



Spring
Home
Learning
Pack E
English

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English

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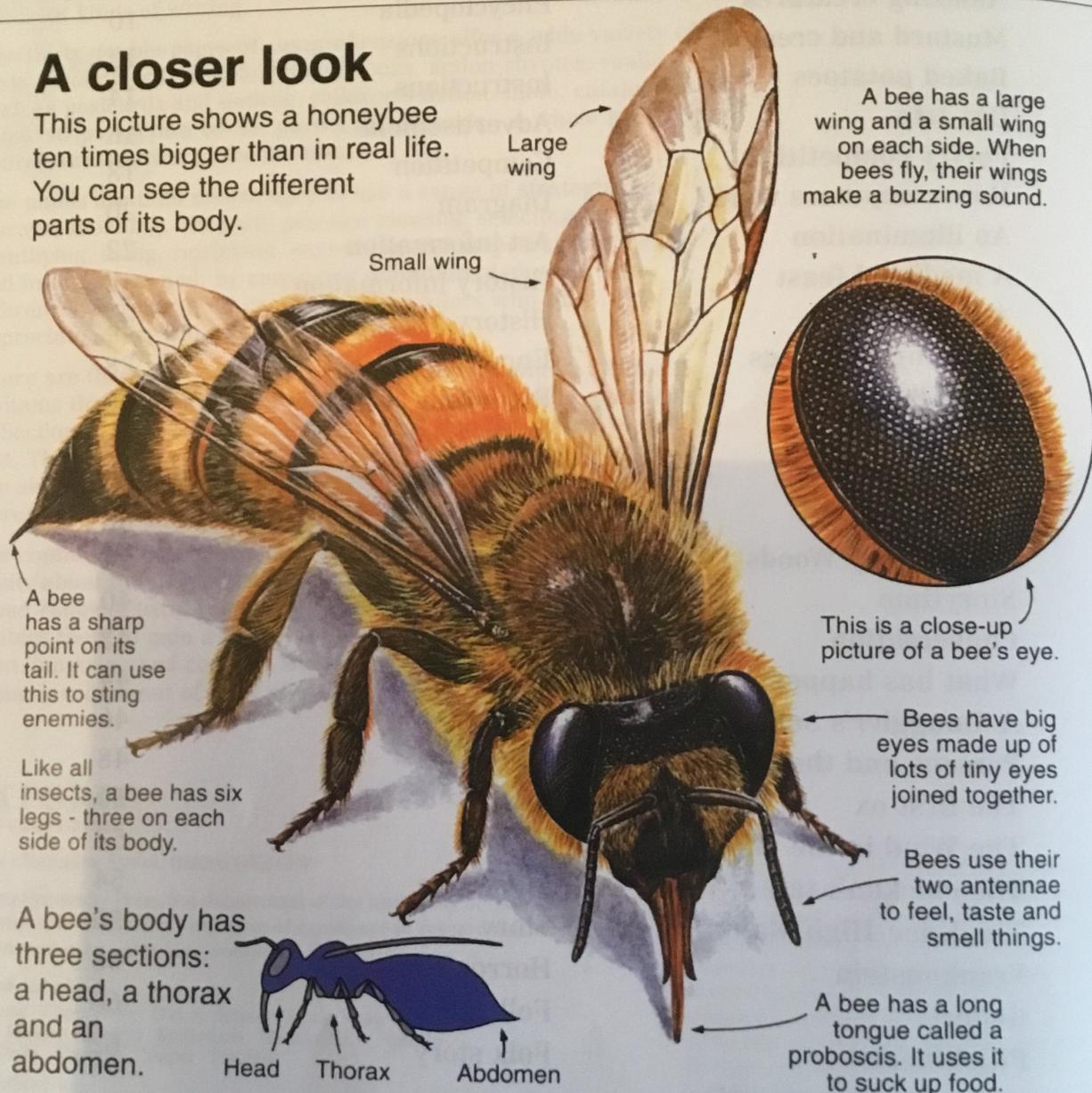
Reading

The honeybee

This page is taken from a science information book.

A closer look

This picture shows a honeybee ten times bigger than in real life. You can see the different parts of its body.



A bee has a large wing and a small wing on each side. When bees fly, their wings make a buzzing sound.

Large wing

Small wing

A bee has a sharp point on its tail. It can use this to sting enemies.

Like all insects, a bee has six legs - three on each side of its body.

A bee's body has three sections: a head, a thorax and an abdomen.

Head Thorax Abdomen

This is a close-up picture of a bee's eye.

Bees have big eyes made up of lots of tiny eyes joined together.

Bees use their two antennae to feel, taste and smell things.

A bee has a long tongue called a proboscis. It uses it to suck up food.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 1 Questions



- 1 How many wings does a bee have?
- 2 On which section of the bee's body would you find the wings?
- 3 How many legs does a bee have?
- 4 On which section of a bee's body would you find the legs?
- 5 Which is the longest section of the bee's body?
- 6 What does a bee use when it has to defend itself?
- 7 Which parts of the bee make the buzzing sound?



- 1 Write down the word used on the opposite page that means a **bee's tongue**.
- 2 Write down the word used on the opposite page that makes it clear bees **don't** chew their food.
- 3 a) Are bees able to smell the flowers they land on?
b) Give a good reason based on the information on the opposite page.
- 4 a) Do bees have powerful eyes?
b) Give a good reason based on the information on the opposite page.

What has happened to Lulu?

In this poem a child has woken up to find another member of the family has gone away in the night.

What has happened, to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?
There's nothing in her bed but an old rag-doll
And by its side a shoe.

Why is her window wide, mother,
The curtain flapping free,
And only a circle on the dusty shelf
Where her money-box used to be?

