buried his bone.'

What do you think the author is showing us about Anthea's feelings with this simile?

.....

.....

6. Read the following line from the extract:

'... suddenly a dry husky voice in the sand made them all jump back, and their hearts jumped nearly as fast as they did.'

What do the words 'their hearts jumped' tell you about how the children were feeling when they heard the voice?

.....

.....

7. The Sand-fairy seems to think he is an important or special creature. What details can you pick out of the text that show this is what he believes?

.....

.....

8. How does Robert persuade the Psammead to be ‘a shade less disagreeable’?

.....

9. Compare how Jane and Cyril react to the possibility that that Anthea has found a snake. In what way are their reactions different, and what does this tell us about them?

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.....

10. Choose **one** of the characters who does something brave. **Describe** what they do that is brave, and **explain** why this shows courage.

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Extension task

Re-read the description of the Sand-fairy and highlight or underline key words/phrases.

Now, draw your impression of the Sand-fairy and annotate it with quotes chosen from the description.

Is it typical of other fairies you have come across in books or films? If so, how? If not, how does it differ?

Comprehension answers

1. Which word best describes Jane's feelings about snakes?

Afraid/Excited/Curious

Pick a detail out of the extract that gives you this impression. **'Shuddered'**

2. Why does Robert not want Cyril to sleep with a snake around his neck?

Because the two boys share a bedroom (perhaps implying Robert is afraid of snakes, because he doesn't mind a rat).

3. Why does Anthea try to stop the other children from using the spade to dig?

Anthea is worried that the spade might hurt the creature.

4. What does this (not wanting to dig with a spade) suggest about the kind of person she is?

Kind, gentle and caring.

5. Anthea 'began to scratch like a dog does when he has suddenly remembered where it was that he buried his bone.'

What do you think the author is showing us about Anthea's feelings with this simile?

Excited, desperate to find out what's buried, enthusiastic, curious.

6. Read the following line from the extract:

'... suddenly a dry husky voice in the sand made them all jump back, and their hearts jumped nearly as fast as they did.'

What do the words 'their hearts jumped' tell you about how the children were feeling when they heard the voice?

Answers should acknowledge that 'their hearts jumped' shows that the children's hearts were beating faster or skipping a beat, suggesting that the children felt shocked, frightened and excited.

7. The Sand-fairy seems to think he is an important or special creature. What details can you pick out of the text that show this is what he believes?

Use of quotations such as: "Why, you talk as if I were nobody in particular ...", and 'Its fur stood out'. Explanation that it seems surprised/scornful that they don't know who or what he is.

8. How does Robert persuade the Psammead to be 'a shade less disagreeable'?

Flattery and praise for the 'wonderfullest' creature.

9. Compare how Jane and Cyril react to the possibility that that Anthea has found a snake. In what way are their reactions different, and what does this tell us about them?

Jane shudders (essentially a negative reaction – frightened, repelled, horrified).

Cyril (positive reaction – eager to see it, jumps into the hole, imagines making it into a pet, explicitly says he's not afraid).

Students could generalise further that Jane is timid, fearful, while Cyril is bold, eager for new experience).

10. Choose one of the characters who does something brave. Describe what they do that is brave, and explain why this shows courage.

Answers will vary according to students' interpretations of the text.

Extension task - responses will vary according to students' choices.

Extract 2

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz - extract

All this time Dorothy and her companions had been walking through the thick woods. The road was still paved with yellow brick, but these were much covered by dried branches and dead leaves from the trees, and the walking was not at all good.

There were few birds in this part of the forest, for birds love the open country where there is plenty of sunshine. But now and then there came a deep growl from some wild animal hidden among the trees. These sounds made the little girl's heart beat fast, for she did not know what made them; but Toto knew, and he walked close to Dorothy's side, and did not even bark in return.

"How long will it be," the child asked of the Tin Woodman, "before we are out of the forest?"

"I cannot tell," was the answer, "for I have never been to the Emerald City. But my father went there once, when I was a boy, and he said it was a long journey through a dangerous country, although nearer to the city where Oz dwells the country is beautiful. But I am not afraid so long as I have my oil-can, and nothing can hurt the Scarecrow, while you bear upon your forehead the mark of the Good Witch's kiss, and that will protect you from harm."

"But Toto!" said the girl anxiously. "What will protect him?"

"We must protect him ourselves if he is in danger," replied the Tin Woodman.

Just as he spoke there came from the forest a terrible roar, and the next moment a great Lion bounded into the road. With one blow

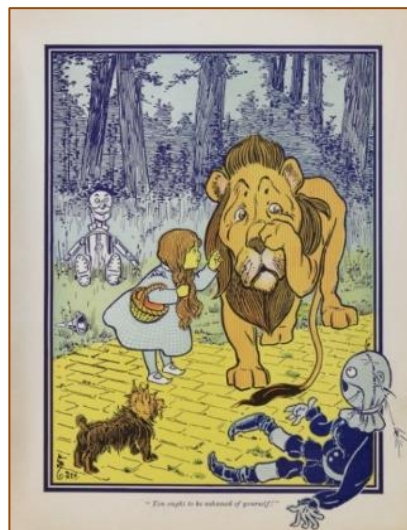
of his paw he sent the Scarecrow spinning over and over to the edge of the road, and then he struck at the Tin Woodman with his sharp claws. But, to the Lion's surprise, he could make no impression on the tin, although the Woodman fell over in the road and lay still.

Little Toto, now that he had an enemy to face, ran barking toward the Lion, and the great beast had opened his mouth to bite the dog, when Dorothy, fearing Toto would be killed, and heedless of danger, rushed forward and slapped the Lion upon his nose as hard as she could, while she cried out:

"Don't you dare to bite Toto! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, a big beast like you, to bite a poor little dog!"

"I didn't bite him," said the Lion, as he rubbed his nose with his paw where Dorothy had hit it.

"No, but you tried to," she retorted. "You are nothing but a big coward."



"I know it," said the Lion, hanging his head in shame. "I've always known it. But how can I help it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. To think of your striking a stuffed man, like the poor Scarecrow!"

