A Trip to the Seaside

Fiction

Content Domain focus:

1b identify or explain key aspects of text through retrieval
1d making inferences

Extract summary

In the extract *A Trip to the Seaside*, by Siobhan Skeffington, Sam has fun playing in the sand and discovers starfish don't come from the sky.

Unit summary

Year 1 children will need to use the text in conjunction with the pictures to aid their comprehension, and you may wish to read the extract to the children. Some children will be able to complete this test independently but will need to get used to the style of the questions, which relates to those used in the National Curriculum Tests. Others may need to go through the comprehension test verbally with the teacher.

Children need to use phonic knowledge gained in Reception, such as adjacent consonants, e.g. ‘pl’ and vowel diagraphs e.g. ‘oa’, ‘oi’ and ‘ee’ to decode unfamiliar words. They will also need to recall high frequency words, such as *mum*. It is a good idea to revise examples of Reception words before undertaking a comprehension test, and to remind children that a sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. The children will need to revise what a question is and how it helps us to find out information.

Teaching prompts

Ask the children to read each word, placing their finger below each one. Remind children to stop at the full stop and check the sentence makes sense. Encourage children to use the pictures for clues. Remind children that they need to read the questions to see what they are asking, and show they have understood what they have read by the answers they give.

Revisiting the extract

You may find it helpful to revisit this extract to enhance understanding of the skills the children have been practising. You could ask them to:

• Draw a picture of what Sam finds.
• Role play the conversation between Sam and her mum.
Answers

Links to Content Domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. Seaside [1b]
2. False [1b]
3. Sand [1b]
4. True [1d]
5. Starfish [1b +1d]

Assessment

Children are secure if they can read the text and answer all the questions about the story. At this stage, this could be on paper or they could give the answers verbally. If they do write the answers, accept any way of identifying the correct answer and any recognisable spelling of starfish.

Some children:

• may not be able to decode the text. However, a test of a child’s aural comprehension can still be useful practice for a test format that they will encounter later on.

• may need to revisit the test. Reread it to them, and ask them to tell you the story in their own words; then, ask them the questions verbally.

• may need further practice answering the questions in a formal way. In such cases a verbal assessment could be made to check their understanding of the text.

Next steps

To aid with comprehension it is very important for the children to listen to a variety of poems, fiction and non-fiction at a level that is beyond their independent reading. These texts should be discussed and the children should be asked to respond informally to questions, which test their comprehension. A daily class story, with time for discussion, is a key aspect of supporting reading comprehension.

It may help to practise a different style of question each day to help the children get used to the tests. For example, ask a true or false question, multiple choice or short answer question.
A Trip to the Seaside

Sam is at the seaside with her mum. It is a hot day. She plays with the sand.

1. Sam is at the ................. .
   Tick one.
   - sky
   - sun
   - seaside
   - star

2. It is a cold day.
   Circle the correct answer.
   True or False

3. What does Sam play with?
   Tick one.
   - sun
   - sand
   - hot
   - mum
Sam finds a star on the sand. She looks up at the sky. ‘Stars are in the sky,’ she says. ‘No,’ says Mum. ‘This is a starfish.’

4  Sam thinks the star came from the sky. Circle the correct answer.

   True or False

5  What does Sam find?

Which questions did you get right? Colour them in.

1 2 3 4 5

Total marks /5

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Leon and the Place Between

Fiction

Content Domain focus:
2d make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
2e predict what might happen from details stated and implied

Extract summary
This extract is taken from the opening of the picture book *Leon and the Place Between*, written by Angela McAllister and illustrated by Grahame Baker-Smith. In the extract, Leon, his brothers Tom and Pete and sister Little Mo, are waiting for a magic show to begin.

Unit summary
The questions prompt the children in thinking about the different reactions of the main characters and the crowd to the anticipation and actuality of the magic show.

Tom and Pete are quite sceptical about the existence of magic, whereas Little Mo wants to believe in it. Leon is eager for the show to start and wants his siblings to go along with the magic, urging them to believe what they see.

After the sudden dramatic performance from the jugglers, the stage is silent and dark — building up the anticipation for the next event. But what might that be?

Teaching prompts
- Activate prior knowledge by discussing times when the children have been looking forward to doing something or going somewhere. How did they feel?
- Explore times when they have been in an audience watching a show or performance (this could be at school rather than at a theatre). What did they do? How did they feel?
- Remind the children that making inferences from reading involves reading between the lines and thinking about clues that the author has left in the text.