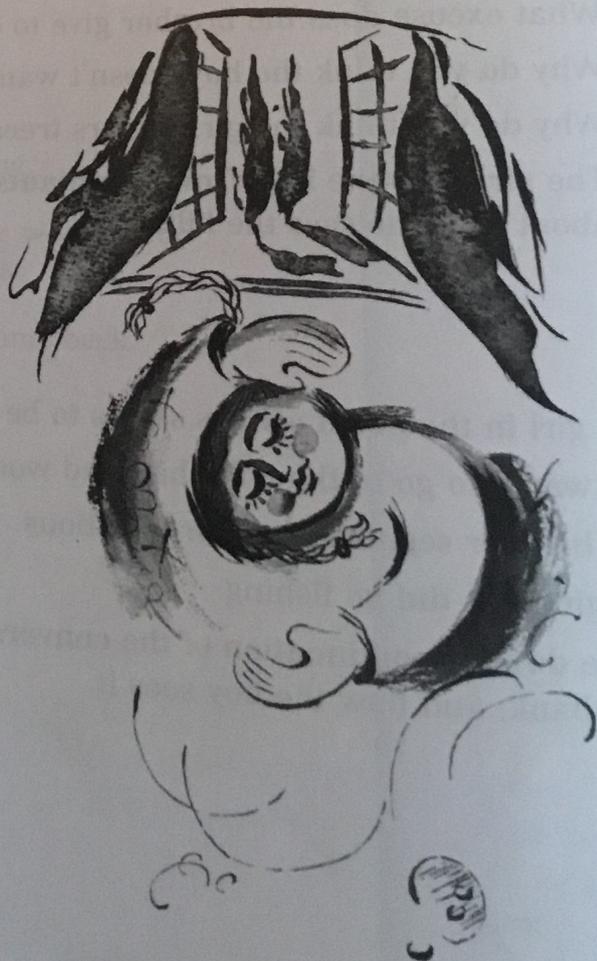
Why do you turn your head, mother,
And why do the tear-drops fall?
And why do you crumple that note on the fire
And say it is nothing at all?

I woke to voices late last night,
I heard an engine roar,
Why do you tell me the things I heard
Were a dream and nothing more?

I heard somebody cry, mother,
In anger or in pain,
But now I ask you why, mother,
You say it was a gust of rain.

Why do you wander about as though
You don't know what to do?
What has happened to Lulu, mother?
What has happened to Lu?

Charles Causley



Reading Comprehension—Activity 2 Questions



- 1 What has Lulu left behind?
- 2 How do you think Lulu got out of the house?
- 3 What did Lulu take with her?
- 4 How can you tell Lulu's mother is sad that Lulu has gone?
- 5 List **two** sounds the child heard in the night.



Evidence indicates that something has happened.

- 1 What evidence is there in the poem that Lulu left quickly?
- 2 What evidence is there in the poem that Lulu left a message behind to explain why she has gone?
- 3 What evidence is there in the poem that someone was helping Lulu get away once she had left the house?
- 4 a) Who do you think gave a cry in the middle of the night?
b) Why do you think this person made this cry?
- 5 Read the poem again carefully. Think about all the evidence. Why do you think Lulu left the house?



The child talking in this poem asks many questions, but receives no answers.

Write a final verse for the poem.

Make sure it follows the same pattern as the other verses.

Make sure it has four lines.

Make the first and third lines longer than the second and fourth lines.

Make the second line rhyme with the fourth line.

In your verse make Lulu's mother explain why Lulu has gone away.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Text

A Load of Rubbish

Do you want to listen o a RUBBISH story? Some people say that it is just a WASTE of time, but I couldn't REFUSE to tell it. Any ideas on what it's about? No? Well, I'll give you a hint ... it's JUNK! So you think this story will be GARBAGE, do you? Listen carefully and maybe I'll be able to change your mind!

It all started last week when I met my best friend, Ayden, at the local park. It was a sunny day and we had decided to go for a bike ride.

"Hey Ayden!" I called as I cycled over to him. Ayden grunted. He was kneeling next to his bike and was inspecting the front tyre. He wore an irritated look. "What's the matter?" I asked, putting down my bike and walking towards him.

"Sorry, Kyle, I've got a flat tyre. Not only that, but my chain keeps falling off too...this bike is a piece of garbage! I'm going to throw it away." Ayden stood up and kicked the bike's tyre. He folded his arms and huffed loudly.

That was when something strange happened. I heard an unusual sound coming from all around us and suddenly, a remarkable lady appeared from nowhere. She was wearing a sparkly, green dress and held a glittery clipboard in one hand. As she noticed us, she pulled down her reading glasses and took a closer look. She scrunched up her nose.

"Who on Earth are you?" Ayden exclaimed. His eyes were wide and he was shaking a little. That was when I noticed the lady wore a large badge. It read 'Mother Earth'.

The lady sighed. "I'm Mother Earth of course. I'm the spirit of the Earth." She looked around and started to make notes on her clipboard. She eventually noticed Ayden's bike on the floor and tutted. "You know, I've been very unwell lately," she complained.

"Oh no, what's wrong? Why have you been so ill?" Ayden asked, looking concerned.

Mother Earth pointed over my shoulder. "Just look at that vile rubbish dump over there..."

"I know. Yuk!" I agreed. I always ride past it on my way to the park.

"Did you know that lots of people use things just once and then throw them away? You humans live your lives as if there is a never-ending supply of everything in this world...and when you live like that, you make a lot of waste and pollution. These things add to what I call your 'carbon footprint'."

"Carbon what?" Ayden cried.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Text

“Carbon footprint. It’s caused by your misuse of the earth’s natural resources. That’s what is making me so sick.” She coughed a little.