"Is he stuffed?" asked the Lion in surprise, as he watched her pick up the Scarecrow and set him upon his feet, while she patted him into shape again.

"Of course he's stuffed," replied Dorothy, who was still angry.

"That's why he went over so easily," remarked the Lion. "It astonished me to see him whirl around so. Is the other one stuffed also?"

"No," said Dorothy, "he's made of tin." And she helped the Woodman up again.

"That's why he nearly blunted my claws," said the Lion. "When they scratched against the tin it made a cold shiver run down my back. What is that little animal you are so tender of?"

"He is my dog, Toto," answered Dorothy.

"Is he made of tin, or stuffed?" asked the Lion.

"Neither. He's a - a - a meat dog," said the girl.

"Oh! He's a curious animal and seems remarkably small, now that I look at him. No one would think of biting such a little thing, except a coward like me," continued the Lion sadly.

"What makes you a coward?" asked Dorothy, looking at the great beast in wonder, for he was as big as a small horse.

"It's a mystery," replied the Lion. "I suppose I was born that way. All the other animals in the forest naturally expect me to be brave, for the Lion is everywhere thought to be the King of Beasts. I learned that if I roared very loudly every living thing was frightened and got out of my way. Whenever I've met a man I've been awfully scared; but I just roared at

him, and he has always run away as fast as he could go. If the elephants and the tigers and the bears had ever tried to fight me, I should have run myself - I'm such a coward; but just as soon as they hear me roar they all try to get away from me, and of course I let them go."

"But that isn't right. The King of Beasts shouldn't be a coward," said the Scarecrow.

"I know it," returned the Lion, wiping a tear from his eye with the tip of his tail. "It is my great sorrow, and makes my life very unhappy. But whenever there is danger, my heart begins to beat fast."

"Perhaps you have heart disease," said the Tin Woodman.

"It may be," said the Lion.

"If you have," continued the Tin Woodman, "you ought to be glad, for it proves you have a heart. For my part, I have no heart; so I cannot have heart disease."

"Perhaps," said the Lion thoughtfully, "if I had no heart I should not be a coward."

"Have you brains?" asked the Scarecrow.

"I suppose so. I've never looked to see," replied the Lion.

"I am going to the Great Oz to ask him to give me some," remarked the Scarecrow, "for my head is stuffed with straw."

"And I am going to ask him to give me a heart," said the Woodman.

"And I am going to ask him to send Toto and me back to Kansas," added Dorothy.

"Do you think Oz could give me courage?" asked the Cowardly Lion.

"Just as easily as he could give me brains," said the Scarecrow.

"Or give me a heart," said the Tin Woodman.

"Or send me back to Kansas," said Dorothy.

"Then, if you don't mind, I'll go with you," said the Lion, "for my life is simply unbearable without a bit of courage."

Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. Look at the paragraph which begins: 'There were few birds ...' How can you tell that Toto is scared? Give two reasons.

.....
.....

2. '... there came from the forest a terrible roar, and the next moment a great lion bounded into the road.'

What are your first impressions of the lion?

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What word or words give you this idea?

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3. Compare Toto's reaction here to his behaviour at the start of the passage (refer back to Q1). How is it similar or different?

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4. Choose one or two short quotations that show the readers that Dorothy is brave.

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.....

5. The Lion asks Dorothy: "What is that little animal you are so tender of?"

What do you think it means to be 'tender of' something?

.....

6. Find one other piece of evidence from the extract that shows how Dorothy feels about Toto.

Feeling:

Evidence:

7. Dorothy accuses the lion of being “nothing but a big coward”. Why?

.....

.....

8. Look at the following line from the extract:

““What makes you a coward?” asked Dorothy, looking at the great beast in wonder, for he was as big as a small horse.’

Does Dorothy seem (a) surprised, or (b) amused, or (c) shocked that the Lion is a coward?

.....

Select one detail from the text to support your answer.

.....

9. Rank the characters (Scarecrow, Lion, Dorothy, Toto, Tin Woodman) in order from most brave to most cowardly, and explain your answer.

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10. What similarities are there between the character of Dorothy and that of Anthea in the extract from *Five Children and It*?

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Extension task

Create a table or list of characters in the extract. Next to each character’s name, detail what we learn about each one using quotations where appropriate, e.g.:

Character	What we learn about him or her ...
Dorothy	Protective (‘rushed forward and slapped the lion upon his nose ...’) Has a dog called Toto Is lost? (Wants to go to Kansas.)

Comprehension answers

1. Look at the paragraph which begins: 'There were few birds ...' How can you tell that Toto is scared? Give two reasons.

He walks 'close to Dorothy's side' and he does not 'bark in return'.

2. '... there came from the forest a terrible roar, and the next moment a great lion bounded into the road.'

What are your first impressions of the lion?

Possible answers: aggressive, dangerous, fierce or big.

What word or words give you this idea?

Details that could be focused on ... 'terrible roar', 'great lion' and 'bounded'.

3. Compare Toto's reaction here to his behaviour at the start of the passage (refer back to Q1). How is it similar or different?

Here: (faces the enemy) protective of Dorothy, brave, runs barking towards the Lion vs ...

Earlier: (hearing only the roar) timid, afraid, walks close to her, doesn't bark.

4. Choose one or two short quotations that show the readers that Dorothy is brave.

'Heedless of danger'

'slapped the lion upon the nose'

'rushed forward'

5. The Lion asks Dorothy: "What is that little animal you are so tender of?"

What do you think it means to be 'tender of' something? **To be fond of it / to love it.**

6. Find one other piece of evidence from the extract that shows how Dorothy feels about Toto.

Answers might focus on details such as:

"But Toto!" said the girl anxiously. "What will protect him?"

'... fearing Toto would be killed'

Feelings: protective, caring, love, afraid he will be harmed.

7. Dorothy accuses the lion of being "nothing but a big coward." Why?

Answers should refer in some way to size, Lion is 'big'. He attacked a much smaller creature 'little Toto'... Explanation that this suggests he is a bully, attacking a weaker victim.