Revisiting the extract
You could ask the children to:
- Draw a picture of Leon, Pete, Tom and Little Mo at the magic show.
- Role play the conversations between the children at the beginning of the extract. Focus on the speech verbs used and explore the difference between ‘hissing’ and ‘whispering’.
- Role play the phrases “the crowd waited impatiently for something to happen” and “the crowd fidgeted with excitement”.
- Highlight the dialogue in one colour, inverted commas in another colour and the speech verbs in another colour.
- Identify their favourite words and phrases in the extract and explain why they have chosen them.
- Read the extract aloud using expression — particularly for the dialogue.
Answers

Links to Content Domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. At a fairground. In a show tent.
2. On the grass. In the show tent.
3. He doesn’t believe that he is going to see magic. He thinks someone will try to trick him. [2d]
4. She looked disappointed because she wants to believe in magic but two of her brothers don’t seem to. [2d]
5. He wants his brothers and sister to believe in the magic. He thinks they’ll enjoy it more if they believe it’s real. [2d]
6. Impatiently [2d]
7. It went dark. [2d]
8. A loud hush [2d]
9. A drum banging
   Tambourines rattling [2d]
10. There might be more entertainment. A magician might do magic tricks. The skittles might come back down. The children will enjoy themselves. [2e]

Assessment

Children will be secure in their understanding of how to find information efficiently and effectively if they use clues in the questions, e.g. looking for, and visualising, key words and phrases, as well as using the clue given by the word ‘where’ to look for a word associated with a place.

Children can demonstrate that they are able to make inferences by thinking about what they are told about a character and what that character says and does. They can also make links with other stories they have read.

Children make valid predictions by linking evidence in the extract with similar situations they have come across.

Next Steps

Use images to develop children’s scanning skills, by asking them to quickly find particular objects in a picture. Remind them to visualise the image they are looking for in terms of colour, size, shape, etc.

Give children copies of an appropriate text. Ask them to find particular words as quickly as they can by visualising the shape and length of the words. Challenge them to carry out ‘speedy searches’ e.g. three nouns, two adjectives, two words starting with the letter ‘a’.

Develop inference by encouraging children to visualise characters as they read, discuss with their reading buddies what they think the characters look like and then draw the character.

Encourage children to make connections with their own experiences (through viewing/reading and actual) to help them to make sense of what they read.

Explain to the children that when they predict what could happen next in a story, they need to think about what has already happened and ask themselves ‘Could it happen again?’ They should also think about how characters have behaved in the story and ask themselves ‘Will they do the same thing again?’ ‘Might they do something very different?’ ‘Will they change in some way?’ Finally, they can think about what has happened in other stories that they have read and ask themselves ‘Could something similar happen?’

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Leon and the Place Between

“I don’t believe in magic,” said Tom, as he settled on the grass in the show tent. Around him the crowd waited impatiently for something to happen.

“It’s not real,” hissed Pete. “It’s only tricks.”

Little Mo looked disappointed.

“Sssh now,” whispered their brother Leon. “It will be magic. You have to believe. Look, it’s going to begin.”

The lanterns went out. In the darkness the crowd fidgeted with excitement. There was a cough, a whisper and then a loud hush. At last a soft, blue glow lit the stage and the curtains twitched.

With a ripple of gold braid … the curtains slowly parted …

Bang!

Three jugglers tumbled onto the stage to the pounding beat of a drum. Skittles flew, fast and furious, back and forth, up and over. Tambourines rattled, loud and louder; skittles spun, high and higher; the jugglers twisted, fast and faster. Then bang the skittles went up … but they didn’t come down! Everybody cheered and clapped. The jugglers bowed and bounced away.

Once more there was only darkness.
Leon and the Place Between

1. Where does the magic show take place?
   ...........................................................................................................

2. Where did Tom sit down?
   ...........................................................................................................

3. Look at what Pete said. Explain how he feels about the magic show.
   ...........................................................................................................

4. Why do you think Little Mo looked disappointed?
   ...........................................................................................................

5. Why do you think Leon said, “You have to believe”?
   ...........................................................................................................

6. Find and copy one word that tells you that the crowd were keen for the show to start.
   ...........................................................................................................

7. Tick one box to show how the crowd knew that the show was starting?
   [ ] It went dark.   [ ] Leon said it was going to start.
   [ ] The jugglers came on stage.

8. Find and copy a group of words that mean the crowd were silent.
   ...........................................................................................................

9. Tick two boxes that show what sounds could be heard once the show started.
   [ ] The curtains opening   [ ] Skittles spinning   [ ] A blue glow
   [ ] Tambourines rattling   [ ] A drum banging

10. Based on what you have read, what do you think might happen next?
    ...........................................................................................................
    ...........................................................................................................
    ...........................................................................................................
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Fiction

Content Domain focus:
2b retrieve and record information/identify key details from fiction and non-fiction
2d make inferences from the text/explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text
2f identify/explain how information/narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole

Extract summary
This is the opening to Lewis Carroll’s famous story Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. The rabbit-hole, down which Alice disappears at the end of the extract, is her entrance to a fantasy world.