Ayden looked shocked. “Us? We don’t do that.”

“Yes you do. All of you do!” Mather Earth yelled, waving her wand in the air. All of a sudden, we heard a rustling noise coming from nearby.

“What’s that noise?” Ayden said in a trembling voice.

“It’s coming from that wheelie bin over there...” I pointed towards a large black bin out in front of a nearby house. The lid was moving up and down as if something was trying to get out.

“Look, here comes a pile of old magazines. It was once a tree you know...” Before we knew it, a huge pile of magazines had jumped out of the bin and was rolling towards us.

“We overheard you talking. We’ve been so sad in there, just wasted. We could have been recycled and used again. That saves energy and trees! You can reduce your carbon footprint if you recycle us.” I was so surprised, I didn’t know what to say. Eventually, I found my voice.

“Maybe I can help to recycle you!” I offered. As I said it, Mother Earth waved her wand and in a puff of smoke a blue recycling bin appeared in front of us.

“Thank you! You know, recycling is so easy to do. You might have a special recycling bin like this that you can put things such as old magazines in. It gets collected and then recycled.” I picked up the pile of magazines and placed them neatly inside the bin.

“Oh yeah, we have one of those bins at home. I think my brother keeps his fishing equipment in it... Mother Earth, is there anything else that can be recycled?” Ayden said.

“I’m glad you asked young man. There are many materials that can be recycled which people just throw away every day.” From the rubbish dump, a plastic container rolled towards us.

As it reached us, it began to talk, just like the magazine. Things were getting stranger every minute! “I would have to be lying here for over four-hundred and fifty years to decompose!” The container sounded unhappy. “If someone had recycled me I could be turned into a toy or even part of a car!”

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Text

“Well, maybe now you’ll get your chance. Boys, did you know lots of big shops recycle bottles already?” She pointed towards the plastic container.

“I can take them to my local supermarket. I think mom’s going tonight,” Ayden replied. He picked up the plastic container and put it into his back pack ready to take home.

“That’s the plastic sorted then, but what about glass?” I asked.

“Glass can be recycled too!” She waved her wand again and a large glass bottle rolled towards the rubbish dump.

“Thank goodness you came along!” the glass bottle started to say. “I could’ve been laying here for the next million years! I don’t rot like other materials! If only I had been recycled.” I picked up the glass bottle and placed it in the recycling bin. I could just feel my carbon footprint getting smaller.

“Mother Earth, I never knew that re-using stuff was so easy to do,” I said.

“Recycling is very important, you should go and tell all of your friends! I’ve got to be going now...I have so many things to take care of...” She waved her wand one last time and disappeared.

“Right, first things first...I’ve got to fix my bike!” Ayden knelt down and started to tinker with the bike chain. Mother Earth taught us that we need to reduce, reuse and recycle if we want to cut out carbon footprint and save the planet. What could you do to reduce your carbon footprint?

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Questions

These questions are based upon the text *A Load of Rubbish* on pages 14-15. Read the text and use this to help you answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think the author has written some words in capital letters in the first paragraph?

2. What were Kyle and Ayden planning to do at the start of the day?

3. Underline 4 sentences in the extract below that show how Ayden is feeling.

“Hey Ayden!” I called as I cycled over to him. Ayden grunted. He was kneeling next to his bike and was inspecting the front tyre. He wore an irritated look. “What’s the matter?” I asked, putting down my bike and walking towards him.

“Sorry, Kyle, I’ve got a flat tyre. Not only that, but my chain keeps falling off too...this bike is a piece of garbage! I’m going to throw it away.” Ayden stood up and kicked the bike’s tyre. He folded his arms and huffed loudly.

4. Which word would you say best describes Ayden's feelings at this point in the story?

annoyed

outraged

furious

seething

5. Find and copy two words from the text that describe Mother Earth's dress.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Questions

6. Match each word to the correct definition.

huffed

horrible or bad

remarkable

looking over very carefully

tuffed

different or unusual, outstanding

vile

to make a 'tutting' sound at someone to show impatience or dislike

inspecting

to breathe out sharply in anger

7. What does Ayden's brother use the recycling bin for?

8. Find 4 different words used in the text that can replace 'said'.

1.

2.

3.

4.

9. Kyle says, 'eventually, I found my voice'. What do you think this means?

10. True or false? Mother Earth says that recycling is simple to do. Find and copy a sentence to explain your choice.

true false

Reading Comprehension—Activity 3 Questions

11. Find and copy the words in the text that can be replaced with the words below.

- 1. break down – _____
- 2. repair – _____
- 3. bottle – _____

12. How long does it take for plastic and glass to break down?

It takes _____ years for plastic to break down.
It takes _____ years for glass to break down.

13. Put these events in the correct order.

- Mother Earth disappears.
- Mother Earth tells the children she has been ill.
- The plastic containers speak to the boys.
- Kyle and Ayden meet in the park.
- The glass bottles talk to the boys.
- Mother Earth visits Kyle and Ayden.
- Ayden is annoyed his bike is broken.

14. What do you think is the key message of the story?

- The message is that people should look after the planet by making sure they put all of their litter into the bin.
- The message is that people should reduce, reuse and recycle to reduce their carbon footprint and help save the planet.
- The message is the children need to start learning about recycling so that they can protect the future of the planet.