8. Look at the following line from the extract:

““What makes you a coward?” asked Dorothy, looking at the great beast in wonder, for he was as big as a small horse.’

Does Dorothy seem (a) surprised, or (b) amused, or (c) shocked that the Lion is a coward? Select one detail from the text to support your answer.

Surprised ... “in wonder”

9. Rank the characters (Scarecrow, Lion, Dorothy, Toto, Tin Woodman) in order from most brave to most cowardly, and explain your answer.

Answers will vary. Cases can be made for Dorothy, Toto and the Tin Woodman (“we must protect him ourselves”) as brave.

10. What similarities are there between the character of Dorothy and that of Anthea in the extract from *Five Children and It*?

Responses will vary, but obvious similarities are:

- Anthea wanting to avoid injury to the creature and Dorothy protecting Toto from the Lion;
- both disregarding potential danger to themselves (Anthea jumps into the hole to dig and Dorothy attacks the Lion).

Extension task - answers will vary according to students' interpretations of the text.

Extract 3

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland - extract

After following a talking rabbit, Alice has tumbled down a hole into a strange underground world.

Alice was not a bit hurt, and she jumped up on to her feet in a moment: she looked up, but it was all dark overhead: before her was another long passage, and the White Rabbit was still in sight, hurrying down it. There was not a moment to be lost: away went Alice like the wind, and was just in time to hear it say, as it turned a corner, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" She was close behind it when she turned the corner, but the Rabbit was no longer to be seen: she found herself in a long, low hall, which was lit up by a row of lamps hanging from the roof.



There were doors all round the hall, but they were all locked; and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again.

Suddenly she came upon a little three-legged table, all made of solid glass: there was nothing on it but a tiny golden key, and Alice's first idea was that this might belong to one of the doors of the hall; but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small, but at any rate it would not open any of them. However, on the second time round, she came upon a low curtain she had not noticed before, and behind it was a little door about fifteen inches high: she tried the little golden key in the lock, and to her great delight it fitted!

Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw. How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway; "and even if my head would go through," thought poor Alice, "it would be of very little use without my shoulders. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could, if I only knew how to begin." For, you see, so many out-of-the-way things had happened lately, that Alice had begun to think that very few things indeed were really impossible.

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes: this time she found a little bottle on it ("which certainly was not here before," said Alice), and tied round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words "DRINK ME" beautifully printed on it in large letters.

It was all very well to say "Drink me," but the wise little Alice was not going to do that in a hurry. "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked 'poison' or not;" for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they would not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger very deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked "poison," it is almost certain to disagree with you, sooner or later.

However, this bottle was not marked "poison," so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot

buttered toast), she very soon finished it off.

"What a curious feeling!" said Alice. "I must be shutting up like a telescope."

And so it was indeed: she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through that little door into that lovely garden. First, however, she waited for a few minutes to see if she was going to shrink any further: she felt a little nervous about this: "for it might end, you know," said Alice to herself, "in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?" And she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out, for she could not remember ever having seen such a thing.

After a while, finding that nothing more happened, she decided on going into the garden at once; but, alas for poor Alice! when she got to the door, she found she had forgotten the little golden key, and when she went back to the table for it, she found she could not possibly reach it: she could see it quite plainly through the glass, and she tried her best to climb up one of the legs of the table, but it was too slippery; and when she had tired herself out with trying, the poor little thing sat down and cried.

Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. Why is there not a moment to be lost?

.....
.....

2. '... away went Alice like the wind ...' What does the simile 'like the wind' tell you?

.....
.....

3. Look at the paragraph which begins: 'There were doors all round the hall ...'

Why is Alice walking 'sadly' in this paragraph?

.....
.....

4. '... but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small'

Which of the following is closest in meaning to 'alas'?

☐

Interestingly!

☐

Oh dear!

☐

Amazing!

☐

Surprise!

5. What does the author's use of this word 'alas' suggest to us about how Alice feels?

.....
.....

6. In the next sentence beginning 'However ...' Alice's feelings change. Explain what this change is, and how you know (try to use a quotation).

.....
.....
.....

7. In the next line '... even if my head would go through,' thought **poor** Alice ...' the author calls her 'poor'. Why?

.....

.....

8. How do we know that Alice feels more cheerful after drinking the contents of the bottle?

Is it because the author tells us:

- a. she found the taste of the drink 'very nice' so she 'finished it off',
- b. she has a 'curious feeling' or
- c. 'her face brightened'.

9. What clues are there that Alice is someone who doesn't give up easily?

.....

.....

10. At the end, why does Alice 'sit down and cry'?

.....

.....

Extension task

Write the next two paragraphs of the story. In your writing, you need to ensure that the following questions are answered:

- a. Does Alice get the key?
- b. Does Alice open the door to the garden?
- c. Does the White Rabbit / another character appear?

Comprehension answers

1. Why is there not a moment to be lost?

She might lose sight of the White Rabbit / she needs to catch up with him.

2. '... away went Alice like the wind ...' What does the simile 'like the wind' tell you?

That she was running fast.

3. Look at the paragraph which begins: 'There were doors all round the hall ...'

Why is Alice walking 'sadly' in this paragraph?

Because all the doors are locked and there's no obvious way out.

4. '... but, alas! either the locks were too large, or the key was too small'

Which of the following is closest in meaning to 'alas'?

☐

Interestingly!

☒

Oh dear!

☐

Amazing!

☐

Surprise!

5. What does the author's use of this word 'alas' suggest to us about how Alice feels?

Disappointed/sad

6. In the next sentence beginning 'However ...' Alice's feelings change. Explain what this change is, and how you know (try to use a quotation).

She goes from disappointed/sad ('alas') that there is no way to open the doors to happy/relieved/pleased ('to her great delight') that the new key fits the lock.

7. In the next line '... even if my head would go through,' thought **poor** Alice ...' the author calls her 'poor'. Why?

She has been disappointed again; the author feels (or wants us to feel) sorry for the character; showing pity or sympathy with her situation.