Unit summary
This unit looks at using literal and inferential comprehension to build an initial understanding of setting, plot and character. The passage introduces the central character, Alice, and the world she is about to leave behind.

The focus for questioning is the way in which the writer, Lewis Carroll, introduces the character of Alice, and prepares the reader for a contrast between the real and imaginary worlds of the novel.

Teaching prompts
• Explain to the children that they are about to read the opening of a famous story.
• Before reading, discuss with them different ways in which writers choose to begin a story, and the kinds of things readers are looking out for when they start reading a story.
• You could also remind children of the three key elements of story — setting, character and plot — and ask them to look out for ways in which these are introduced in the passage they are about to read.
• The passage is quite accessible, so you may feel that you would like children to read it and answer the questions independently in the first instance.
• If you feel that the passage is too challenging for some children to read independently, you could read it to them before they complete the questions. This would help you to distinguish between issues of decoding and comprehension.

Revisiting the extract
You could ask the children to:
• Describe what they would include in their first illustration if they were illustrating the story.
• Reconstruct the scene, with volunteers playing the parts of Alice, her sister and the White Rabbit. If this were a film or a drama, what would they be trying to show the viewer or audience?
• Return to questions 3 and 8 in the test, which relate to Alice’s character. Discuss the way that the writer builds a picture of Alice through individual details. Ask the children to share the three adjectives they chose to describe her (question 8) and what made them choose these.
Answers

Links to Content Domain requirements are in brackets after the answer.

1. On a (grassy) bank [2b]
2. Reading [2b]
3. bored [2d]
4. The weather is hot. It is making Alice sleepy and stupid (in the sense of lethargic). [2b]
5. Two from: It speaks; it is wearing clothes; it is carrying a watch. [2d]
6. There was nothing so very remarkable in that; The rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat pocket [2b]
   The author is using italics for emphasis; The author is drawing our attention to something unusual [2d]
7. Burning with curiosity. [2b]
8. | What she is           | What she says or does                                                                 |
    |----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
    | Alice is imaginative | she readily accepts the rabbit’s ‘human’ behaviour                                  |
    | she is restless and  | she cannot settle to anything – she wants to be active                               |
    | easily bored         |                                                                                     |
    | she is adventurous/  | she is quick to chase off after the rabbit, and follow him down the rabbit-hole     |
    | energetic           |                                                                                     |
    | she is impulsive/    | she doesn’t stop to think how she is going to escape from the rabbit-hole            |
    | foolhardy           |                                                                                     |
9. An animal talks, wears clothes and consults a watch. Despite her size, Alice disappears down a rabbit-hole after the rabbit. [2f]

Assessment

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 require straightforward information retrieval and interpretation, and are there to ease children into the passage.

Questions 5, 6 and 7 require closer reading and a greater familiarity with the conventions of fiction writing.

Questions 8 and 9 ask for a more sophisticated evaluative response about the way in which the author suggests the personality of the central character, and the kind of story this is going to be.

All children should be able to answer questions 1–4 correctly. If children are not secure in their answers to questions 5–7, this should be resolved through discussion when the text is revisited after the test. Longer term, children will become more secure in their answers through continual experience of sharing and discussing their reading of fiction.

Next Steps

Look at the openings to other stories, such as JK Rowling’s Harry Potter series, Tom’s Midnight Garden by Philippa Pearce and Philip Pullman’s His Dark Materials trilogy. How do different writers introduce setting, character and plot? Can children develop a toolkit to guide them as readers – and as writers – in approaching story openings?
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversation?”

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid) whether the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, “Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!” (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

1 Where are Alice and her sister sitting when the story starts?

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

2 What is her sister doing?

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

3 How is Alice feeling at the beginning of the story? Tick one box.

☐ happy ☐ sad ☐ bored ☐ excited

4 What is the weather like, and what effect is it having on Alice?

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

5 Name two things that are unusual about the rabbit when it appears.

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

6 Find two occasions in the story when the author uses italics and copy them into the box below. Why do you think he does this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of italics</th>
<th>Why does the author do this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Find and copy the three-word phrase that tells us what made Alice chase after the rabbit.

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

8 What kind of person do you think Alice is, on the evidence of this passage, and what makes you think so?

Use the box below to suggest three adjectives that could describe her character (what she is), and provide evidence from the story to support each idea (what she says or does).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What she is</th>
<th>What she says or does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 There are clues in the passage to suggest that this might not be a realistic story. Identify two.

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