15. Why do you think that the story finishes with a question?

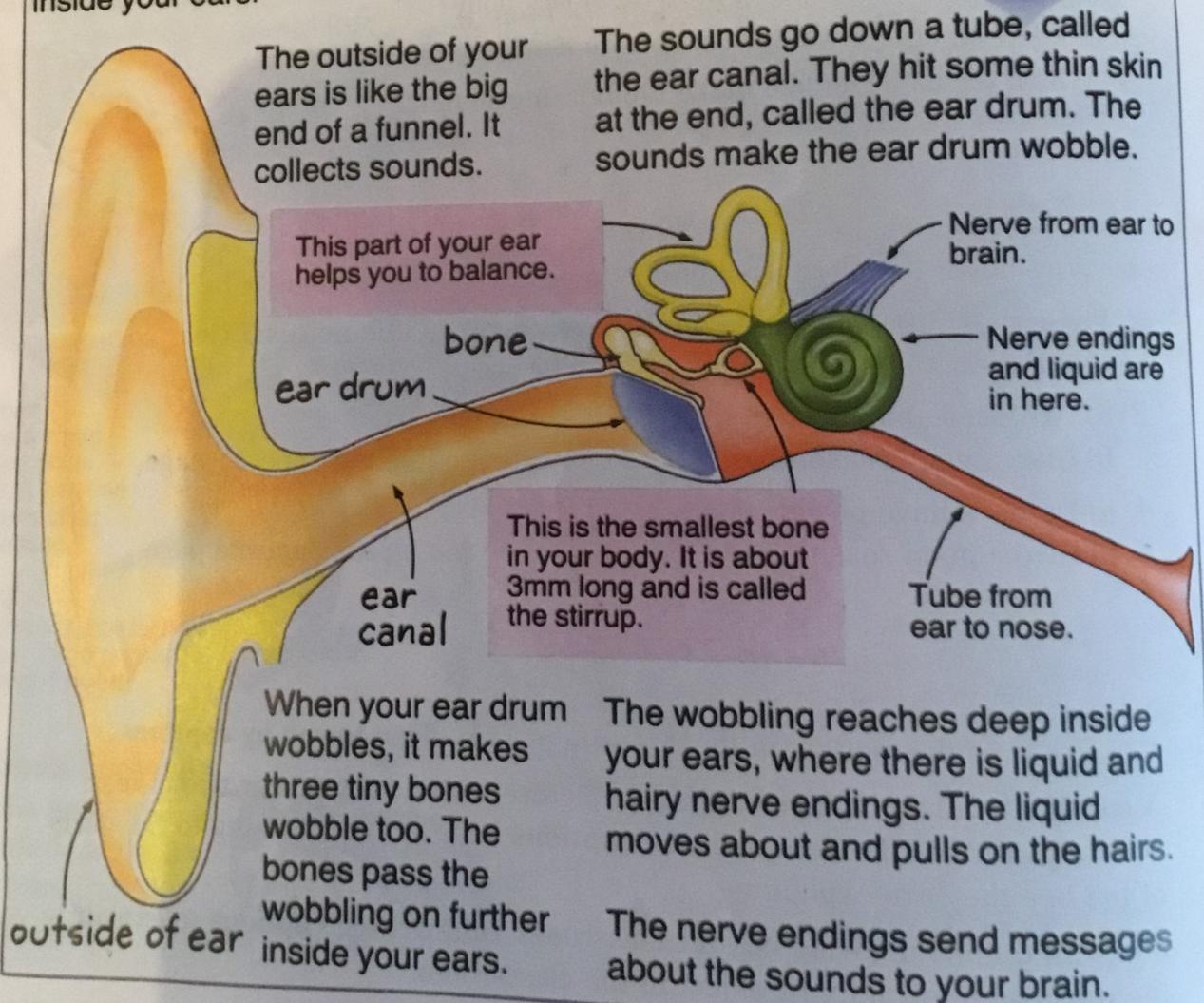
The human ear

This page is also from a science information book.

Hearing and touching

How you hear

Sounds affect nerve endings right inside your ears.



Reading Comprehension—Activity 4 Questions



- 1 What job does the **outside** of the ear do?
- 2 What is the name given to the channel that connects the outer ear to the inner ear?
- 3 What is the ear drum made out of?
- 4 What happens to the ear drum when a sound hits it?
- 5 What carries the sound from the ear drum further on into the ear?
- 6 What does the liquid pull and move around?



- 1 What is special about the **stirrup**?
- 2 Where do the nerves take their messages?
- 3 It allows you to hear, but what else does the inner ear help you to do?
- 4 Why do you think the ear drum and the tiny bones are so far **inside** the head?



Imagine you hear a loud noise, like an explosion. Write in your own words all the stages the sound goes through, before your brain understands that it has heard a loud bang.

Fleeing the Fire

With his tummy rumbling, he nosed around near the bottom of the chimney. Scraps sometimes fell there. No such luck today. The fireplace was cold and empty after its owners had disappeared from the house in the middle of the night. In fact, people all along the street had left their homes over the last day or so. They had left in a hurry, so they couldn't have taken everything with them. He would just have to look harder.

He scratched behind his ear. A new smell filtered into his nostrils. Someone else was here. Someone else was hungry.

The scent led him out from under the chimney and down along the side wall of the house. He picked his way over splinters and around mucky bits of mud and mortar. His nose led him into a second room, just off the first.

There she was! The someone else he'd smelt across the house! She knew she was caught. Rather than scurrying away, she turned and looked him dead in the eyes. He began to show his teeth; they were sharp and dangerous. He was hungry.

No more hungry than her though. She too had razor-sharp, jagged teeth and bared them. Neither rival was backing down. He darted forward at pace, to see if it would scare her. She didn't flinch. He darted forward again, and she raced out towards him. Flashing teeth and scratching claws met. She gouged his side. He bit her neck. He felt her tail thrash against him and another claw scrape his ear.

They separated in order to catch their breath. Neither of them had won yet. There was more to come.

He was feeling overheated. Why was he so hot? They'd only been fighting for a few seconds. The charred logs in the fireplace were cold, so where was that heat coming from?