8. How do we know that Alice feels more cheerful after drinking the contents of the bottle?

Is it because the author tells us:

- a. she found the taste of the drink 'very nice' so she 'finished it off',
- b. she has a 'curious feeling' or
- c. **'her face brightened'.**

9. What clues are there that Alice is someone who doesn't give up easily?

'had tired herself out with trying' / 'kept trying to climb up to get the key'

10. At the end, why does Alice 'sit down and cry'?

Because she still can't get through the locked door / can't reach the key / her last hope of getting out has gone.

Extension task - students should be rewarded for answering the key questions in their writing, as well as for the strength of their descriptions and narration.

Extract 4

Odin's Reward

Odin's Reward - extract

This is a story from Norse mythology about Odin, the chief of the Aesir (the gods of Asgard).

One night when all was quiet in Asgard and the Aesir had gone to rest, Odin, the Allfather, sat awake on his high throne, troubled with many thoughts. At his feet crouched his two faithful wolves, and upon his shoulders perched the two ravens of thought and memory, who flew far abroad every day, through the nine worlds, as Odin's messengers.

The Allfather had need of great wisdom in ruling the worlds; after thinking a long time on the matters which needed his care, he suddenly started up, and went forth with long strides from his palace of Gladsheim into the night. He soon returned, leading his beautiful, eight-footed steed, Sleipnir, and it was plain that Odin was going on a journey. He quickly mounted Sleipnir, and rode swiftly away toward Bifröst, the rainbow bridge, which reached from Asgard, the city of the gods, down through the air to the lower worlds.

When Sleipnir stepped upon the bridge it trembled, and seemed hardly strong enough to bear the horse and his rider; but they had no fear of its giving way, and Sleipnir galloped swiftly onward.

Soon Odin saw Heimdall, the watchman of the bridge, riding toward him on a fine horse, with a golden mane that reflected light upon the noble face of his rider.

"You must be bound on some important errand, Father Odin, to be riding forth from Asgard so late at night," said Heimdall.



"It is indeed a most important errand, and I must hasten on," replied Odin. "It is well for us that we have such a faithful guardian of the 'trembling bridge'; if it were not for you, Heimdall, our enemies might long ago have taken Asgard by storm. You are so watchful, you can hear the grass grow in the fields, and the wool gather on the backs of the sheep, and you need less sleep than a bird. I myself stand in great need of wisdom, in order to take care of such faithful servants, and to drive back such wicked enemies!"

They hurried over the bridge until they came to Heimdall's far-shining castle, at the farther end of it. This was a lofty tower which was placed so as to guard the bridge, and it sent forth into the land of the giant enemies such a wonderful, clear light, that Heimdall could see, even in the darkest night, any one who came toward the bridge. Here Odin stopped a few moments to drink the mead which the good Heimdall offered him.

Then said Odin, "As I am journeying into the land of our enemies, I shall leave my good horse with you; there are not many with whom I would trust him, but I know that you, my faithful Heimdall, will take good care of him. I can best hide myself from the giants by going on as a wanderer."

With these words the Allfather quitted Heimdall's castle, and started off toward the north, through the land of the fierce giants.

During all the first day there was nothing to be seen but ice and snow; several times Odin was nearly crushed as the frost giants hurled huge blocks of ice after him.

The second day he came to mountains and broad rivers. Often when he had just crossed over a stream, the mountain giants would come after him to the other bank, and when they found that Odin had escaped them, they would send forth such a fierce yell, that the echoes sounded from hill to hill.

At the end of the third day, Odin came to a land where trees were green and flowers blooming. Here was one of the three fountains which watered the world tree, Yggdrasil, and near by sat the wise giant, Mimir, guarding the waters of this wonderful fountain, for whoever drank of it would have the gift of great wisdom.

Mimir was a giant in size, but he was not one of the fierce giant enemies of the gods, for he was kind, and wiser than the wisest.



Mimir's well of wisdom was in the midst of a wonderful valley, filled with rare plants and bright flowers, and among the groves of beautiful trees were strange creatures, sleeping dragons, harmless serpents, and lizards, while birds with gay plumage flew and sang among the branches. Over all this quiet valley shone a lovely soft light, different from sunlight, and in the centre grew one of the roots of the great world tree. Here the wise giant Mimir sat gazing down into his well.

Odin greeted the kind old giant, and said, "Oh, Mimir, I have come from far-away Asgard to ask a great boon!"

"Gladly will I help you if it is in my power," said Mimir.

"You know," replied Odin, "that as father of gods and men I need great wisdom, and I have come to beg for one drink of your precious water of knowledge. Trouble threatens us, even from one of the Æsir, for Loki, the fire-god, has lately been visiting the giants, and I fear he has been learning evil ways from them. The frost giants and the storm giants are always at work, trying to overthrow both gods and men; great is my need of wisdom, and even though no one ever before has dared ask so great a gift, I hope that since you know how deep is my trouble, you will grant my request."

Mimir sat silently, thinking for several moments, and then said, "You ask a great thing, indeed, Father Odin; are you ready to pay the price which I must demand?"

"Yes," said Odin, cheerfully, "I will give you all the gold and silver of Asgard, and all the jewelled shields and swords of the Æsir. More than all, I will give up my eight-footed horse Sleipnir, if that is needed to win the reward."

"And do you suppose that these things will buy wisdom?" said Mimir. "That can be gained only by bearing bravely, and giving up to others. Are you willing to give me a

part of yourself? Will you give up one of your own eyes?"

At this Odin looked very sad; but after a few moments of deep thought, he looked up with a bright smile, and answered, "Yes, I will even give you one of my eyes, and I will suffer whatever else is asked, in order to gain the wisdom that I need!"

We cannot know all that Odin bravely suffered in that strange, bright valley, before he was rewarded with a drink from that wonderful fountain; but we may be quite sure that never once was the good Allfather sorry for anything he had given up, or any suffering he had borne, for the sake of others.

Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. 'Odin ... sat awake on his high throne, **troubled** with many thoughts'. What does 'troubled' mean in this context?

.....
.....

2. a. Which one of these is the odd one out, and why?

- 'thinking a long time'
- 'quickly mounted'
- 'rode swiftly'.

.....
.....

- b. What do the two related quotations show us about Odin, and can you find any more details that achieve the same effect?

.....
.....

3. Why does the bridge need to be guarded?

.....
.....

4. What skills or qualities make Heimdall a good guardian of the bridge?

.....
.....

5. Why does Odin leave his horse behind?

.....
.....

6. Why does the well need to be guarded?

.....

-
7. Compare the two guardians, Heimdall and Mimir. Are there any ways in which they are similar? And what differences are there between them?

.....

.....

.....

8. "Oh, Mimir, I have come from far-away Asgard to ask a great boon!"

Which word most closely matches the meaning of the word 'boon'?

☐

question

☐

curse

☐

reward

☐

favour

9. Read the description of Mimir's valley carefully.

- a. List three adjectives the storyteller uses to describe the things that grow there.

.....

.....

- b. How does the storyteller make the animals sound unthreatening?

.....

.....

.....

10. Why did Odin not regret the suffering he experienced in the 'strange, bright valley'?

.....

.....

Extension task

Create a map of Odin's journey and label it with the key places that he passes through.

Comprehension answers

1. 'Odin ... sat awake on his high throne, **troubled** with many thoughts'. What does 'troubled' mean in this context?

Worried

2. a. Which one of these is the odd one out, and why?

- 'thinking a long time'
- 'quickly mounted'
- 'rode swiftly'.

'thinking a long time' – others show speed/haste/decisiveness.

- b. What do the two related quotations show us about Odin, and can you find any more details that achieve the same effect?

Choose from: **'suddenly started up', 'long strides', 'soon returned'.**

3. Why does the bridge need to be guarded?

It is the way into Asgard / enemies would attack that way.

4. What skills or qualities make Heimdall a good guardian of the bridge?

Watchful, listens carefully, nothing escapes his notice, 'faithful'.

5. Why does Odin leave his horse behind?

He's going to disguise himself as a wanderer / doesn't want to be identified by the giants.

6. Why does the well need to be guarded?

Drinking the water will give wisdom/knowledge.

7. Compare the two guardians, Heimdall and Mimir. Are there any ways in which they are similar? And what differences are there between them?

Similarities might include: **both guardians; both have great responsibilities which they carry out responsibly; both occupy a 'magical' site.**

(H = trembling bridge/tower of light, M = wonderful valley/root of the world tree).

8. "Oh, Mimir, I have come from far-away Asgard to ask a great boon!"

Which word most closely matches the meaning of the word 'boon'?

☐

question

☐

curse

☐

reward

☒

X

favour

9. Read the description of Mimir's valley carefully.

- a. List three adjectives the storyteller uses to describe the things that grow there.

Growing things: trees were green, flowers blooming,

- b. How does the storyteller make the animals sound unthreatening?

Animals: *sleeping* dragons, *harmless* serpents, birds with *gay plumage*, birds *sang*.

10. Why did Odin not regret the suffering he experienced in the 'strange, bright valley'?

It was worth it to gain wisdom ... to protect others, 'for the sake of others' he was ready to 'pay the price' or 'suffer whatever else is asked'.

Extension task - students will need to re-read the extract carefully in order to map the journey. Highlighting or listing key landmarks will help them to start the task.

Extract 5

The Canterville Ghost

The Canterville Ghost - extract

The American Mr Hiram B Otis has bought Canterville Chase, a country estate in England which is said to be haunted. Here, Mr and Mrs Otis and their four children, Washington, Virginia and young twins nicknamed Stars and Stripes, arrive at their new home.

Extract 1 (Day 1)

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each a low curtsy as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, 'I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase.' Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained-glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs Umney, 'I am afraid something has been spilt there.'

'Yes, madam,' replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, 'blood has been spilt on that spot.'

'How horrid,' cried Mrs Otis; 'I don't at all care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once.'

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, 'It is the

blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed.'

'That is all nonsense,' cried Washington Otis; 'Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time,' and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.



'I knew Pinkerton would do it,' he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the sombre room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs Umney fainted.

'What a monstrous climate!' said the American Minister calmly, as he lit a long **cheroot**. 'I guess the old country is so overpopulated that they have not enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of opinion that emigration is the only thing for England.'

'My dear Hiram,' cried Mrs Otis, 'what can we do with a woman who faints?'

'Charge it to her like breakages,' answered the Minister; 'she won't faint after that'; and in a few moments Mrs Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

'I have seen things with my own eyes, sir,' she said, 'that would make any Christian's hair stand on end, and many and many a

night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here.' Mr Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of **Providence** on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. 'I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent,' said Washington, 'for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost.' He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr Otis himself, and the key carried upstairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr Otis began to suspect that he had been too **dogmatic** in his denial of the existence of ghosts ...

Vocabulary

cheroot - similar to a cigar

Providence - God or nature as providing protective care

dogmatic - very strong expression of opinions as facts

Extract 2 (Day 3)

At eleven o'clock the family retired, and by half past all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor, outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong **phial** out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy **manacles** and rusty **gyves**.



'My dear sir,' said Mr Otis, 'I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it.' With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the **wainscoting**, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realize his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted.

Vocabulary

phial - small glass bottle

manacles - handcuffs/chains

gyves - shackles/metal restraints on the legs

wainscoting - wooden panelling on the wall

Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. How does Mrs Otis react to the news that there is a bloodstain on the floor of the room?

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.....

2. For what reason(s) might the family be 'admiring' of Washington?

.....
.....
.....

3. In Extract 1, what details has the author included to create a 'spooky' atmosphere? Try to find one thing each about:

- a. the room:
- b. Mrs Umney:
- c. the weather:

4. What causes Mr Otis to doubt his belief that ghosts don't exist?

.....
.....

5. '... he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect'. What does 'aspect' mean in this context?

- angle
- appearance
- view
- feature

6. What similarities are there between Washington's reaction to the bloodstain in Extract 1, and Mr Otis's reaction to the ghost in Extract 2?

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7. How do we know the ghost is angry when Mr Otis goes back to bed?

.....

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8. By the time he gets to own 'secret chamber' the ghost is feeling extremely insulted. Why?

.....