She'd noticed the change in temperature too. He could see her eyes searching around the room and her nose twitching. He smelt the air. Something was changing. Something was seeping in through cracks in the walls and threading its way through gaps in the door. Smoke.

He flicked his eyes back to her, but she was already off and running. She scrambled up the wall and out through a window. So that was how she'd got in! He dashed after her. All thoughts of food and fighting were forgotten. The bright, terrible, flickering enemy, that all rats knew to fear, was coming after him!

She was already on the ground by the time he'd reached the window ledge. He dug his claws deep into the wall as he climbed down. Not deeply enough. A section of wall gave way beneath him, and he tumbled to the ground. The falling clump landed by his head, only just missing him. There was no time to worry about the fall now. Quick as a flash, he was back on his feet and tearing off into the main street.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 5 Text

What he saw was terrifying.

There was an orange glow. Tall flames licked the air. Great showers of bright golden sparks fell to the ground. Above it all, loomed a monstrous cloud of thick black smoke. The whole city was burning.

He had to move, but where could he run? Away from the flames he dashed, but each new twist and turn just brought him back to another wall of fire.

The city was a maze of winding, narrow streets and close wooden houses. It was impossible to see the best way to run without climbing onto a roof, but to go so high might leave him trapped.

Other rats, some alone and some in larger groups, flashed past him. As the city shrank, more and more of his kind were forced together. The fire was like a great hand that scooped them up and threatened to close around them. Terrified squeals filled his ears as they pushed, bit, scratched and clawed to be the furthest from the fire.

Then, something changed. The group came to a halt. It happened so suddenly that the rats piled into one another as they failed to stop in time. Something had blocked their path.

The river. It was slow-flowing but wide. Too wide for a fire to cross.

Those rats at the front had already been pushed into the water by the force of the pileup behind them. Others tried to turn left or right and follow the bank to safety.

Instinct told him that the river was his best chance of escape. He spotted a large piece of wood floating along the edge of the riverbank. It was now or never. He leapt across the water and landed safely on the makeshift raft. He was just in time too, as the river swirled and pulled him and his raft away from the edge. Now in the middle of the river, the current carried him downstream and away from the burning terror behind him.

Relieved to be safe, his stomach reminded him of a problem he had yet to solve – he was still hungry!

Reading Comprehension—Activity 5 Questions

Fleeing the Fire – Comprehension

These questions are based upon the text *Fleeing the Fire* on pages 13-14. Read the text and use this to help you answer the questions below.

1. What type of text is this? Circle your answer.

narrative

letter

Information
text

poem

2. True or false? He knew that someone else was in the house because he could hear them.

true

false

3. Find and copy the words from the text that have the same meaning as the words below.

1. leftovers –

2. gone –

3. smell –

4. rushing –

4. What does the word 'gouged' mean?

to punch with force

to move slowly but with force

make a groove, hole or indentation in something

to move quickly

5. Which clues that tell us that the main characters are not human?

soft hands

razor-sharp teeth

scratching claws

long hair

tail

Reading Comprehension—Activity 5 Questions

6. Which senses does the female character rely on to work out where the heat is coming from?

sight

smell

taste

touch

hearing

7. Fill in the missing word to complete the sentence.

The author has included the word _____ in a one word sentence on page 13 to give it more impact.

8. True or false? The author is writing about the sun when they refer to the bright, flickering enemy.

true

false

9. Complete the sentence below using evidence from the text.

We know he has more important things to think about than fighting because it says in the text that: _____

9. Complete the sentence below using evidence from the text.

We know he has more important things to think about than fighting because it says in the text that: _____

10. 'As the city shrank...' What do you think the author meant when they wrote this phrase?

11. How are the first and last sentence of this story connected?

Reading Comprehension—Activity 5 Questions

12. Number the statements below to put them in the order that they happened.

He escapes down the river on a piece of wood.

He has a fight with a female rat.

The rats race around the city trying to escape the flames.

He goes looking for food.

They smell smoke and leave the house.

He finds another rat in the house.

The Better Brown Stories

Allan Ahlberg

Brian Brown, who had no dog of his own, nevertheless knew more about dogs than any boy in Snuggleton. His room was full of dog books; in school even the teacher had come to rely on his superior knowledge. At home, Brian did his share of the Hoovering and often boiled eggs for the family breakfast. All he asked for in return was a dog or, more particularly, a puppy. His thoughtless parents, however, refused to consider it and his apathetic sister was no help either. Brian endured the situation with dignity. As time went by, he slowly covered the walls of his room with dog pictures, collected cheap sets of dog cards whenever he went to an antique fair ... and waited.

It was half-past ten on a cool May night ... Brian ate a sandwich at the kitchen table and listened to the radio. Suddenly there was a newsflash: "WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAMME TO REPORT ANOTHER MISSING DOG IN SNUGGLETON." It was the Plumber's Pekinese, apparently. The police were at the scene of the crime in Roman Road. Owners were again advised to check the whereabouts of their dogs and warned to "STAY INDOORS".

Brian wandered over to the window. His cool yet curiously reckless mind was considering this business of the missing dogs. He drew the curtain aside. Fog, drifting in from the sea, pressed up against the glass and smothered the view. The street lamp was barely visible. Brian listened: faint rumblings from the fridge, gurgling water in the radiator. Outside, a distant throbbing. He switched off the light.