.....

.....

9. What does it take to have a career as a ghost? The Canterville ghost has had a 'brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years'. Use the description of his appearance and behaviour in these extracts to make a list of essential requirements for this job.

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10. Do you think the Otis family are brave? Give reasons for your opinion.

.....

.....

.....

11. Remind yourself of the Psammead's reaction to the children in *Five Children and It*. Which of the following words could be used to describe the feelings of **both** the Psammead and the Canterville Ghost?

- offended
- angry
- flattered
- frightened

Extension task

Imagine you are the Canterville Ghost. Write an application letter to a new employer in which you attempt to persuade him/her that you have the skills for successfully haunting their mansion or castle.

You may want to include the following:

- why you want to apply for the position
- your key skills or attributes (the things that set you apart from all the other ghosts)
- your history of haunting people and premises (including key achievements e.g. making servants faint).

Comprehension answers

1. How does Mrs Otis react to the news that there is a bloodstain on the floor of the room?

Says it's horrid, wants it cleaned up and is not frightened.

2. For what reason(s) might the family be 'admiring' of Washington?

He cleaned up the bloodstain when Mrs Umney said it couldn't be removed.

3. In Extract 1, what details has the author included to create a 'spooky' atmosphere? Try to find one thing each about:

- a. the room: **low ceiling, black oak panels, described as 'sombre', bloodstained floor**
- b. Mrs Umney: **speaks in a low and/or mysterious voice, warns that trouble is coming, says she has witnessed terrible things**
- c. the weather: **thunder, lightning, storm.**

4. What causes Mr Otis to doubt his belief that ghosts don't exist?

The bloodstain reappears even after he has locked up the room and there was no way for anyone to get in.

5. '... he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect'. What does 'aspect' mean in this context?

- **angle**
- **appearance**
- **view**
- **feature**

6. What similarities are there between Washington's reaction to the bloodstain in Extract 1, and Mr Otis's reaction to the ghost in Extract 2?

Both are practical (clean the floor / oil the chains), neither are frightened, both offer modern branded products that are supposed to be excellent (Washington = 'Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time' / 'I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon detergent' as he has 'tried it with everything' ... Mr Otis = 'Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator ... said to be completely efficacious upon one application,').

7. How do we know the ghost is angry when Mr Otis goes back to bed?

He dashes the bottle violently upon the polished floor / smashes the bottle.

8. By the time he gets to own 'secret chamber' the ghost is feeling extremely insulted. Why?

He's indignant because nobody is scared by him, Mr Otis wants him to stop clanking his chains and the twins threw a pillow at him.

9. What does it take to have a career as a ghost? The Canterville ghost has had a 'brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years'. Use the description of his appearance and behaviour in these extracts to make a list of essential requirements for this job.

Appearance: old, eyes as red burning coals, long grey matted hair, old-fashioned style of dress.

Clothes: soiled and ragged, chains, manacles and gyves, shines with a ghastly green light.

Behaviour: hollow groans, can vanish, can walk/appear through walls and cause disturbances (clanking chains) in the middle of the night.

10. Do you think the Otis family are brave? Give reasons for your opinion.

Answers to this question will vary but the Otis family could reasonably be categorised as brave based on their reactions to the Canterville Ghost.

11. Remind yourself of the Psammead's reaction to the children in *Five Children and It*. Which of the following words could be used to describe the feelings of **both** the Psammead and the Canterville Ghost?

- offended
- angry
- flattered
- frightened

Extension task - students should be rewarded for how effectively they outline the Canterville Ghost's key skills as well as for the strength or their written communication and persuasiveness.

Extract 6

Great Expectations

Great Expectations - extract

Our narrator is an orphan boy named Pip. One cold, dark evening he is alone among the gravestones of the village churchyard. He is feeling miserable and starts to cry – suddenly a frightening figure appears. (It is later revealed that this man is an escaped prisoner.)

“Hold your noise!” cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. “Keep still, you little devil, or I’ll cut your throat!”

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

“O! Don’t cut my throat, sir,” I pleaded in terror. “Pray don’t do it, sir.”

“Tell us your name!” said the man. “Quick!”

“Pip, sir.”

“Once more,” said the man, staring at me. “Give it mouth!”

“Pip. Pip, sir.”

“Show us where you live,” said the man. “Pint out the place!”

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment,

turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself – for he was so sudden and strong that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet – when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.

“You young dog,” said the man, licking his lips, “what fat cheeks you ha’ got.”

I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized for my years, and not strong.

“Darn me if I couldn’t eat em,” said the man, with a threatening shake of his head, “and if I han’t half a mind to’t!”

I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn’t, and held tighter to the tombstone on which he had put me; partly, to keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying.

“Now lookee here!” said the man. “Where’s your mother?”

“There, sir!” said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

“There, sir!” I timidly explained. “Also Georgiana. That’s my mother.”

“Oh!” said he, coming back. “And is that your father alonger your mother?”

“Yes, sir,” said I; “him too; late of this parish.”



“Ha!” he muttered then, considering. “Who d’ye live with – supposin’ you’re kindly let to live, which I han’t made up my mind about?”

“My sister, sir – Mrs. Joe Gargery – wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir.”

“Blacksmith, eh?” said he. And looked down at his leg.

After darkly looking at his leg and me several times, he came closer to my tombstone, took me by both arms, and tilted me back as far as he could hold me; so that his eyes looked most powerfully down into mine, and mine looked most helplessly up into his.

“Now lookee here,” he said, “the question being whether you’re to be let to live. You know what a file is?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you know what wittles is?”

“Yes, sir.”

After each question he tilted me over a little more, so as to give me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

“You get me a file.” He tilted me again. “And you get me wittles.” He tilted me again. “You bring ‘em both to me.” He tilted me again. “Or I’ll have your heart and liver out.” He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, “If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn’t be sick, and perhaps I could attend more.”

He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weather-cock. Then, he held me by the arms, in an upright position on the top of the stone, and went on in these fearful terms:

“You bring me, to-morrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make a sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate. Now, I ain’t alone, as you may think I am. There’s a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am a Angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret way pecooliar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in wain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am a-keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it wery hard to hold that young man off of your inside. Now, what do you say?”