Reading Comprehension—Activity 6 Questions

1. Why is it a bit surprising that Brian is such an expert on dogs?

2. Write a question that Brian's teacher might ask him when she is relying on his superior knowledge.

3. Join each character to words the writer uses to describe them.

Brian	apathetic
His parents	enduring
His sister	thoughtless

4. "*Brian endured the situation.*"

Which word or phrase is closest in meaning to "*endured*" in this sentence? Tick **one**.

continued	<input type="checkbox"/>	put up with	<input type="checkbox"/>
enjoyed	<input type="checkbox"/>	endangered	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. At the end of paragraph 1, it says that Brian waited. What do you think he was waiting for?

6. Write a word, phrase or clause from paragraph 1 that gives a reason why the police might ask Brian for help.

7. Brian is described as having a "*cool yet curiously reckless mind*".

What do you think the author meant by this? Tick one.

He was good at solving problem and puzzles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He got angry very quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He got into trouble because he didn't think things through.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He didn't care about anyone else.	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Do you think Brian might have taken the Pekinese? Explain your answer.

9. Write the paragraph number that matches each of these statements.

Introduces the problem in the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Begins to explore how the problem might be solved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduces the characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gives hints about who might solve the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gangsta Granny by David Walliams

To Ben, all the diamond rings looked pretty much the same. However, Granny seemed to know each of them as if they were her oldest friends. "Such a little beauty," she said as she brought the ring up to her eye for a closer inspection. "This is the first one I stole, back when I was a nipper."

"I grew up in a small village and my family was very poor," continued Granny. "And up on top of the hill was this grand country house where a lord and lady lived. Lord and Lady Davenport. It was just after the war and we didn't have much food in those days. I was hungry, so one night at midnight, when everyone was asleep I crept out of my mother and father's little cottage. Under the cover of darkness, I made my way through the woods and up the hill to Davenport House."

"Weren't you scared?" asked Ben.

"Yes of course I was. Being alone in the dark woods at night, it was terrifying. There were guard dogs at the house. Great black Dobermans. So as quietly as I could, I climbed a drainpipe and found an unlocked window. I was a very little girl at eleven, small for my age. So I managed to squeeze myself through a tiny gap in the window, and landed behind a velvet curtain. When I pulled back the curtain, I realised I was in Lord and Lady Davenport's bedroom."

"Oh no!" said Ben.

"Oh yes," continued the old lady. "I thought I might just take some food perhaps, but next to the bed I saw this little beauty." She indicated the diamond ring.



Reading Comprehension—Activity 7 Questions

1. "To Ben, all the diamond rings looked pretty much the same." The words "pretty much the same" tell us what? Tick one.

Ben loves all the diamond rings equally.

He's never paid much attention to diamond rings.

All he cares about is how much he can sell them for.

Ben is fascinated by the stories behind how Granny came by each of the rings.

2. Which words in paragraph 1 tell you that Granny was fond of the diamond rings?

3. How do you think Ben felt when Granny said: "This is the first one I stole, back when I was a nipper"?

4. (a) What did Granny plan to steal from the house?

(b) What did she steal?

5. At the beginning of the story, Ben thought his granny was boring.

(a) Write one word to show how you think he feels about her by the end of this extract.

(b) Explain your answer.

6. What do you think might happen next in this story? Tick one.

Granny will give Ben a chocolate biscuit.

Granny will tell Ben off for poking around in her room.

Ben will say that he wants to phone his parents and go home.

Ben will ask Granny to tell him more stories about where she got the other rings and bracelets.

From *The Little Ghost* by Otfried Preussler

The little ghost had lived in Eulenstein Castle for hundreds of years. He was one of those harmless little ghosts who haunt places by night, and never hurt anyone else unless they are provoked.

During the day, he slept up in the attic in a heavy, iron-bound oak chest. The chest was well hidden behind one of the big chimneys. No one knew it really belonged to a ghost.



But at night, when the Town Hall clock struck twelve in the town of Eulenberg at the foot of the castle, the little ghost awakened. On the very last stroke of twelve, he would open his eyes, stretch and yawn. Then he would put his hand under the old letters and legal documents he used for a pillow, and bring out a bunch of keys. There were thirteen keys; the little ghost always carried them around. He would wave them at the lid of the chest, and immediately the lid would begin to open of its own accord.

Now the little ghost could climb out of the chest. He always bumped into the cobwebs; no human being had visited this remote attic for years, so it was covered with cobwebs and was dreadfully dusty. Even the cobwebs were full of dust. Showers of dust came tumbling down, if anything touched them.

"A-tishoo!"

Every night, as the little ghost climbed out of the chest, he would bump into the cobwebs, get some dust up his nose, and sneeze. He would shake himself once or twice, to make sure he was really awake. Then he would float out from behind the chimney and begin his nightly haunting.

Like all ghosts, he weighed nothing at all. He was light and airy as a wisp of mist. Luckily he never stirred without his bunch of thirteen keys, or the least breath of wind might have blown him away to goodness knows where.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 8 Questions

1. Find and copy **one** word from the first paragraph that tells us the ghost was not dangerous.

2. The author explains in the first paragraph that this type of ghost would “*never hurt anyone unless they are provoked*”. Which of the words below could the author have used instead of the word “*provoked*”. Circle **all** that apply.

Angered

Irritated

Sleepy

Annoyed

Happy

3. Explain **two** things that would happen when the clock struck twelve.

(a) _____

(b) _____

4. Using the information in the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each sentence is **true** or **false**.

True

False

	True	False
The little ghost used old papers for his pillow.		
The little ghost carried three keys.		
The little ghost didn't need to put the key in the lock to open the chest.		
The little ghost struggled to push open the chest.		
People came into the attic to see the little ghost.		

5. Why did the little ghost sneeze when he climbed out of the chest?

6. In the final paragraph, what is the little ghost likened to? Explain why this is a good simile.

7. In the final paragraph, what does the text explain that the little ghost actually needed the bunch of keys for?

The Girl Who Walked on Air

Read the passage below, then answer the questions that follow.