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

“Say Lord strike you dead if you don’t!” said the man.

I said so, and he took me down.

“Now,” he pursued, “you remember what you’ve undertaken, and you remember that young man, and you get home!”

“Goo—good night, sir,” I faltered.

“Much of that!” said he, glancing about him over the cold wet flat. “I wish I was a frog. Or a eel!”

At the same time, he hugged his shuddering

body in both his arms — clasping himself, as if to hold himself together — and limped towards the low church wall. As I saw him go, picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.

Comprehension questions

Name: Date:

1. How can we tell that the man is extremely hungry?

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.....

2. What shows us that he is very cold?

.....
.....

3. What is the misunderstanding that causes the man to start to run away when Pip points and says his mother is 'there'?

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.....
.....

4. "Blacksmith, eh?" said he. And looked down at his leg." Why? What is the connection he is making between the two?

.....
.....
.....

5. The man asks Pip if he knows what 'wittles' is. Can you find a phrase later in the extract which reveals the meaning?

.....

6. Put these threats against Pip in the order they are made.

- To eat his cheeks
- To cut his throat
- To tear out his heart and liver

7. The man tells Pip, “in comparison with which young man I am a Angel.” How is he using this comparison to frighten Pip into keeping the secret and bringing what he has asked for?

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.....

.....

8. What do you think is the reason the man says “I wish I was a frog. Or a eel!”?

.....

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9. a. Which words are connected to Pip and which to the ‘fearful man’?

Pleaded, powerfully, timidly, trembling, strong, threatening, helplessly

- b. What impression of each character does this language create?

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10. Re-read the descriptions of Pip’s first sight (paragraph 2) and last sight (final paragraph) of the man. Select three details that might help to create a more sympathetic picture of this terrifying character.

.....

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Extension task

The graveyard setting is eerie/terrifying and provides the perfect setting for encountering an escaped prisoner. In no more than 500 words, either:

- a. Create your own eerie setting for a suitably terrifying encounter or ...
- b. Do the opposite and create a comforting/inviting setting.

For both a. and b., make sure you use the weather and scenery to good effect.

Comprehension answers

1. How can we tell that the man is extremely hungry?

He ate 'ravenously'.

2. What shows us that he is very cold?

'shivered', 'teeth chattered'

3. What is the misunderstanding that causes the man to start to run away when Pip points and says his mother is 'there'?

He thinks someone else is nearby, but Pip is pointing at her tombstone.

4. "“Blacksmith, eh?” said he. And looked down at his leg.’ Why? What is the connection he is making between the two?

He has a 'great iron' on his leg'. A blacksmith has tools/skills and can work with metal ...
He can see that there might be a way to remove the manacle.

5. The man asks Pip if he knows what 'wittles' is. Can you find a phrase later in the extract which reveals the meaning?

'I would get him what broken bits of *food* I could.'

6. Put these threats against Pip in the order they are made.

- To eat his cheeks B
- To cut his throat A
- To tear out his heart and liver C

7. The man tells Pip, "in comparison with which young man I am a Angel." How is he using this comparison to frighten Pip into keeping the secret and bringing what he has asked for?

He is increasing the sense of threat and making Pip even more afraid of the consequences of betrayal. If the 'fearful man' is an angel, then how much more terrifying must the 'other young man' be?

8. What do you think is the reason the man says "I wish I was a frog. Or a eel!"?

Answers may vary, but could refer to the 'cold wet flat' or it won't be a 'good night'.
Might refer back to the initial description 'soaked in water' and 'smothered in mud'.
Reject evidence that only refers to cold (e.g. 'hugged his shuddering body').

9. a. Which words are connected to Pip and which to the 'fearful man'?

Pip: pleaded, timidly, trembling, helplessly
Fearful man: powerfully, strong, threatening

- b.** What impression of each character does this language create?

Pip: Weak, young, afraid, intimidated

Fearful man: dangerous, overpowering, aggressive

- 10.** Re-read the descriptions of Pip's first sight (paragraph 2) and last sight (final paragraph) of the man. Select three details that might help to create a more sympathetic picture of this terrifying character.

Answers will vary, but might include:

- with 'broken shoes ... lamed by stones, and cut by flints, who limped' / '... limped towards the low church wall'
- and 'no hat' but only an 'old rag tied round his head'
- 'soaked in water', and 'smothered in mud', and 'stung by nettles', and 'torn by briars'
- 'shivered', and 'teeth chattered' '... hugged his shuddering body in both his arms'
- 'eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up to ... pull him in'.

Extension task - students should be rewarded for the strength of their descriptive writing and for effective use of descriptive techniques.

Additional resources to support reading comprehension

The following resources are intended to support students in a variety of ways. All have been adapted from original Teachit resources.

- **‘Golden rules for reading comprehensions’** is a useful pre-reading prompt sheet for students. Use this if giving the extracts to students for homework or during cover lessons as it provides some helpful dos and don’ts to get them off on the right track.
- Use the **‘In my reading, I’** grid after students have completed a number of the comprehension tasks in the workbook. It’ll give you an accurate sense of the skills students feel they have accomplished, as well as next steps or areas for improvement.
- The three **‘Connections’** sheets are designed to support students when making broad comparisons between texts (which could then form part of a post-reading assessment or group work task. ‘Compare the ways in which the writer creates suspense in text x, and text y’, for example).

Golden rules for reading comprehensions

1	Always read the passage carefully at least once through, for meaning.
2	Read the questions through to check what you will be looking for and go back to the text if you need to. It's better to take your time than to rush through getting the answers wrong.
3	Re-read the passage, locating where you will find the answers. Highlight or underline relevant bits of the text.
4	When answering, always write in full sentences.
5	Use evidence from the passage to back up your points. This can take the form of longer and shorter quotations.
6	Don't just copy sections from the passage - write in your own words or paraphrase where appropriate.
7	Take ten minutes after you've finished the questions to check that your spelling and punctuation are correct, and that your work makes sense!