The bigger the danger, the bigger the crowd. One look at tonight's punters said it all. With just minutes till show time, the big top was almost full and I was quite ready to burn with excitement. Every last ticket was sold. And still the queue snaked out of the field and down the lane until all you could see were people's hats bobbing above the hedgerows. 5

First thing this morning, the posters had gone up all over town. 'MORE DARING THAN EVER!' they'd said in blue and gold letters. 'WATCH MONSIEUR MERCURY DEFY GRAVITY ON HIS TRAPEZE!' To me, M. Mercury was good old Jasper, who I lived with in a tiny trailer, and who drank lapsang tea out of dainty cups and let me have first dibs on every piecrust. Which was more than could be said for my mam. When I was just a baby she left me at the circus, the way most people forget an umbrella. 10

Inside the ticket booth where I worked there wasn't space to swing a cat. I jiggled from foot to foot, impatient to get finished so I'd be free to watch the show. My dog Pip sensed it too; sat beside me, he watched my every move. At last, the final punters filed past to claim their tickets. They were a noisy bunch, laughing and nattering, their breath like smoke in the evening air. They'd be quiet soon enough. Once they'd squeezed up on a bench inside the big top, they'd look upwards. And what they'd see would leave them speechless. 15

A little shiver went down my neck. *Imagine if I was about to perform. All those eyes gazing up at me. Just imagine it!* 20

I came back to earth with a bump. The circus owner, Mr Leo Chipchase, was in the doorway. He'd put on his best tartan waistcoat and was smiling, which made a change.

'Think of all those backsides on seats, Louie,' he said as he squeezed in beside me to count the coins. 25

'The bigger the danger...'

'...the bigger the crowd,' I finished for him.

He did have a point. There were grander circuses than ours, with more animals, more curiosities, more sparkle. Backsides on seats mattered. So, what better way 30

Reading Comprehension—Activity 9 Text

to draw the crowds than a thrilling new routine. And tonight that's exactly what they'd get. Jasper would perform not a double but a TRIPLE somersault from his trapeze. No other circus boasted such a stunt. It was genius.

But it was dangerous too. Now I'd reminded myself of this fact, it grew like a little worm inside my head. Tonight's shows had that WHIFF OF DEATH all right. 35
How anyone could hang mid-air for so long I didn't know. Jasper made it look easy. And I thought of Charles Blondin – the GREAT Blondin – who'd crossed Niagara Falls on a *tightrope*. One hundredthousand people had turned up to watch him. They placed bets that he'd fall and die. He didn't, of course, but I still felt sick thinking about it. 40

At last the queue ended.

'Can I go now?' I asked, unable to stop fidgeting.

If I was quick, I'd get to wish Jasper luck. And be sure of a good viewing spot at the back of the big top.

Mr Chipchase waved me away. 'Go.' 45

I darted across the showground straight for the big top. Smells of horse sweat and gingerbread filled the air. There was music too, the organ and drums all fast and furious, signalling the show was about to start. It was the bit of circus life I loved best, that moment before the action, when the very air tingled. And tonight I felt it keenly. How I dreamed of being a showstopper like Jasper. 50
Breathed it. Lived it. But in this subject Mr Chipchase was clear. 'Not a chance, Louie,' he always said. 'You're too young.'

Never mind that Mighty Ned the ringmaster was my age. Or Kitty Quickblade, who threw knives, was only a tiny bit older. But when I'd pointed this out Mr Chipchase went red enough to burst. 55

So these days I watched from the sidelines. And I kept my dreams to myself.

Extract from *The Girl Who Walked on Air* by Emma Carroll

Reading Comprehension—Activity 9 Questions

- Ⓐ *The bigger the danger, the bigger the crowd.*

Find and copy **one** other word in paragraph one that refers to the crowd.

- Ⓑ In paragraph one, why is *snaked* an effective way of describing the queue?

- Ⓒ Why are some letters in paragraph two written in capital letters? []

- Ⓓ What does the reader learn about Jasper in paragraph two?

- Ⓔ Reread paragraph three. Describe how the crowd's behaviour will change as the show begins.

- Ⓕ Which words in paragraph three show that it was a cool evening? []

- Ⓖ *A little shiver went down my neck.* What causes the shiver to go down Louie's neck?

- Ⓗ Reread paragraphs five, six and seven. Circle the correct answer.

Mr Chipchase was smiling because:

He was excited about the stunt.

He always smiled.

The large crowd meant lots of money.

He was pleased to see Louie.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 9 Questions

I *it grew like a little worm inside*. What does Louie mean? Tick **one**.

She didn't want to think about it

The idea was getting bigger the more she thought about it

The idea was too dangerous to think about

She was able to stop thinking about it

J Circle **one** answer. The phrase *the whiff of death* suggests that:

It smells bad in the tent.

Someone will die.

The stunt is extremely dangerous.

The stunt looks harder than it is.

K Reread paragraphs 10 to 15. Find and copy **three** words or phrases which show Louie is both excited and nervous.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

L How does paragraph 15 make it easy for the reader to imagine the fairground? Refer to the language used.

M From the information across the whole extract, what impression is created of the fairground owner?

N *And I kept my dreams to myself*.

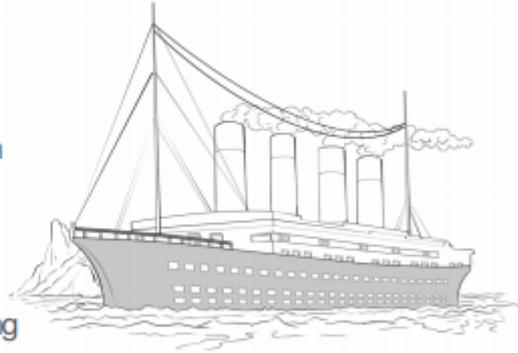
What is the 'dream' that Louie keeps to herself?

***Titanic* Tragedy**

Read the passage below, then answer the questions that follow.

That Famous Ship

Think of a story about a ship and an iceberg, and you will almost certainly think of *Titanic*. At the time of her launch, *Titanic* was the biggest ship in the world, weighing over 46000 tons and capable of carrying more than 3500 passengers and crew. Built in Belfast for the White Star Line shipping company, *Titanic* was designed to be



the last word in luxury, with first-class accommodation that rivalled the most opulent of hotels. This magnificent vessel set sail on 10 April 1912, from the English port of Southampton, to begin her maiden voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. Some of the richest and most famous members of society had paid thousands of pounds to be amongst the first to occupy the stylish suites aboard the ship. However, the passenger list reflects society at the time, and included approximately 285 second-class passengers and 706 travelling in 'steerage' (third-class accommodation), many of whom were looking forward with optimism to starting new and better lives in America. For all these reasons, it is no wonder that *Titanic* has been referred to as 'the ship of dreams'. Sadly, for many of those who sailed on *Titanic* their dreams were never realised, since it is neither the size nor the luxury of *Titanic* that ultimately made her famous, but the tragedy that struck on her one and only voyage.

The Disaster and Rescue

After setting sail from Southampton, *Titanic*'s first stop was at Cherbourg, on the coast of France, where some passengers disembarked and others joined the ship. From here, she sailed to Queenstown in Ireland; the final photographs of *Titanic* afloat were taken here. As she began her transatlantic journey, we can only imagine that the last thing on the minds of most passengers was the likelihood of the ship sinking, particularly since it was widely believed that *Titanic*'s design made her 'unsinkable'. Indeed, all appeared to be well three days into the voyage, as they made record time across the Atlantic.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 10 Text

During this time, *Titanic* had received messages from other ships warning of icebergs, but a combination of factors meant that they were not acted upon and so as night fell on 14 April 1912, the mighty *Titanic* sailed on, oblivious to what fatal danger lay in her path.

At 11.40 p.m., the ship's lookouts spotted the outline of a dark shape looming in 35
front of them. "Iceberg right ahead!" one is reported to have called; the ship's
warning bell was rung. However, by this point, moving at the speed they were,
it was too late: manoeuvring a ship the size of *Titanic* took time and space,
neither of which they had. The ship struck the iceberg under the water, causing
a long gash in the hull. Although *Titanic* had water-tight compartments 40
which could be shut off individually if they became flooded, no one had
anticipated this happening to several of them at once. As water poured from
one compartment to the next, the ship became unstable. The Captain, Edward
J. Smith, gave orders that the lifeboats were to be put into action. Many
accounts from survivors mention the chaos, as the bewildered passengers and 45
even the crew, gradually became aware of what had happened. One of the
most shocking facts about the *Titanic* tragedy was that there were not enough
lifeboats to save all those on board. In total, only 705 people were rescued,
with women and children being taken first. Far more first-class passengers
were saved than third-class, perhaps because the steerage accommodation 50
was further from the lifeboats and access to first-class areas was restricted.
Within three hours of hitting the iceberg, *Titanic* had sunk under the icy water,
splitting in two as she did so. Several ships heard the distress calls sent by
Titanic and came to help, the first of which was *Carpathia*, but it took several
hours to arrive. The survivors in the lifeboats were taken aboard and eventually 55
arrived in New York, shocked and traumatised by their ordeal.

In the days before satellites, the internet and 24-hour broadcasting, news of
the tragedy emerged slowly and the 'facts' reported at first were somewhat
muddled. One London newspaper even had a headline which read 'Everyone
Safe'. The truth eventually became clear and the tragic story of *Titanic* has 60
continued to be written about extensively ever since.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 10 Questions

- Ⓐ Using the information in the first paragraph, describe what *Titanic* was like for first-class passengers.

- Ⓑ Which word below could NOT be used to replace *opulent* in the first paragraph and keep the same meaning?

Tick **one**.

richly-decorated

expensive

luxurious

old

- Ⓒ *looking forward with optimism to starting new and better lives in America*. What does this suggest about the lives third-class passengers were leaving behind and their attitude towards their new lives?

- Ⓓ Look at the first paragraph. Give **two** ways in which *Titanic* could be thought of as a 'ship of dreams'.

- Ⓔ In the first paragraph, what does the noun phrase *maiden voyage* tell you?

- Ⓕ Read the section entitled *The Disaster and Rescue*.

it was widely believed that Titanic's design made her 'unsinkable'

Underline a word or phrase in this line which shows you that this was an opinion rather than a fact.

Reading Comprehension—Activity 10 Questions

Ⓖ Match the places to the correct event in *Titanic's* history.

Southampton	Dockyard where <i>Titanic</i> was built
New York	Set off from here on 10 April 1912
Belfast	Last photographs of the ship afloat taken here
Queenstown	Final scheduled destination

Ⓕ Tick to show which statements are true and which are false.

	True	False
<i>Titanic</i> was crossing the Atlantic faster than previous ships.		
<i>Titanic's</i> crew were not warned about the ice.		
The lookouts saw the icebergs when they were too close.		
The damage to the ship was below the waterline.		

Ⓖ In the section entitled *The Disaster and Rescue*, what do the words *bewildered* and *chaos* suggest?

Ⓖ Give **two** reasons why a third-class male passenger may have been less likely to survive.

Ⓖ How do you think the passengers' feelings changed during their voyage? Use evidence from across the text to support your opinions.