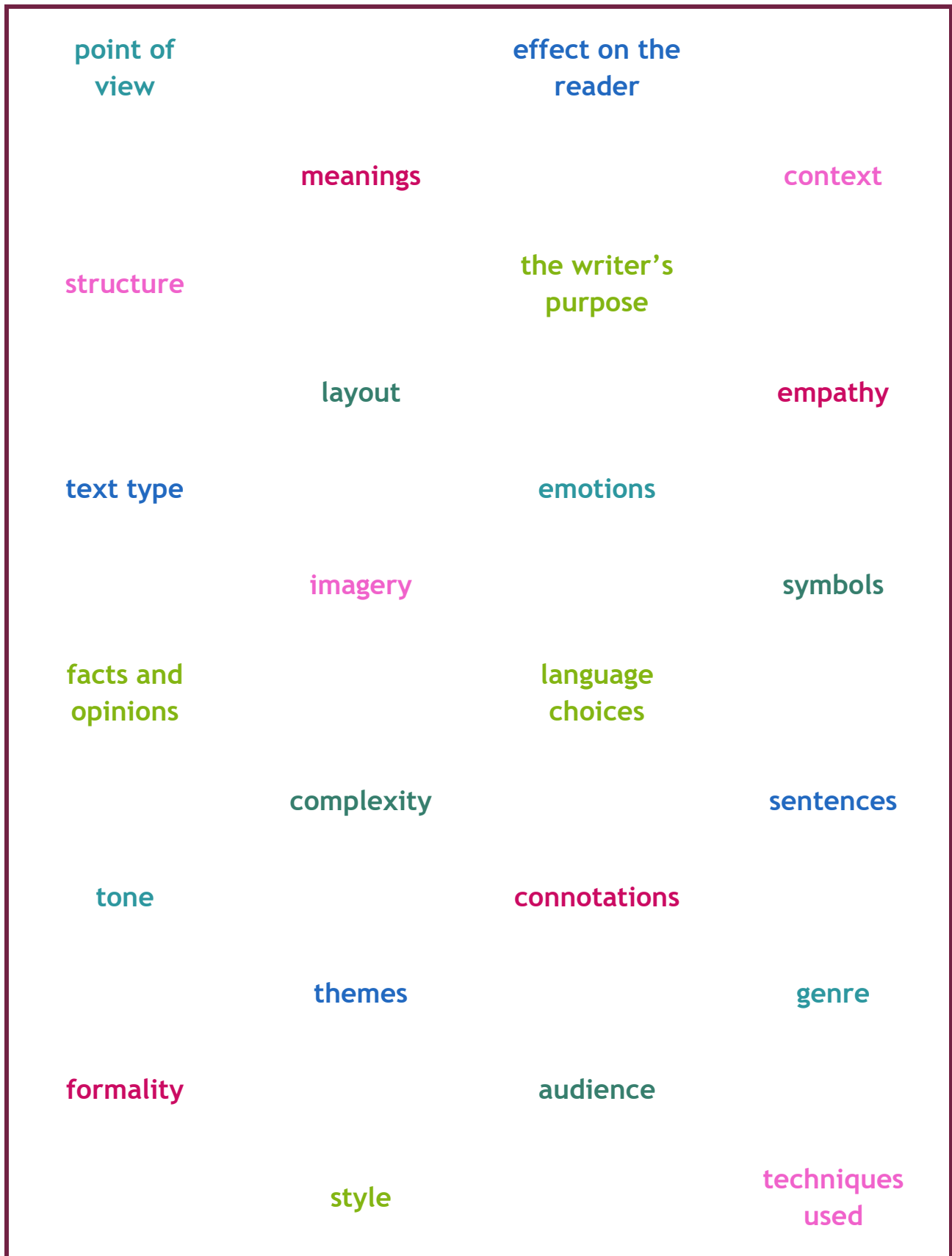
In my reading, I:
INFER and DEDUCE ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ see images/visualise ✓ hear a voice through the text ✓ predict what might happen ✓ speculate about characters and events ✓ summarise what is happening.
RESPOND ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ask questions ✓ relate to my own experiences ✓ give comments ✓ feel involved ✓ empathise.
REFLECT ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ rationalise what is happening ✓ re-read ✓ re-interpret ✓ pass judgments ✓ interpret patterns (theme, language, structure) ✓ relate to previous reading experiences ✓ establish a relationship with the author/narrator ✓ relate a text to its time and place.



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Additional resources to support reading comprehension

The ability to make connections between what you read, other texts, your experiences and the world around you is an important skill. Here are some ideas to help identify connections that will make your links precise.



Useful words and phrases

Text to text

A connection between the text and another text that you have read

How is this text similar to other things that you have read?
How is this text different to other things that you have read?
Does it make you feel/react in the same way as other texts you have read? How? Why?
Is the language/presentation/content similar to other texts?

Text to self

A connection between the text and something in your own life-experience

What does this text remind you of? How?
Can you relate to its characters/messages/language? How? Why?
Does anything in this text remind you of your own life/experiences/points of view/outlook?
Does this text make you think about something from a different perspective?

Text to world

A connection between the text and something that is happening or has happened in the world

What does this text remind you of in the real world?
If the text is fictional, how are events similar or different to events in the real world?
How does the text link to the time period in which it was written?
How does the text link to ideas and viewpoints in society? (e.g. attitudes to war, views about controversial issues etc.)

however	whenever	until	overall	in contrast	equally
instead	despite this	in fact	after all	the opposite	because
likewise	therefore	similarly	albeit	nevertheless	alternatively
comparatively	different because	similar because	in the same way		

Use the following questions to help you make links between texts.

- Who are the texts written for? How do you know?
- What kind of language is used in each text?
- Do the texts belong to the same genre?
- What kinds of themes/ideas/symbols/images are there in the texts? Are these similar or different?
- What are the texts about? A similar or different subject?
- Are the texts written for the same purpose? How do you know?
- Are the texts written for the same audience? How do you know?
- What kind of language is used in each text? Are there any links?
- How do the texts make you feel? Do they have a similar or different impact on you? How? Why?